

Engaging Young
Professional Jews
in the Jewish
Community:

An In Depth Look at Two
Successful Programs

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Introduction

With suburbanization and the baby boom, synagogues have long been oriented toward the needs of Jewish families. The National Jewish Population Survey¹ and numerous local studies confirm that married couples (especially those with children) are the most likely to be synagogue members. These same studies have documented a long running trend toward later age at first marriage. As a result, there is a growing group of young professional Jews who are finished with college, but not yet raising a family. Many of these individuals and couples choose not to join a synagogue, as they feel that the synagogue is not geared towards addressing their needs. As they become more involved in other activities, the synagogue and Judaism may or may not stay on their list of priorities. When they do finally marry and begin their family, they are much less likely to join a synagogue if the Jewish community has not been an important part of their life in the preceding years.

With this in mind, the issue of closing the gap and finding a way to keep young Jews involved in the Jewish community has become an important issue in recent years. Additionally, many programs are being developed around the country to try to engage this population and keep them connected to the Jewish community.

With all these programs being created, and having seen many individuals move away from Judaism in these liminal years, I was led to the

¹ National Jewish Population Survey 2000-2001: Strength, Challenge and Diversity in the American Jewish Population. United Jewish Communities Report, NY, New York. 2003.

question- is any of this working? Are any of these programs having a real effect on the lives of its participants? Are the young adults joining these programs and then leaving unchanged, or is their participation in these groups changing their outlooks and their lives. Are they increasing their store of Jewish social capital and are they becoming more meaningfully involved in the Jewish community? And if these programs are indeed reaching its participants beyond the scope of the program, are there any common factors that can be replicated and used by other groups?

With these questions in mind, I set out to review two organizations that are serving the needs of young professional adults. One group, Coed Jewish Sports is based in Boston, Massachusetts. It is a sports oriented group that has no synagogue affiliation or Jewish component- aside from that fact that all its participants are Jewish. It is open and marketed towards Jews of all denominations, although very few Orthodox Jews choose to participate. The second group, Shabbat Schmooze, is a Los Angeles, California based monthly Shabbat program that is affiliated with Stephen S. Wise Reform Synagogue. Its participants need not be temple members, but it is marketed to Reform Jews, both couples and singles, in their 20-30's.

Doing both qualitative and quantitative interviews I have analyzed different aspects of each group and created this document. Some of the questions I looked at were: What kinds of people are attracted to this kind of programming? What initially motivates them to join? What factors have either kept them involved, or turned them off? What effect has their

involvement had on their connection with Judaism and other Jews? Have any of their ritual practices changed as a result of their involvement? Has the religious make up of their friends changed? Do they see these programs as having impacted their lives in substantial ways?

This document is not meant to be the final word on Jewish programming for the 20's-30's age group, rather it is designed to pinpoint some common factors between different programs. My hope is that this work can be used to help Jewish organizations, including synagogues, identify programming that will be successful in engaging and retaining young Jews.

Literature Review

Studies have proven that Jews who stay connected to the Jewish community are more likely to marry other Jews and to raise Jewish families.² This means that the consequences of allowing the post college- pre family age group to lose its connection to the Jewish community can be detrimental to the future vibrancy of Judaism. Therefore, many programs are being designed to cater to the needs and interests of this liminal group. Larger Jewish communities such as Los Angeles and New York, with their abundance of Jews in this age group, have a plethora of events, activities, and organizations that are targeted towards them. But in recent years, even the smaller communities such as Kansas City³ and Philadelphia⁴ are finding way to connect young Jews to one another and to Judaism.

Social Capital

There are many tools to success. People have long recognized that physical capital such as tools and technology and human capital such as education are important keys to success. In the past two decades a third form of capital has emerged as similarly important. This is social capital. Social capital is the term used to describe the intangible recourses of human

² Phillips, Bruce. What We Know Now About Jewish Education. Unpublished. 2008.

³ "Young Professionals Initiative." United Jewish Communities.
<http://www.ypikc.org/index.aspx?page=1>

⁴ "Jewish Heritage Program Young Professionals Network." Facebook.
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2598885736>.

connections we draw upon in our daily life. John Field sums up the basis of social capital by saying “relationships matter.”⁵ In this, he is arguing that who we know, what they know, and how well we can tap into that knowledge, constitutes real resources at our disposal. Robert Putnam defines social capital as, “the features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination for mutual benefit,”⁶ and “developing networks of relationships that weave individuals into groups and communities.”⁷

In other words, it's not what you know, it's who you know. And this can apply to many aspects of life- getting into the best school, landing the best job, even getting the best deal on a new car. But social capital can also be the simple act of finding out about a social event through a friend or being invited to a party where there may be potential dating partners.

Conventional wisdom dictates that the more social capital a person acquires, the more successful he will be. Therefore, one might assume that Americans, especially young professionals just beginning their careers, would be acting in such a way as to increase their social capital and involvement in civic life. Yet, this is not the case. As Robert Putnam and others have documented, indicators point to a consistent decline in American group membership and civic life over the past 50 years⁸. Participation in civic life,

⁵ Field, John. Social Capital. Routledge, New York, NY, 2003. , pg 1

⁶ Putnam, Robert D. “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital.” Abridged version from Journal of Democracy, July 1995.

⁷ Putnam, Robert D. Better Together: Restoring the American Community. Simon and Schuster, New York, NY 2003. Pg 1.

⁸ Putnam, Robert D. Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Democracy. Simon and Schuster, New York, 2000. front flap.

once a staple of American life, has become more and more rare. Rather than attend a political rally or work for a campaign, people watch the rally on TV or read about it on CNN.com. Americans are spending less time with neighbors and families, and more time on their computers. Less time talking to friends face to face, and more time text messaging them.

Jews are no exception to this decline. However, in recent years there has been a slight uptick in the numbers of young Jews engaging in the Jewish community.⁹ Part of this may be a backlash to the loneliness that results from the disengagement with the community, part may be due to the general rise in ethnic and cultural pride in America, and part is likely due to the increased effort to reach out to the young Jewish community.

Whatever the reason, young professional Jews can be seen actively engaging in their community. Some are doing it through political activism, getting involved in social justice causes, and some are choosing to become active in their faith communities.

Those choosing to be active in Judaism are not necessarily doing it by the established methods of joining a synagogue or community center. As with many aspects of their lives, young professionals are finding new and innovative ways of engaging with Judaism and the Jewish community. Over the past decade many programs have tried to meet this need with varying degrees of success, but those that have seen the most success are those

⁹ While there has been an increase in day school attendance, Jewish studies courses on college campus, and some ritual observance, there are also areas that point to less engagement such as philanthropy and synagogue affiliation.

National Jewish Population Survey 2000-2001: Strength, Challenge and Diversity in the American Jewish Population. United Jewish Communities Report, NY, New York. 2003 pg 10.

that have helped its participants build social capital. Therefore creating programs and events targeted towards the young professional age group is important, but in order to be successful in effecting change in their participants' lives, the programs need to create an environment where social capital can be gained.

This paper will look at how two programs are creating social capital and increasing Jewish engagement in the young professional Jewish community. It will also examine the formal and informal connections that are being formed and how those new connections are influencing the lives of its participants. By assessing how social capital is being created and utilized, this paper will also seek to help other communities build similarly successful programs.

Methodology

This paper was created using two research methods. First qualitative interviews¹⁰ were held with the creators of each of the two programs and several participants. After the interviews, a short quantitative survey was sent out to all recent participants in both programs. By combining the information received, I was able to put together an overall picture of both the Shabbat Schmooze program and Coed Jewish Sports.

To begin my research, I identified a few people or couples from each group that I thought would have interesting perspectives. After interviewing each of them, I asked them to refer me to another person or couple they thought would also have an interesting perspective. All of the Los Angeles based interviews were conducted in person, and all of the Boston interviews were conducted over the phone. Each interview lasted approximately 30-40 minutes, and was recorded. Using the Grounded Theory method, each interview differed slightly from the previous ones, but all were very similar. The questions focused on the participant's motivation for getting and staying (or not staying) involved in the program, as well as the impact the program had on the participant's life.

¹⁰ Methods of interviewing were garnered from two sources:

Brinkmann, Svend and Steinar Kvale. Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing. Second edition. Sage Publications, Los Angeles, CA, 2009.

And

Silverman, David and Amir Marvasti. Doing Qualitative Research: A Comprehensive Guide. Sage Publications, Los Angeles, CA, 2008.

Overview of Programs

Why I Chose These Programs?

I chose Shabbat Schmooze and Coed Jewish sports because they are two programs I have been involved in and anecdotally knew were successful. I was a participant in Coed Jewish Sports from January 2003 until I left for rabbinical school in spring 2004. In that time I participated in three seasons of volleyball and met many friends, one of whom became my husband. When I returned from my year abroad in Israel, my (then) fiancé and I moved to Los Angeles and joined Shabbat Schmooze as a way to meet other young Jews in the Los Angeles area. After three years, we made several friends whom we still often socialize with.

