

**HEBREW UNION COLLEGE – JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION  
California School**

**/DEFINING JEWISH IN THE JEWISH FEDERATION/**

**A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
of Master of Arts in Jewish Communal Service**

**by**

**Lonee Michelle Frailich & Sarah Rene' Sirota**

**A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
double degrees Master of Arts in Jewish Communal Service and Master of  
Arts Social Work**

**by**

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**HEBREW UNION COLLEGE – JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION**

**Los Angeles School**

**The thesis of Lonee Michelle Frailich and Sarah Rene' Sirota is approved  
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Our study attempts to define all that is Jewish in the Jewish Federation. In doing so we hope to provide a guide for all future "Wacky Wednesday" students in the Jewish Communal Service program who too might ask the same questions that began our study.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to reflect upon what appears to be a fairly universal question with reference to Jewish philanthropic organizations in today's society. The question became evident as it was posed on a weekly basis during a course entitled "Introduction to Jewish Communal Institutions", where students explored a variety of institutions around the Los Angeles Metropolitan area. The class often concerned itself with seeking out the exact components in each of these organizations that makes them "Jewish". Therefore, the questions commonly asked were, "What does the "J" stand for in your organization?" or "What makes your work Jewish?"

Since the Jewish Federation serves as the umbrella organization for the majority of the philanthropic institutions visited, this study will focus itself solely upon the over-arching "Jewish Federation" of Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Jewish Federation consists of four locations; each serving its respective geographic regions: the City/Central site, South Bay, Valley Alliance, and Metro-West. Each location acts as the umbrella to a variety of service agencies. However, the City site, formally known as the



Goldsmith Center, is considered the central managing headquarters for the entire Los Angeles Metropolitan area.

The Jewish Federation's assistance to the community centers itself in a variety of areas including: rescue, resettlement, mental health, education, financial aid, family, youth and senior, and vocational services. In order to run and sustain service programs and world Jewry concerns, the Jewish Federation is the second largest fundraising organization in Los Angeles ("Who Knew", 2). The funds are distributed through a planning and allocations process managed by the Central location. According to an interviewee, individual service agencies, Jewish communities in Israel, the Former Soviet Union, and around the world receive monetary provisions on a regular basis that are reviewed at least once a year.

Recognizing the integral Jewish values within such a support based institution, these writers felt that the "Jewish" in the Jewish Federation would be obvious to all who interact with and work within the Jewish Federation. However, as future Jewish communal service professionals, not currently working in the Federation system, these writers were left searching for the "Jewish" in the Jewish Federation. This study seeks to:

1. Define the Jewish values, philosophies, and practices.
2. Examine whether it is necessary to infuse Judaic symbols and content within the work environment.

3. Determine if the Jewish Federation's Jewish component is appropriate or oppressive.
4. Discover staff and lay leaders personal views and experiences regarding the Jewish aspects of their work.
5. Compare the Los Angeles Jewish Federation with other Federations in varying geographic regions in the United States to make recommendations.

The writers of this thesis hope to provide a review of the topic and offer relevant recommendations based upon the examination of a body of literature and personal experiences of people involved with the Jewish Federation.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A large body of literature exists with reference to the history of Jewish social service agencies and the Jewish Federation. Thus far the publications have not included the explicit examination or definition of the "Jewish" components within the Jewish Federation. Alternatively, the Jewish Communities Centers have undertaken an evaluative process involving both its programmatic and Judaic content and have published these findings in the Janowski Report. Around the 1950s, the Jewish Community Centers began to focus on the methodologies that expressed Jewish components within the Center's programming.

The Jewish component within a Jewish social service agency has been affected throughout the agency's history through its mode of funding. Private and public funding for social services each plays a crucial role in the definition of Judaism within these agencies in this country. Therefore, in order to best understand the framework of the Jewish Federation, this literature review will explore not only the Jewish Federation as it developed in relationship to American history but will also explore a variety of literature sources outside to assist in defining the concept of "Jewish."

Currently, the Los Angeles Federation considers itself the central representative voice and address for the more than 520,000 Jews in the greater Los Angeles area ([www.Jewishla.org](http://www.Jewishla.org)). The Los Angeles Jewish community today grew out of a much smaller nucleus of Jews, as did its social service agencies. In fact there is evidence that the early Jewish agencies came to be when there was still under 1,000 Jews in the area.

Maimonides, a Jewish philosopher from the Medieval period, stated in his law code, Laws of Gifts to the Poor 9:1, "Every city resided in by Jews is required to establish a charity fund with at least two people to administer it, the Talmud further explains on this *kuppah* or the chest." Maintaining this Jewish value, it comes as no surprise that the Hebrew Benevolent Society, the pre-cursor to Jewish Family Services, was established in 1854, just 13 years after the arrival of the first Jews to Los Angeles. Other social service agencies were quick to follow, such as the formation of Associated Charities in 1888, whose primary mission was to assist immigrant Jews. Only a few years later, in 1911, the Federation of Jewish Charities elected its first board (Goldstein and Gurvis, 50).

Jewish social service agencies of America have a broad background, dating beyond 1854 and 1911. Yet, emerging out of this variety of organizations came the Jewish Federation to aid in developing a structure or at least an order amongst the various agencies. The Jewish Federation,

as the community's central body maintains several key functions: to serve and unite the various social service agencies and to care for Jewish in need. As Miller eloquently states, "History combined with the American experience produced the unique instrument known as the Jewish Federation" (7). This greater history and the roots of Jews caring for its own community can be found in Biblical accounts and in Rabbinic literature. All of which offers insights regarding Jewish responsibility for caring for the earth and those who inhabit it, first for one's immediate family, then in the local area, and finally around the world.