I also chose to use Coed Jewish Sports and Shabbat Schmooze because I knew I would have access to both participants in the programs and its creators. This allowed me to get a full picture of how and why the programs were created and it provided me with a way to disseminate the quantitative surveys.

Shabbat Schmooze

Shabbat Schmooze is a Shabbat program affiliated with the W group at Stephen S. Wise Temple in Los Angeles, California. The W group is the 20s and 30s young adult group. They describe themselves as:

The W Group of Stephen S. Wise Temple is an award-winning community of young Jews in their 20s and 30s within the Stephen S.

Wise Temple community with over 800 individual members and growing daily. The W Group acts as a gateway for Temple members, single and married, to begin experiencing the richness of Jewish life through a variety of Temple-based educational, spiritual, and social programs. They pride themselves on thinking outside the "Jewish Box".

The W Group community establishes spiritual and social connections and builds relationships in a warm, fun, and welcoming environment. They are able to achieve this through innovative programming ideas and using relevant life issues to discuss and learn as they use traditional ideas as pretext for personal conversations.

The community has something to offer for everyone; whether your interest is social action projects, learning opportunities, sport and recreation leagues, or social activities, this is the place for you.¹¹

Within the framework of the W groups stated interest in developing spiritual and social connections between group members, Jeremiah (Jeremy) and Karen Kalan created Shabbat Schmooze in 2005. Beginning with only a few groups, the program has grown to over 100 participants. The goals of Shabbat Schmooze are:

To offer a reoccurring program for W Group members and others Jews in their 20s and 30s with minimal time commitment. This will encourage interactive participation in Jewish traditions, help facilitate making new friends, and help Stephen S. Wise Temple (Wise) and the W Group reach more young adults.

W Group members and non-members in their 20s and 30s are invited to join this exciting new program. People will be grouped based on a few matching criteria (singles vs. couples vs. parents vs. mixed groups, geographic preference, and age). This will help to attract young adults who are looking to make new friends and celebrate Jewish traditions, but who want a lighter commitment than is expected of joining a Havurah. Some groups may even turn into a Havurah.¹²

Each participant is assigned to a dinner group and the group remains consistent for the 9 month program. Each month, one of the group member's

¹¹ "The W Group (20s-30s)." Stephen S Wise Synagogue.

<http://wisela.org/temple/defaultcn.aspx?id=7056&showcontent=1>

¹² Kalan, Jeremiah. Shabbat Schmooze Proposal. Unpublished. 2005.

hosts a potluck dinner on a predetermined Shabbat. In addition to the traditional Shabbat prayers, group leaders are encouraged to bring in educational components provided by the rabbinic staff of the synagogue. Topics range from a discussion of the weekly parsha, to viewing a Jewish themed movie and discussing it.

In creating the program, Jeremy and Karen set out to design a program that would provide its participants a chance to get to know one another over time. Having previously attended “one shot” events, they both realized that the key to long lasting friendships and connections is repeated interactions among the same group of people. As Karen said, “We would go to these events in Chicago and we met really cool people, but at the end of the event it was just really weird to say to people ‘Hey, can we get together again, can I have your phone number?’”¹³ Jeremy echoed the sentiment saying that as a male he felt uncomfortable asking other males or females for their numbers if he had only met them once, but that after meeting them several times, the friendships naturally developed, and it no longer felt uncomfortable to suggest an outside gathering.¹⁴ Although looking for continual contact, Jeremy and Karen also recognized that young adults are loathe to make long term commitments, such as would be required in a chavurah that is designed to be a multi year commitment. Therefore they designed a program that met monthly but only for one year. Shabbat was the

¹³ Kalan, Karen. Interview. November 5, 2008.

¹⁴ Kalan, Jeremiah. Interview. November 5, 2008.

natural choice as it allowed “Jews to do Jewish together.”¹⁵ Also as a program connected with a Reform synagogue, Jeremy recognized that many reform Jews have a cultural connection with Friday night Shabbat celebrations.

Coed Jewish Sports

Coed Jewish Sports (CJS) is a secular sports program in Boston, Massachusetts. As its name indicates its goals are to be Coed, Jewish, and provide sports activities. According to its mission statement, CJS endeavors to:

Coed Jewish Sports provides its members with an opportunity to participate in athletic activities and meet new people in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere of healthy physical recreation. It is established for people that are interested in recreational activities and is focused on Building Jewish Community by virtue of bringing people together to have fun.¹⁶

Founded in 1999 by Don Goodman, CJS was created to fill a void in the community. As a secular Jew who spent his formative years in Israel, Don came to Boston and felt disconnected from the Jewish community. Looking for a social, rather than religious, connection to the community Don joined the Jewish Community Center (JCC) volleyball league. However, after playing in the JCC league for some time, he became unhappy with its competitiveness and decided to start his own league- with the expressed intent of building Jewish community through social programming. To that

¹⁵ Kalan, Jeremiah. Interview. November 5, 2008.

¹⁶ Goodman, Don. “About Us” Coed Jewish Sports. <http://coedjewishsports.com/index.htm>

effect CJS explicitly works to maintain a balance of men and women in their leagues, and designs their rules to keep the game as social and non competitive as possible (while still allowing for a winning and losing team). In promotional materials, CJS explicitly states that it is a recreational league for young adults in their 20's, 30's and 40's that is designed to provide, "athletic activities in a friendly social atmosphere."¹⁷

One way Don is able to establish and maintain a balance is by creating teams that have a diversity of gender, age, ability and marital status. He also works with the team captains to stress the importance of the social atmosphere. In fact, he instructs them that their dinner after the game is just as important as the game itself (and often lasts as long as the playing time).

Although the program is entirely secular, Don knows that by, "promoting and building Jewish community we are preventing assimilation."¹⁸ While *he* does not provide Jewish programming, he knows that many people have connected with friends through CJS and attended various synagogues, celebrations, and educational programs in the Boston Jewish community. He sees CJS as a gateway for those that want to be more involved religiously in the Jewish world.¹⁹

¹⁷ Goodman, Don. Coed Jewish Sports. <http://coedjewishsports.com>

¹⁸ Goodman, Don. Interview. December 16, 2008.

¹⁹ Goodman, Don. Interview. December 16, 2008.

Qualitative Interviews

How the Interviews Were Conducted

There were nine interviews conducted with eleven participants. Each interview was scheduled for 30-40 minutes. With the local (Shabbat Schmooze) participants, interviews were conducted in person and recorded. Due to distance, the Boston interviews (Coed Jewish Sports) were conducted over the phone. As with the in person interviews, these too were recorded. All of the participants knew and agreed to be recorded. While formal informed consent²⁰ documents were not collected, each participant was made aware that they were being recorded and could request to not to be recorded if they so chose. They were also informed of the purpose of the research, and how their interviews would be used.

There were four parts to the interview. First I asked the participant questions about their Jewish background and level of participation prior to joining the program. The second set of questions focused on their motivation for joining the program, their perception of it, and their reasons for continuing to be involved or discontinuing their involvement in the program. The third set of questions focused on how their life is different from before they joined the program- are they more involved in the wider Jewish community, has their core group of friends changed, did their participation lead to any major life

²⁰ Bailey, Carol A. A Guide to Qualitative Field Research, Second Edition. Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2007. pg 16-17.

changes (new job, life partner, etc). The fourth and final set of questions asked for background and demographic information

Using the Grounded Theory method of questioning, there was no one questions list for all the interviews. Rather each interview was shaped not only by the answers that were given during the interview, but also the answers and responses from the previous interviews.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a method of qualitative research in which the collected data is used to continually guide and refine the theories. Rather than starting with a hypothesis and setting out to prove it, as most sociological methods do, grounded theory begins with questions and sets out to find the answers.²¹ Thus they allow for the “systemic discovery of the theory from the data of social research.”²²

The main aspect of grounded theory is that each interview is semi structured²³ and dynamic. As the interviews are conducted field notes are taken and coded. Not only are follow up questions and relevant tangents encouraged, but each interview is expected to impact the following interviews. If a question led to an interesting finding, then the next interview will continue that thread to see if a trend (theory) is emerging. In this way, the researcher

²¹ Glaser, Barney and Anselm Strauss. The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. Aldine Publishing Company, New York, NY, 1967. pg 1.

²² Ibid. pg 3.

²³ Bailey, Carol A. A Guide to Qualitative Field Research, Second Edition. Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2007. pg 100

is not expected to stick directly to the question sheet, but is encouraged to allow the answers and information to guide the conversation.²⁴

One aspect of grounded theory that I decided not to follow is the suggestion to not tape the interviews.²⁵ The theory behind this is that the researcher will be making method notes throughout the interview and a full taping/transcription is not necessary. However, as I am not proficient in creating field notes, I wanted to have the taped conversation to refer back to if necessary.

Who I Interviewed

During a two month period at the end of 2008 I conducted nine interviews with eleven participants. When deciding who to interview, I looked for a diverse population from each group. I tried to balance my choices between men and women participants, single and coupled participants, and those who are still part of the group and those who chose not to continue.

For Shabbat Schmooze, I conducted five interviews with seven people (two of the interviews were with couples involved in the program). Included in those seven were the two founders; three members who are single, four members who joined as part of a couple, and one woman who originally joined a singles group but has since married and she and her husband are group leaders for one of the couples group (although they are both Jewish,

²⁴ Glaser, Barney and Anselm Strauss. The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. Aldine Publishing Company, New York, NY, 1967. pg 28.

²⁵ "Grounded Theory." Wikipedia. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grounded_theory_\(Glaser\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grounded_theory_(Glaser))

they did not meet through the program). There were four women and three men among the interviewees; three of the interviewees are in their twenties, and four in their thirties. Four of them are still members of Shabbat Schmooze, and three of them decided not to continue. One interviewee converted to Judaism and all seven have full time jobs. To find interviewees, I began with people I knew and after interviewing them, I asked them to refer me to others who may have a different perspective. All of the interviews were conducted in person and taped with the full knowledge and agreement of the participants

For Coed Jewish Sports I conducted four interviews. As with Shabbat Schmooze, I began with a few participants I knew and asked each of them for a referral to someone else. Due to distance, the interviews had to be conducted over the phone. Included in the four interviews was the creator of Coed Jewish Sports, two long time members and one newer member. Of the four, three are still actively involved, and one has left the program. Among the four interviewees there were two men and two women, two in their thirties and two in their forties. Among the group, one was married, one engaged (to a man she met through CJS) and two were single.

Quantitative Research

After conducting the eleven interviews, several trends began to emerge. However, I knew that I had only interacted with a small percentage of participants from each program. Also, as these were participants whom

were willing to give their time to be interviewed, it was possible that I was only hearing from a self selective group- one that possibly has been more positively affected by their participation. With this in mind, I set out to test these trends with a larger group. For each program I designed a survey that asked respondents to consider how Shabbat Schmooze and Coed Jewish Sports has affected and/or changed their lives. By asking questions aimed at their motivation for getting involved, and how their life is substantially different (attending more Jewish events, forming new friendships, etc) I was able to gauge how wide spread some of these trends were.

With the help of the Jon Brown, Jeremy and Karen Kalan in the Shabbat Schmooze program and Don Goodman in Coed Jewish Sports, an online survey was sent out to recent participants from each of the programs. A note from them, along with a note from me and the link to a Survey Monkey survey was sent out. The surveys were sent out in mid January and each group was given about a week to respond.

Jon Brown, the current coordinator for the Shabbat Schmooze program sent out the request to the 195 participants of Shabbat Schmooze. Of those 195, 42 responded, resulting in a 21% response rate.

Don Goodman sent out the Coed Jewish Sports request as part of his weekly email to approximately 800 addresses. He reports that 30% (240) of the list opened the email, and of those 25% (60) actually clicked through the message. Of the 60 who actually read the email sent by Don, 38 responded.

While this too is only a percentage of participants in either program, it provides a much broader picture of the effects of the programs.

Two factors that may account for the higher response rate from the Shabbat schmooze group is that I was more recently a participant in that group, and many people likely filled it out because they knew me and wanted to help me with my project. Having been away from Coed Jewish Sports for five years, less people know/remember me, and may have been less likely to take the time to complete the survey. Additionally, the Shabbat Schmooze request went out in a separate email asking for participation in the survey, while the Coed Jewish Sports request was part of the weekly newsletter sent out by Don Goodman. As evidenced by the 30% open rate, it seems that many people simply did not see the request at all, assuming his email contained only the usual info about upcoming games and events.

Findings

In conducting both the personal interviews and the survey questionnaires, many trends came to light. While Coed Jewish Sports and Shabbat Schmooze are two very different programs, with different goals and different guiding philosophies, they share many characteristics that make them successful. The following pages highlight some of the more distinct and important trends that developed in one or both groups. The findings are from a combination of both the personal interviews and the online survey. In general, the survey correlated with the personal responses, but there were a few places where differences were discovered.

The findings are broken down into three major categories; who these programs are reaching, what effects the programs are having on the participants' lives, and why these programs are successful. Each of these categories will be looked at closely.

Who Joins?

Finding out who is joining (and not joining) these programs is an important aspect to their success. While Coed Jewish Sports and Shabbat Schmooze attract slightly different groups of participants, both groups are targeting the same demographic. In this section we will examine who is being reached, touched and affected by both programs. We will also look at which

aspects of the program are most successful in attracting new participants and which ones may be turning people away.

Expanding Definition of Young Adult

As more people are choosing to get married and start families even later in life, the definition of a young adult is expanding. In 1950 the average age of marriage for men was 22.3 years, and for women it was 20.3 years. By 1990 those numbers had risen to 26.1 years for men and 23.9 years for women. By 2003 those numbers had risen even higher to 27.1 years for men and 25.3 years for women.²⁶ With no downward trend in sight, there are more and more older singles in our communities.

Although neither group is geared specifically towards singles, singles are attracted to both groups. When Coed Jewish Sports began it was marketed towards the 20's and 30's group, but in recent years it has expanded its marketing campaign to include 20's, 30's, and 40's. Shabbat Schmooze, on the other hand has remained a 20's and 30's group. The reasons for this are two fold; first it is a newer group and so the participants have not been in the group as long, and secondly it is affiliated with the W group at Stephen S Wise- which is exclusively 20's and 30's (there is another group that caters to the 40's and 50's age group- both singles and couples).

The result for Coed Jewish Sports is that there is a wider age disparity among its participants. For some this is OK, but for others this is a turn off.

²⁶ Stritof, Sheri and Bob. "Marriage." About.com.
<http://marriage.about.com/od/statistics/a/medianage.htm>

In fact, CJS cofounder and organizer Don Goodman spoke of the difficulty of attracting the younger age group, as he is no longer in that demographic himself. He spoke of looking for new ways to reach the 20 something's and interest them in joining CJS. For some of the older participants this has caused them to feel that it may not be the place for them anymore, and for some of its younger participants, finding out there are mostly 30-40 year olds in the group may be a disincentive to return.

For Coed Jewish Sports, Don spoke of purposely mixing the teams with respect to age and marital status, while Jeremy and Karen Kalan took the opposite approach with Shabbat Schmooze. When making the Shabbat groups, participants are split according to age and marital status, thus there are single 20-something groups, and coupled 20-something groups, and single 30-something groups, and coupled 30-something groups. By splitting the participants according to age and marital status, the organizers are trying to ensure more commonalities among group members.

How People Are Finding Out about the Programs?

The greatest program can be invented, but if no one knows about it, it will still fail. Therefore it is important to get the word out to the right demographic. As with many programs, the most successful marketing campaign for both programs has been word of mouth through friends and acquaintances. In the first year of Shabbat Schmooze Jeremy and Karen publicized the group among their social circle, and the synagogue marketed it

to the members of the W group. As word got out that people were enjoying themselves, the second year saw a doubling in the number of participants. While a 31% of respondents said they found out about the program from either the main synagogue or W group newsletter, 50% heard about the program through a friend or acquaintance.

When Coed Jewish Sports began almost ten years ago, word of mouth was also the marketing strategy most utilized by its creators. However, as the founders and many of their core members are getting older, the coveted 20 something's are getting harder and harder to reach by word of mouth. To help reach this demographic Don has begun to hire younger members in the program to attend Jewish functions not affiliated with CJS and promote their program. Rather than having them pass out flyers or give "sound bites," these members are encouraged to strike up conversations with other event attendees and bring up their own experience in Coed Jewish Sports. While this has helped CJS attract a few new members, it is still experimenting with ways to reach out to a community that they are no longer natural members of.

Another successful method Coed Jewish Sports is using in the internet (40% of respondents said they heard about CJS via the internet). With a simple Goggle search of "young adult, Jewish, Boston, and sports," Coed Jewish Sports is one of the top returns. Therefore when young adults move into the community and want to get involved with a Jewish sports league, will be able to easily access CJS. CJS has also gotten their program listed on sites geared towards young adults like Gesher City

(<http://www.geshercity.org/web/boston>). Shabbat Schmooze, on the other hand, is fairly difficult to find by doing a Google search. Once on the Stephen S. Wise website, the W group is easy to locate under “Community” and then “Shabbat Schmooze” is listed under their “highlights.” However in order to find the page the potential participant would need to first know to go onto Stephen S Wise’s website.

Who is Attracted to these Programs?

Although many programs are designed with the goal of reaching the young, unaffiliated, and unconnected Jews, the reality is that some young Jews don’t want to be reached. Those who have no desire to have any connection with the Jewish community are not going to be attracted by these programs. They will join the secular sports leagues and would have no interest in a group that gets together to celebrate a Jewish holiday (Shabbat or any other). Therefore, the ones that are being reached are the ones who have at least a moderate connection with the Jewish community. In fact, over 85% of respondents to the Shabbat Schmooze survey responded that being involved with the Jewish community was either “very important (45.2%)” or “somewhat important (40.5%)” to them in the year prior to joining the group. Additionally, almost half (45.2%) of the respondents surveyed indicated that they were actively looking for a program that would allow them to meet other young Jews. In other words, most, if not all, of the participants in both groups

took some step on their own to find a group of like minded young professional Jews.

Contrary to the trend in the general Jewish community the vast majority of those surveyed (84% for Shabbat Schmooze and 77% for Coed Jewish Sports) responded that their significant other is Jewish. Of those who are single, over 90% indicated that marrying someone Jewish is important to them. Although most don't credit the programs with changing their minds, this is clearly a departure from the general community. Among young American Jews, the intermarriage rate hovers around 50%,²⁷ but for those who choose to participate in these types of Jewish programming, Jewish marriage is apparently an important factor.

Another trait common among survey respondents was their Jewish background growing up. Over 80% reported celebrating Jewish holidays in the home and becoming a Bat/Bat Mitzvah. Over 60% responded that they attended religious school through 7th grade and went to a Jewish summer camp. Over 40% of participants continued their religious schooling past 7th grade and participated in Jewish youth groups. These results further indicate that the participants in these programs already had a strong connection to Judaism before choosing to participate.

One major difference between Coed Jewish Sports and Shabbat Schmooze is their attractiveness for couples and singles. Whereas Shabbat Schmooze is more successful with couples, Coed Jewish Sports attracts

²⁷ Phillips, Bruce. Re-examining Intermarriage: Trends Textures and Strategies. The Susan and David Wilstein Institute of Jewish Policy Studies and the American Jewish Committee. 1997. pg 4.

more singles. While half of CJS's players are coupled or married, over 85% of its participants started playing when they were single. Once coupled many members decide to continue playing, especially if they met their partner through CJS and/or many of their friends are participants, but others decide that they no longer "need" Coed Jewish Sports.

In Shabbat Schmooze's first year, one of the Shabbat groups was a mixed group of couples and singles. However, after the first dinner it became obvious that couples and singles, even of the same age, were in different places in their lives. Therefore the groups were reconfigured to have strictly single and strictly couples groups. While the majority of the couples groups have been successful, some of the singles groups have fallen apart mid year when people decided that there were no interesting dating partners. For this reason, couples tend to find Shabbat Schmooze more appealing.

What Gets People to Actually Join?

Its one thing to find out an interesting program exists, another to look into it, and yet another to actually take the effort to sign up and participate. So what aspects of the program are tipping the scales and making it worth the effort to sign up and participate in these programs?

By far the most appealing factor in both Coed Jewish Sports and Shabbat Schmooze is that it is an opportunity to meet new people (either in search of friends or potential dating partners). In trying to meet new friends, participants realized that a reoccurring program with the same small group of

people was more likely to lead to new friendships/relationship. Unlike one shot social events, or attending synagogue or community wide events, these programs provided its members with a small group of people they could get to know over a longer time period. As one interviewee said, "A program like this gives you the opportunity to make the community a little smaller." Another responded saying, "If I walk into an event knowing no one, I will leave knowing no one, but if I walk in knowing ten people, I will leave knowing twenty," and yet another added, "I was new to town and wanted to meet active people in the Jewish community." By providing members with a small group of people that they can get to know better over several encounters, both Shabbat Schmooze and Coed Jewish Sports are inspiring young professional adults to make time in their busy schedules to join and participate.

Another aspect of both Coed Jewish Sports and Shabbat Schmooze is that they are relatively short term commitments. As the Kalan's discovered with their young adult chavurah, young adults are not yet in a place to make multi-year commitments to programs, as their lives are in constant flux. Therefore a six to nine month commitment is a more attractive and reasonable commitment to make. Although many participants in both programs have been multiyear members, each year (or season) they are given the opportunity to gracefully bow out.

Of course the activity itself is also a draw. As two (CJS) survey participants responded, "I had just had a relationship end and a lot of my

friends had left Boston during that time. So I wanted to meet new people and get involved in the young Jewish community. And as a former high-school baseball player, I thought it would be fun to play in a recreational softball league, albeit one that wasn't very competitive, " and, "I had recently ended a long term relationship and was looking for new friends. I liked volleyball and decided that it would be a good way to meet other young people like myself, the fact that it was Jewish was a bonus!" Several of the interviewees also responded that they came into Coed Jewish Sports through a combination of loving sports and wanting to meet other young professional Jews. One Shabbat Schmooze interviewee described her desire to get more involved religiously, but having trouble finding a program that was suitable for her and her husband. She was very excited to come across the Shabbat Schmooze program as it perfectly fit her search for a group that allowed her and her husband to "do Jewish with other Jews."

What Gets People to Stay or Leave?

The number one reason people stay involved in either group is friendships. Continued participation of course fuels the cycle of friendships and connections being made- as it allows people an even longer time frame to get to know the other participants. Of the Shabbat Schmooze respondents who are still involved with the programs, the vast majority have socialized with members from the group, whereas the majority of people who are no longer active responded that they did not connect with their group and therefore

decided not to continue participating. Other common reason for continuing participation is that it is a lower pressure environment than bar scene/singles events. As the groups are smaller and the connections more frequent, respondents felt more comfortable.

While Coed Jewish Sports is designed for all young professionals, single or not, the majority of its new participants are single. As participants enter into relationships, some choose to continue their association and others choose to drop out. Those who meet their partner through CJS are of course more likely to continue than those who meet their partner elsewhere. Conversely, many singles felt that the small group setting of the Shabbat program didn't allow them to meet *enough* new people. This response was especially common among women as there were more single women than men who signed up. Another drawback was what one participant dubbed "the weird factor." She explained that the program seemed to attract a disproportionate amount of strange characters, and that "the weird factor seemed to be bigger than it should have been." Another response that was common among those who did not continue their participation was that they felt they had not made a connection with the other members in their group.

Another factor that has caused several people to drop out of the groups is having a child. This is more common in Shabbat Schmooze as it has a larger number of young couples participating. However, since these groups are marketed and created for childless couples or singles, this is not a

drawback. Additionally, if these families want to meet other young Jewish families, the synagogues are better able to meet their needs.

Effects of Joining

Each action and decision people make, affect their lives. Some effects are minimal, while others are life altering. As with anything, participation in Shabbat Schmooze and Coed Jewish Sports have affected all those who participated. However for some, the effect was simply an activity to do for a period of time, but for others, participation in these groups led to a whole new group of friends and social opportunities, and/or meeting a life long partner. This section will look at the different ways these programs have affected the lives of those whom are participating or have participated in these programs. While some of the changes may be short term effects, many of them will have a long term effect on the lives of Shabbat Schmooze and Coed Jewish Sports participants.

New Friends

The stated goal of both programs is to help foster friendships among Jewish young adults. One way to measure if this is happening, it to ask participants if they have socialized with members outside of the organized programming. When asked, the vast majority of participants in both programs

indicated that they had indeed done something social with other participants in the past six months.²⁸

Over 60% of respondents in both surveys indicated that they had gone out to dinner with members of their programs, and approximately half responded that they had attended a party or had other participants over to their home. Both programs are also successfully encouraging further participation in Jewish life. Over a quarter of respondents from Shabbat Schmooze have celebrated other Jewish holidays (28%) and gone to another W group event (28%) with their new friends, while another 24% have attend Shabbat services with them. Similarly, 38% of Coed Jewish Sports respondents have celebrated Jewish holidays and 35% have celebrated Shabbat. Another 27% have gone to temple with other members of CJS.

While the number of people doing Jewish things outside the program is smaller than those simply socializing, for many, just socializing with Jewish friends is an act of connection to the Jewish community. As one Shabbat Schmooze participant said "Judaism to me isn't knowing the prayers. It is more cultural. I tend to share similar values and beliefs and life experiences as my Jewish friends. None of us go to temple or service together, but we are Jewish, it is a common ground, a presumed belief of similar values."

²⁸ Because a "None of the above" choice was not listed, it is unclear if those who skipped this question did so because they have not socialized with other members of the program, or for another reasons. When presenting numbers, the percentages are taken from those who responded to the question. Thus for Shabbat Schmooze there were 29 (out of 42) who responded to this questions, and 29 (out of 38) for Coed Jewish Sports.

Percentage of Jewish Friends

Another sign of deepening connection to the Jewish community is the percentage of Jewish friends one has. With more Jewish friends, one has more Jewish social capital, interest, and investment in the Jewish world. Therefore a sign that these programs are succeeding in their goal of connecting young professional Jews to the Jewish community is that the percentage of Jewish friends rose after joining the program.

Across the board, in all categories, the percentage of Jewish friends that the participants report having has increased. While this amazing statistic can be the result of many factors,²⁹ one factor undoubtedly is their participation in Coed Jewish Sports or Shabbat Schmooze. Interestingly, when asked if they have more, slightly more, same, slightly fewer, or fewer Jewish friends, the plurality answered “Same as before” (57% for Shabbat Schmooze and 42% for Coed Jewish Sports). But out of the other 40-60% of respondents only **one** person responded that they had slightly fewer Jewish friends. All of the other marked “slightly more” or “more.” Additionally, when asked what percentage of their friends growing up were Jewish and what percentage of their current friends are Jewish, both programs showed a marked increase in the percentage of Jewish friends. And the rise was even greater for those who had been involved in the programs for longer. One interviewee who is a

²⁹ Since many respondents reported that involvement in the Jewish community is important to them and slightly over half were members of other Jewish groups at the time of joining either CJS or Shabbat Schmooze, some of the rise in Jewish friends should be contributed to outside factors. As one respondent commented, “I am not sure that CJS made a difference. I think this is an active choice and you make before doing CJS.”

longtime member of Coed Jewish Sports remarked that growing up he had no more than 20% Jewish friends, and now that number has risen to about 80%. Of the Shabbat Schmooze participants who joined the program three or more years ago, 53% of them had mostly non Jewish friends growing up. Now only 29% still have mostly non Jewish friends, and 53% now have over 75% Jewish friends

Interestingly, when asked if they thought their involvement in either Shabbat Schmooze or Coed Jewish Sports affected the *value* they placed on having Jewish friends, most participants said it didn't change the importance, but it did affect the reality of being able to establish and nurture Jewish connections. As one respondents said, "It [was] already important to me to have Jewish friends which is why I did the program. This program doesn't make it more important." This was echoed by several others who comments that while it was always desirable to have Jewish friends, it was just not always possible.

Connections to the Jewish Community

Involvement in Jewish programs lead to having more Jewish friends, and that often leads to becoming more involved in more Jewish activities. More involvement and more friends lead to more Jewish social capital. In asking participants to consider their Jewish involvement prior to joining either Shabbat Schmooze or Coed Jewish Sports, and currently, the majority of respondents reported no change in their behavior. However, of all those who

responded that they had been a change in any of the behaviors (attendance at other Jewish events, celebrations of Jewish holidays, likelihood of synagogue membership and participation, membership in other Jewish organizations, donations to Jewish causes, following Jewish news stories, etc), **more than 90%**, (and in some case 100%) reported an increase in the level of activity

While these activities may only be reaching those who already have an predisposition to be involved in the Jewish community, clearly these programs are aiding these young professionals in getting more involved in the greater Jewish community. Also, without these kinds of programs, eager young professional Jews may not find an outlet for Jewish connection, and may lose their desire to be connected at all.

Although most participants do not feel that Shabbat Schmooze or Coed Jewish Sports directly led to higher involvement in the Jewish community many did see both formal and informal connections created as a result of participation. Several participants remarked that they had turned to other program participants for advice and suggestions when considering a career change, and one participant in Coed Jewish Sports felt that the skills he learned while playing volleyball, namely team work, listening, and communication skills, helped him succeed professionally. Additionally, 14% of CJS respondents indicated that their relationship status changed as a result of their participation in the program.

Jewishly, many respondents also noted changes they have experienced as a result of participation. Several members of Shabbat Schmooze have joined Stephen S. Wise Temple, and one member commented that she has a, “much richer Jewish identity and a lot more friends.” One CJS interviewee commented that she is more likely to go to the Jewish events since she knows she will “probably run into other CJS’ers that I know.” Another attributes his decision to join a synagogue to the fact that he wanted to celebrate more Jewish holidays- which he attributed to the increase of Jewish friends. A survey respondent commented that as he became more involved in Coed Jewish Sports he noticed that some of his CJS friends were getting more involved in other Jewish organizations that he belonged to.

General Effect

With the exception of the few participants of Shabbat Schmooze that did not connect with their group and felt that their participation did not affect any part of their lives, most respondents felt that participation in the programs was a positive experience. Several people commented about how participation in Shabbat Schmooze and Coed Jewish Sports affected them.

About Coed Jewish Sports:

“Thanks to CJS I had an easy transition into my new life up here [in Boston] and will remain in contact with people from the league. Most importantly, I met my B’shirt, which was a nice bonus to my involvement in the league.”

“CJS very much helped me get out of a shell and be able to go in[to] a group and talk to people. CJS very much helped me mature.”

“Most of my friends have come from CJS and that has impacted most aspects of my life. I have done job networking through people I met in CJS, have a place to spend holidays when I can't see my family, [and have met] other people”

“Socially, personally - it definitely compared to the old college days.”

About Shabbat Schmooze:

“I was already engaged and this gave my fiancé and I a chance to meet other couples together--that they were/are Jewish is a bonus--even more importantly, we wanted to meet Jewish Young Professional couples and this program actually gave us couples in the same situation as us and three years later, the group is all married and still gets together at least once a month.”

“After a week of stressful work I was looking for an escape from the pressure. I don't consider myself particularly religious, but spiritual. I made an effort not to discuss work at all, it is the Shabbat. It was an opportunity to make friends, focus on my spirituality and go home at the end of the night at peace.”

These comments reflect the effects these programs can have on participants.

While many of the effects are not tangible or measurable, they are real and meaningful.

What Makes These Programs Successful?

Success can be measured in several ways. The measurement I am using is how well each program is able to live up to its stated goals. The goals of Coed Jewish Sports are to, “Provide all members of the adult community with an opportunity to participate in athletic activities and meet new people in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere of healthy physical

recreation,” and, “Build Jewish Community by virtue of bringing people together.”³⁰ And the goals of Shabbat Schmooze are to, “encourage interactive participation in Jewish traditions, help facilitate making new friends, and help Stephen S. Wise Temple (Wise) and the W Group reach more young adults.”³¹ Based on the last section, it would seem that both groups are successful in fulfilling their goals. Therefore this section will examine which aspects of the program seem to lead each of the programs to success.

People are Making Friends

As evidenced in the last section, people are indeed making friends through both Coed Jewish Sports and Shabbat Schmooze. This can be seen by the fact that many people have attended outside events with program members, and that the percentage of Jewish friends has gone up (with longer participation equaling a higher rise in Jewish friends). This can also be seen in the comments that were written. Many people commented that while they may or may not still be participating in the program, the friendships they created while participating have continued. In fact, 14% of respondents to the CJS survey indicated that their relationship status has changed as a *direct result* of their participation in the program. And Don, the organizer of the

³⁰ Goodman, Don. “About Us” Coed Jewish Sports. <http://coedjewishsports.com/index.htm>

³¹ “The W Group (20s-30s).” Stephen S Wise Synagogue.
<http://wisela.org/temple/defaultcn.aspx?id=7056&showcontent=1>

program, reports that 4-5 weddings a year take place between Coed Jewish Sports participants.³²

When people join a program hoping to make friends, they are much more likely to do so than if they are not looking for that. When asked, 96% of all respondents (to both surveys) felt that the opportunity to make Jewish friends was an appealing aspect of the program³³ (with 70% indicating that the opportunity was “very appealing”). Even if the participants had no intention of doing Jewish activities with their new friends, the idea of having more Jewish friends is an appealing aspect that both of these programs are successful in providing. As one respondent remarked “I am not very religious, but always enjoy sharing part of my family faith/traditions with like individuals.”

There are many reasons people find themselves more able to make friends through Shabbat Schmooze and Coed Jewish Sports than other events. Following are several reasons why so many lasting friendships and relationships have been established as a result of participation in either Shabbat Schmooze or Coed Jewish Sports.

Recurring Group of People

The most important factors that allow people are able to make friends and connections through these programs is that they provide a setting where the participants feel more comfortable and at ease. Rather than feeling as if

³² Goodman, Don. Interview. December 16, 2008.

³³ The other 4% marked it as “not a consideration.” 0% of the respondents thought that the opportunity to make Jewish friends was a drawback to participation.

you have to make friends with someone by the end of the night, participants see one another on a regular basis for an extended period of time. As one CJS participant said, “[the] atmosphere is conducive to meeting people from a comfort[able] perspective.” This allows for the friendship/relationship to develop at a more natural pace and centered around shared interests and experiences. Another survey respondent said, “It [Shabbat Schmooze] is really centered around friendship first and allows you to feel like your Judaism still matters.”

When asked, 50% of the respondents from each survey indicated that the opportunity to be involved in a “reoccurring activity with the same people” was “very appealing” in deciding to join, with another 40% indicating the option was “appealing.”³⁴ Of those who did not initially mark that the opportunity to interact with the same people on a reoccurring basis was an appealing factor in deciding whether or not to join the program, many remarked later in the survey that it ended up being an important factor in allowing friendships to develop and deepen over time.

Smaller Groups Provide a Chance to Interact More Intimately

Another factor that allowed friendships and relationships to flourish was the small group setting. For Shabbat Schmooze the small group setting

³⁴ The other 10% marked “not a consideration.” It was not a drawback for any respondent from either survey.

was the main form of interaction. Although once a year all of the groups meet for one large Shabbat dinner at Stephen S. Wise Temple, the majority of the program takes place in peoples homes with only the members of their group. While this means that many of the participants may never meet one another, it does allow for very intimate dinners and opportunities to really bond with those in the participant's group. As many of the participants remarked, this makes the dinner much more relaxed and warmer in nature.

Coed Jewish Sports on the other hand, has the small group feeling by placing each participant on a team which remains their core group for the season, but each game is either played against one other team (softball) or several other teams (volleyball). And after the game all the participants are encouraged to go out to dinner together. This allows for both small group intimacy and larger group interaction.

While the majority of participants seemed happy to have a small group to interact with, for many singles, the Shabbat groups felt too restrictive after the first few months. Many of them would have liked more opportunities to meet the other participants from the program. When several of the participants expressed their desire to the Kalans, they tried to meet the request by suggesting that people from all the groups meet up at a specific bar after dinner. However, when this was tried, not enough people showed up to make it a successful addition to the program, so it was discontinued after a few months.

Less Pressure on “Meeting” Someone

The last major factor that promotes friendship development is that there is less pressure to “meet” someone when attending either Shabbat Schmooze or Coed Jewish Sports. Since both programs take place over a period of several months, participants don’t feel that they have to connect with someone the first time they meet them. Although 89% of players were single when they joined CJS, many of them remarked on the low pressure atmosphere CJS provided. As one respondent said, “There isn’t the same pressure or expectations with CJS as there is at the bar scene and/or singles events.” Another wrote, “[you get to] meet people on a casual level, no ‘performance’ expectations, casual contact repeated over time.” And a third wrote, “People focus on the sports and just socializing, the romantic stuff is saved for after the event not during it.” These comments highlight participants’ recognition of the absence of pressure to meet someone immediately. Although many people have and continue to meet life partners through these programs, it is not the focus of the events, and so it allows for a more comfortable, casual atmosphere (as well as making space for those who are not looking for a partner).

How it is Different from Bar Scene

Although over 60% of respondents (66% for CJS and 62% for Shabbat Schmooze) indicated that they had attended bar scene/singles events in the year prior to joining either Shabbat Schmooze or Coed Jewish Sports, the

majority of them did not enjoy those events (58% for CJS and 72% for Shabbat Schmooze). While 64% of Coed Jewish Sports participants would not go back to the events, only 31% of Shabbat Schmooze would no longer attend those kinds of events.³⁵ But whether or not they have intentions of going back, many of them recognized the difference between the two kinds of programming. One CJS participant went so far as to comment, “General sobriety on a Sunday afternoon leads to better, more meaningful conversations. Also, seeing your teammates in sweaty CJS shirts only makes me feel way hotter than I actually am when out of uniform.” And another remarked, “CJS encouraged people to talk and I liked the idea that Don assigned you to teams rather than you had to sign-up with a team. I also liked that he encouraged you to go out to dinner afterwards with the group.” A Shabbat Schmooze participant expressed her view as, “[Shabbat Schmooze is] more about making new friends and seeing the same people over and over again and establishing friendships, rather than seeing people once in a crowded bar (and maybe never seeing them again).” These comments show that the participants are generally more satisfied with programs like Shabbat Schmooze and Coed Jewish Sports, and that these programs are actually

³⁵ This discrepancy can likely be attributed to the fact that more of the Shabbat Schmooze participants are still single. As these events are geared towards the single crowd, once people are coupled or married they are much less likely to continue to attend them. However, those who are single, even if they don’t enjoy the events, may continue to go in hopes of meeting someone. As one single respondent commented, “I will go to them again because I hope to meet someone Jewish to date, but I do not enjoy meat markets or finding men to date at bars.” Another echoed that sentiment with, “As much as I don’t like them I have found limited ways to meet people in LA.”

more successful in creating the opportunity for someone to establish a meaningful relationship (romantic or otherwise) that any one time event.

Organic nature

Another aspect that both programs share is the organic nature of its creation. In both cases the creators of the programs saw a need in the community and created something to fill it. Rather than creating the program and trying to fit it into the established community structure, both Don and the Kalan's worked to fill an existing void. Therefore, both programs were relevant and needed when they were created.

While this has allowed the programs to be successful, it can also be a hindrance to future growth. As Don is experiencing with Coed Jewish Sports, those for whom he created the program are still involved, thus moving the average age higher. This keeps his participation and retention numbers high, but it can also make it more difficult to attract new younger members.

Retention

Often, one sign of a successful program is that people enjoy the program enough to continue participating. For Coed Jewish Sports this is definitely the case. It consistently attracts repeat attendees. Over 66% of survey respondents began participating more than five years ago, of that

group 56% are still playing (63% of all respondents are still involved).³⁶

When asked why people either are or are not still playing, many of those who are not playing have moved away or have kids (and less free time). Only three of the respondents replied that they did not enjoy the league and left dissatisfied.

Because so many of Coed Jewish Sports' participants are repeat players, the league actually counts on them to help those who are new. Rather than having to go over the rules of the league and orient all the new players to the specifics of the league, Don counts on the returning players to do that for him. It is also a way for the veteran players to introduce themselves to the new players.³⁷

The issue of retention is very different for Shabbat Schmooze. The program was designed to be a one year program after which people would leave with a new group of Jewish friends. The creators envisioned that participants might do a second year if they enjoyed the program or didn't find anyone they specifically clicked with in the first session, but long term retention was never the goal. In fact, when it became apparent that participants were signing up for a third year, a decision was made that first time applicants would get priority. This statement is even listed in the FAQ section, thus implying that continual participation is not the goal. However, Shabbat Schmooze has enrolled 364 people over its four year course, yet

³⁶ Because the survey request was sent out as part of Don's weekly email, it is very likely that those who no longer play in his leagues were less likely to open the email at all. Thus the percentage of those still playing is probably slightly lower than the actual number indicates.

³⁷ Goodman, Don. Interview. December 16, 2008.

there are only 201 distinct email addresses. Thus each person is participating for an average of 1.8 years

While retention is not the goal, continued friendships are. So the fact that so many participants are socializing outside of the program, means that while they are not being retained by the program, they are retaining their friendships. In fact at least one group has officially dropped its connection with Shabbat Schmooze but continue to have monthly Shabbat dinners in one another's homes. They, of course, also socialize frequently throughout the month as well. For the organizers of Shabbat Schmooze, this is considered to be the best sign that their program is achieving its goals.

Cost

Another aspect that wasn't discussed in any of the interviews or surveys is that of cost. Many young professionals are just becoming financially secure, so any program that caters to them will likely need to be low to no cost. If there is a cost, it should be reasonable and the participants should be able to see why the cost is being charged and feel that they are "getting their money's worth." Both Shabbat Schmooze and Coed Jewish Sports fit that model. To join Shabbat Schmooze there is no cost other than agreeing to host one dinner and bringing something to each of the others (all dinners are designed to be potluck). There is a cost associated with being a member of Stephen S Wise Temple, but membership is not required to join the program. Additionally membership is drastically reduced to all members

under 40 years old, with beginning membership being as low as \$100 a year per person.

There is a cost to participate in Coed Jewish Sports, but each season is only \$95-\$105, with a \$20 discount for full time students. This fee includes eleven to twelve weeks of play (in a rented facility) and a T-shirt uniform; there are no hired staff as the founders and team captains all donate their time. While some of Coed Jewish Sports' other activities, such as the ski or golf weekends are higher priced, others such as the bowling events or social parties are generally much lower priced. Also their fees are comparable to other sports leagues in the area.³⁸

³⁸ For comparison see <http://www.bssc.com/index.cfm>. Although each season is slightly cheaper, they have an annual membership fee.

Conclusions

Overall, both Shabbat Schmooze and Coed Jewish Sports have enjoyed many successes. Each program has engaged young professional Jews, exposed them to the larger Jewish community, and given them access to greater Jewish social capital. In this section I will not only look at some changes that can be made to improve the exiting programs, but more importantly I will examine how these programs could be expanded to reach more people, both in the communities in which they exist, and in smaller communities around the nation. Therefore I will look at ways to raise the awareness, success, and viability of these and other programs like them.

Taking Advantage of New Technology

Young professional Jews have grown up in the computer age. As such, many of them rely on the internet for more than just news and online shopping. Many turn to the net to find out about activities, connect with others their age, and even to find dating partners. While both Shabbat Schmooze and Coed Jewish Sports have websites, more can be done to utilize all the internet can provide. By establishing a networking page on a site such as Facebook, Shabbat Schmooze and Coed Jewish Sports would be giving its participants another way to interact with one another. It could also serve as a place to publicize other Jewish events that members are planning to attend. This would also not only help members to get more

connected into the Jewish community, but it could also serve to connect members more closely to one another.

Another use of technology would be to have a standardized central site where all events for young professional Jews (or any other demographic) could be listed. While some cities do have sites such as these, many people in those cities may not know about it. And even if they know about it, it doesn't mean that if they move they can find out about events in their new city. If it became standard for one organization to have such a listing (such as Jewish Federation or the local Hillel) then it would slowly become known that you could find activities in any specific area by checking THAT site. An example of this is Craigslist.³⁹ Although it may not be universally known, many people know if they want to buy or sell something a good place to check is their local Craigslist. If a site developed nationally that Jewish professionals could either check or refer young adults too, more programs would be accessible to more people.

Singles versus Couples

Shabbat Schmooze is better set up for couples and Coed Jewish Sports is better serving singles. What can each group learn from one another? Many participants in the singles groups thought their group was too small, especially after a few people decided to drop out partway through the year. Maybe larger groups or combining two smaller groups partway through

³⁹ Buckmaster, Jim. Craigslist. <http://www.craigslist.org/about/sites>

(as they get smaller) would allow for greater diversity and participation in the singles groups. Conversely, while many people continue playing Coed Jewish Sports once they are in a serious relationship, some chose to drop out if they feel that they no longer “need” CJS (although this was less of the case than in the Shabbat Schmooze program).

Although neither program is billed as a singles event, over 90% of those who were single when they joined the program thought that the “opportunity to meet Jewish dating partners” was either “very appealing,” or “somewhat appealing.” This indicates that many participants are viewing these programs as single events, regardless of how it is marketed. Those who see Shabbat Schmooze as a singles event are very disappointed once they decide that there is no one “dateable” in their group. Here, Coed Jewish Sports has an advantage. Because players are put on teams, but come into constant contact with other teams, they are able to provide the small group feel while still allowing participants from different teams to meet and interact.

While Coed Jewish Sports may be more attractive to singles, Shabbat Schmooze is better serving couples. Since couples are not looking for dating partners, they are less likely to drop out when no potential mates are found. Also couples are less likely to allow another social engagement (ie a date) to take precedent over the planned Shabbat dinners. Lastly, with it being such a small group, without consistent interaction with the other groups, the couple groups have better gender equality.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ The singles groups tend to be predominately female.

Because singles and couples are in very different stages of their life, it can be difficult to reach both of them with the same program. Either being sure to provide outlets for both of them, or to have separate events will allow for each group to feel the most comfortable.

Should there be an Age Cutoff?

Does a just-out-of-college 22 year old want to interact socially with a 42 year old married engineer? This is the situation being faced by programs such as Coed Jewish Sports that have been in existence for several years, and whose originally young participants are now entering their late 30's and 40's. Because the group has consistently been successful and fun, participants want to continue to play, but is that harming their ability to attract new younger members?

As Don mentioned, now that he is no longer in the target age range, it is harder for him to attract people who are in that demographic. But even if he is able to entice them to come for the first few weeks of play, are they going to want to stay when their entire team is significantly older than they are? This leads to the question of an age cutoff.

Who qualifies as a young adult? As evidenced earlier, the definition of young adult seems to have expanded. But should there be an upper limit? Do people move out of the category only when they marry and have children? And what about young married couples? Or young couples with children? Each of these groups are in very different places in their lives- in addition to

their age differences. So do you alienate more people by setting an age limit, or by creating an atmosphere where there are many people in many different stages of life?

One option, as Shabbat Schmooze tries to do, is to keep the groups divided by age *and* marital status. While this works when each group is its own individual unit, in a larger activity, maybe teams or leagues could be divided along those lines, while still allowing for large group interaction. Alternatively, the teams could be evenly balanced, so that there are even numbers of younger and older players (as Don consciously does)- thereby avoiding a situation where everyone on the team is either older or younger than one member.

Some programs also lend themselves to better mixing. An active program, like sports, where people are engaged in a common activity may be easier for age mixing than a dinner based program where participants are expected to have longer, more involved dinner conversations with one another.

What Kinds of Programs Might Work in Smaller Communities?

Every community is different; therefore a different type of program or programs will work in each community. Just as in life, there is no **one** magic program that will work for every Jewish community. No program is going to suddenly attract all the young unaffiliated Jews in the area, and no program is

going to ensure that all our young people marry other Jews. However, by closely looking at the target population, and figuring out what they most need and want, success can be reached in most communities.

For a program to be successful, it seems there are several criteria that should be met:

1. There needs to be enough of a critical mass to have programming. However, some programs, like the Shabbat group can be run with as little as 8 people, while other groups are more successful with larger groups.

2. There needs to be a reliable and widespread method of alerting the target population that this new program exists and is being created specifically for them.

3. There needs to be a central focus for the program- such as Shabbat celebrations or sports. Even if the unstated goal is “meeting someone,” it should not be the main focus of the event (such as singles or bar scene events).

4. It needs fit into the busy lifestyles of the young professional demographic.

5. It should be limited in duration and reasonably priced

6. It should allow for small group intimacy while also allowing for larger group interaction

While a program that meets all these criteria may still fail and others may find other ways to succeed, these guidelines will help a community begin

to design a program, or programs that will attract and interest the young professional population. However, the most important aspect of any program created for the young professional population is that it should provide its participants with a chance to have a little fun. Many young professionals work hard and long hours, and want to spend their free time enjoying themselves and making friends.

Appendix A:

Shabbat Schmooze Survey

Shabbat Schmooze

Background Information

When did you first join Shabbat Schmooze?

- ☐ Last year
- ☐ Two years ago
- ☐ Three years ago

How did you find out about Shabbat Schmooze? (check all that apply)

- ☐ W group newsletter
- ☐ General email announcement
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ Stephen S Wise temple newsletter
- ☐ At another W group event
- ☐ From a friend
- ☐ Word of mouth (not someone you knew well)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Were you actively looking for this type of program? (check all that apply)

- ☐ No, but it sounded interesting
- ☐ Yes, I was actively looking to get involved in Stephern S Wise
- ☐ Yes, I was actively looking to meet other young Jews
- ☐ Yes, I was actively looking get involved in a Shabbat program

What about Shabbat Schmooze was appealing to you?

	Very Appealing	Somewhat Appealing	Not a Consideration	Somewhat Not Appealing	Not Appealing
Recurring activity with the same people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An opportunity to learn more about Judaism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An opportunity to make Jewish friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An opportunity to meet new people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Something to do on Friday nights	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Something Jewish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An opportunity to celebrate Shabbat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An opportunity to meet Jewish dating partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)					

Shabbat Schmooze

What was the most important reason for joining?

The Program

In the past six months have you done any of the following with people from your Shabbat Schmooze group? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Have people over
- ☐ Attend an Israel rally
- ☐ Attend a Jewish social action event
- ☐ Go out to dinner
- ☐ Attend a party
- ☐ See a Jewish movie
- ☐ Go to temple
- ☐ Celebrate Shabbat (other than the planned Shabbats)
- ☐ Attend another W group event
- ☐ Go to a secular movie or play (not specifically Jewish)
- ☐ Attend lecture or other Jewish educational program
- ☐ Celebrate Jewish holidays
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Are you still involved with Shabbat Schmooze?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What is the main reason for your answer?

Points of Comparison

Shabbat Schmooze

How important was being involved in the Jewish community important to you in the year before you joined Shabbat Schmooze?

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat not important
- ☐ Not important

Please explain

In the year prior to joining Shabbat Schmooze, did you attend any Jewish bar scene or singles events?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Points of Comparison

Did you enjoy the bar scene/singles events?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Would you go to them again?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Why or Why not?

How is Shabbat Schmooze different from the bar scene and/or singles events you attended?

Points of Comparison

Thinking about your Jewish life at the time you joined Shabbat Schmooze, were you a member, or involved in, any other Jewish groups?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Shabbat Schmooze

Points of Comparison

Which groups?

Do you still belong to or are you active in any of these groups?

☐ No

☐ Yes

If yes, which ones?

Points of Comparison

As compared to before joining Shabbat Schmooze, do you/are you:

	Many/Much More	Slightly More	Same as Before	Slightly Fewer/Less	Fewer/Less	N/A
Attend Jewish social events outside of the program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attend Jewish religious events/services outside of the program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Belong to Jewish organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Give money to Jewish causes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have Jewish friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Celebrate Jewish holidays	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Likely to be active in a synagogue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Likely to join a synagogue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Follow "Jewish" news stories closely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you think your participation in the program has impacted any other aspect of your life? (career, housing, dating life etc)

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please explain

Shabbat Schmooze

Thinking of your closest friends growing up, or the people you saw most often socially, what percentage was Jewish?

- ☐ Less than 25%
- ☐ 25-50%
- ☐ 50-75%
- ☐ Over 75%

Thinking of your closest friends currently, or the people you see most often socially, what percentage is Jewish?

- ☐ Less than 25%
- ☐ 25-50%
- ☐ 50-75%
- ☐ Over 75%

As a result of your participation in Shabbat Schmooze, has it become more important for you to have Jewish friends?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please explain your answer

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Demographic Information

Thinking about how you were raised, were you raised as: (check all that apply)

- ☐ Reform
- ☐ Conservative
- ☐ Orthodox
- ☐ Reconstructionist
- ☐ Renewal
- ☐ Non Religious/Secular
- ☐ Non Jewish

Other (please specify)

Shabbat Schmooze

Were you involved in high school or college Jewish events? (check all that apply)

- ☐ NFTY
- ☐ USY
- ☐ NCSY
- ☐ BBYO
- ☐ Hillel
- ☐ Keshet
- ☐ None of the Above
- ☐ Other (please specify)

How do you think of yourself now? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Reform
- ☐ Conservative
- ☐ Orthodox
- ☐ Reconstructionist
- ☐ Renewal
- ☐ Non Religious/Secular
- ☐ Non Jewish
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Shabbat Schmooze

Jewish education/involvement growing up (check all that apply)

- ☐ Jewish Preschool
- ☐ Jewish Day School (elementary)
- ☐ Jewish Day School (middle school)
- ☐ Jewish Day School (high school)
- ☐ Hebrew School/Religious School (through 7th grade)
- ☐ Hebrew School/Religious School (after 7th grade)
- ☐ Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- ☐ Confirmation
- ☐ Jewish celebrations in the home
- ☐ Jewish Camp
- ☐ Israel Trip with family
- ☐ Organized youth Israel trip
- ☐ Birthright Israel trip
- ☐ Jewish Youth Groups
- ☐ No Jewish education/involvement growing up

Other (please specify)

Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Age

- ☐ 22-25
- ☐ 26-30
- ☐ 30-34
- ☐ 35-39
- ☐ 40+

Profession

Shabbat Schmooze

Marital/relationship status

- ☐ Single/Never married
- ☐ In a committed relationship
- ☐ Married/Partnered
- ☐ Divorced/Widowed

Demographic Information

Is marrying someone Jewish important to you?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you think you would have answered the same way before joining Shabbat Schmooze?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Demographic Information

Is your Significant Other:

- ☐ Born Jewish
- ☐ Converted to Judaism
- ☐ In the process of converting to Judaism
- ☐ Not Jewish

Appendix B:

Coed Jewish Sports Survey

Background Information

When did you first join Coed Jewish Sports?

- ☐ 0-2 years ago
☐ 2-5 years ago
☐ 5-10 years ago
☐ 10+ years ago

How did you find out about Coed Jewish Sports? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Internet
☐ General email announcement
☐ Jewish Advocate
☐ Word of mouth (not someone you knew well)
☐ From a friend
☐ Other (please specify)

Were you actively looking for this type of program? (check all that apply)

- ☐ No, but it sounded interesting
☐ Yes, I was actively looking to get involved with a Jewish program
☐ Yes, I was actively looking to get involved with a sports program

What about CJS was appealing to you?

	Very Appealing	Somewhat Appealing	Not a Consideration	Somewhat Not Appealing	Not Appealing
An opportunity to meet new people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Something to do on Sundays	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An opportunity to meet Jewish dating partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An opportunity to play volleyball/softball	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recurring activity with the same people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An opportunity to make Jewish friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Something Jewish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)					
<input type="text"/>					

What was the most important reason for joining?

The Program

Did you expect there to be any Jewish educational content in CJS?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes

The Program

Were you disappointed to find out there wasn't?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes

The Program

**In the past six months have you done any of the following with people from CJS?
(Check all that apply)**

- ☐ Gone on a date with a fellow CJS member
☐ Celebrate Shabbat
☐ Attend lecture or other Jewish educational program
☐ Go to temple
☐ Attend an Israel rally
☐ Have people over
☐ Celebrate Jewish holidays
☐ Attend a Jewish social action event
☐ Attend a party
☐ Go out to dinner
☐ Go to a secular movie or play (not specifically Jewish)
☐ See a Jewish movie
☐ Other (please specify)

Are you still involved with CJS?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

What is the main reason for your answer?

Points of Comparison

How important was being involved in the Jewish community to you in the year before you joined Coed Jewish Sports?

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat not important
- ☐ Not important

Please explain

In the year prior to joining CJS, did you attend any Jewish bar scene or singles events?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Points of Comparison

Did you enjoy the bar scene/singles events?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Would you go to them again?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Why or Why not?

How is CJS different from the bar scene and/or singles events you attended?

Points of Comparison

Thinking about your Jewish life at the time you joined CJS, were you a member, or involved in, any other Jewish groups?

☐ No

☐ Yes

Points of Comparison

Which groups?

Do you still belong to or are you active in any of these groups?

☐ No

☐ Yes

If yes, which ones?

Points of Comparison

As compared to before joining CJS, do you/are you:

	Many/Much More	Slightly More	Same as Before	Slightly Fewer/Less	Fewer/Less	N/A
Attend Jewish religious events/services outside of the program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Celebrate Jewish holidays	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Likely to be active in a synagogue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Belong to Jewish organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have Jewish friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Likely to join a synagogue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attend Jewish social events outside of the program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Date Jewish people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Follow "Jewish" news stories closely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Give money to Jewish causes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you think your participation in the program has impacted any other aspect of your life? (career, housing, dating life etc)

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please explain

Thinking of your closest friends growing up, or the people you saw most often socially, what percentage was Jewish?

☐ Less than 25%

☐ 25-50%

☐ 50-75%

☐ Over 75%

Thinking of your closest friends currently, or the people you see most often socially, what percentage is Jewish?

☐ Less than 25%

☐ 25-50%

☐ 50-75%

☐ Over 75%

As a result of your participation in CJS, has it become more important for you to have Jewish friends?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please explain your answer

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Demographic Information

Thinking about how you were raised, were you raised as: (check all that apply)

- ☐ Reform
- ☐ Conservative
- ☐ Orthodox
- ☐ Reconstructionist
- ☐ Renewal
- ☐ Non Religious/Secular
- ☐ Non Jewish

Other (please specify)

Were you involved in high school or college Jewish events? (check all that apply)

- ☐ NFTY
- ☐ USY
- ☐ NCSY
- ☐ BBYO
- ☐ Hillel
- ☐ Kesher
- ☐ None of the Above
- ☐ Other (please specify)

How do you think of yourself now? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Reform
- ☐ Conservative
- ☐ Orthodox
- ☐ Reconstructionist
- ☐ Renewal
- ☐ Non Religious/Secular
- ☐ Non Jewish
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Jewish education/involvement growing up (check all that apply)

- ☐ Jewish Preschool
- ☐ Jewish Day School (elementary)
- ☐ Jewish Day School (middle school)
- ☐ Jewish Day School (high school)
- ☐ Hebrew School/Religious School (through 7th grade)
- ☐ Hebrew School/Religious School (after 7th grade)
- ☐ Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- ☐ Confirmation
- ☐ Jewish celebrations in the home
- ☐ Jewish Camp
- ☐ Israel Trip with family
- ☐ Organized youth Israel trip
- ☐ Birthright Israel trip
- ☐ Jewish Youth Groups
- ☐ No Jewish education/involvement growing up

Other (please specify)

Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Age

- ☐ 22-25
- ☐ 26-29
- ☐ 30-34
- ☐ 35-39
- ☐ 40+

Profession

What was your marital/relationship status prior to joining CJS?

- ☐ Single/Never married
- ☐ In a committed relationship
- ☐ Married/Partnered
- ☐ Divorced/Widowed

Current Marital/relationship status

- ☐ Single/Never married
- ☐ In a committed relationship
- ☐ Married/Partnered
- ☐ Divorced/Widowed

Demographic Information**Is marrying someone Jewish important to you?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you think you would have answered the same way before joining CJS?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Demographic Information**Did your relationship status change as a result of CJS?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Other (please specify)

Is your Significant Other:

- ☐ Born Jewish
- ☐ Converted to Judaism
- ☐ In the process of converting to Judaism
- ☐ Not Jewish

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