In the Middle Ages, one finds Jewish communities operating in almost a completely autonomous manner. Although Jews paid taxes to the public authorities, the Jewish community was left to police its own religious observance, judicial matters, collection of taxes, charity, etc. During this time period, one may note the formation of the *kuppah*, the central fund. This fund was designed to help regulate such matters as the allocation of money, food, and clothing. From this period through the European Enlightenment, there existed an organizing body, usually referred to as the *kehilla*. All Jewish community members participated in this movement, as the *kehilla* was a non-voluntary system. It regulated the religious practices, such as laws for butchering, the collection of money for charity, and could even assist in controlling market prices to enable further

as the community's central body maintains several key functions: to serve and unite the various social service agencies and to care for Jewish in need. As Miller eloquently states, "History combined with the American experience produced the unique instrument known as the Jewish Federation" (7). This greater history and the roots of Jews caring for its own community can be found in Biblical accounts and in Rabbinic literature. All of which offers insights regarding Jewish responsibility for caring for the earth and those who inhabit it, first for one's immediate family, then in the local area, and finally around the world.

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distribution of monetary resources. In the end, the *kehilla* served as the primary authority, with responsibility for overseeing Jewish religious observation rights and overall community welfare.

The *kehilla* differs greatly from the Jewish social service agencies established in the United States, due to its non-voluntary status. There were consequences if one chose not to participate in the giving of charity or to adhere to the Jewish religious practices outlined by the *kehilla*. Such consequences could be to the extreme of expulsion from the community or by the entire community avoiding the individual, not speaking to him, or working with him in his trade, it would be as if one did not exist.

However, in America, the participation in the Jewish Federation is strictly voluntary. The Jewish social service agencies were a part of the general sectarian agencies that developed during the waves of immigration to the United States, especially with the third migration wave that encompasses the period from 1880 to 1920 (Goldstein and Gurvis, 35). Originally the origins of these sectarian groups came out of a reaction to new immigrants from a somewhat hostile community. The majority group did not positively receive the Jews, during this period of the *kehillot*. Sectarian agencies, Jewish and non-Jewish, acted almost as a shield to protect and serve their own. In Church and State in Social Welfare, Coughlin

discusses the need for such specialized group welfare and relief by  
sectarian agencies:

In a pluralistic society a minority group feels the need to maintain as a bulwark against the value system of the majority group its own institutions with their value orientation. A majority group, however, does not need such a bulwark to assure the preservation of its way of life, since its values reflected in the patterns and policies of the larger society. At one time American society was practically identical with Protestant society. Social institutions reflected Protestant values, and in the field of welfare, agency, staffs, and boards of directors were frequently also lay trustees of Protestant churches. Nonsectarian social work was therefore bound to reflect Protestant values, and it was easy for Protestants to adjust to secularization in social welfare, as they had done in education. Welfare agencies, public and private, reflected the prevailing religious culture, Protestantism, and were at the same time channels of Christian benevolence through which the Protestant churches influenced society.

Catholics and Jews, however, both minority groups, felt the need for their own value system within the context of the Protestant system (24).

Jews required a different pattern for social welfare. They needed a support group with shared Jewish values. The overwhelming American model existed primarily in a Protestant context. Interestingly, the synagogues were the first welcoming institutions for the Jewish poor and for Jewish settlers. But as the immigrant population continued to grow, with increased urbanization and industrialization, independent Jewish sectarian organizations were created. Ironically, both the synagogue world and United States government policies would consider these



organizations secular. Community Chests, Jewish Benevolent Societies, Jewish Federations, and other groups operated outside the constraints of any one sect of Judaism or "ruling" body of Jewish religious practice. Therefore, the charge directed to these agencies was to care for one's own "kind" while maintaining the culture and value of Judaism in a primarily Protestant country. Unlike the *kehilla* movement, these social service agencies did not monitor religious practices.

In the early 1900's the main function of these Jewish social service agencies was providing financial aid. The exponential growth in immigrant population proved difficult for any one group to meet all of these financial needs. The wave of immigrants between 1900 and 1924 was estimated to include 1.25 million Jews (Englander, 156). With such a large group of immigrants, the support systems created by synagogues began to fail in meeting the needs of the individual. However, those social service agencies, with a reputation of high standards for care, were able to grow in proportionate numbers with the need. This immense growth created an environment of competition for funding. From this situation, the Jewish Federation model began to emerge, serving as a central resource for providing allocations and offering coordination among these agencies. Also, during World War One, groups such as the Joint Distribution Committee and other Jewish social service agencies began to

send money overseas in response to Jews suffering as a result of anti-Semitism (Englander, 160).

The Jewish Community Centers' document, the Janowski Report, comments on this time as well. It tells that from the time of the Civil War until the great immigration waves of Eastern European Jews, the Jewish Community Center movement focused on education and recreation, maintaining Jewish ideas and values as a part of the program's focus (22). However, the great need for immigrant aid and settlement required the agency to shift its focus. Along with this internal shift within the organization was also a clear outward shift by the immigrant population's second generation away from religious Judaism. This generation became more assimilated into greater America. While maintaining Jewish culture in the home, they chose to affiliate on a smaller basis with religious institutions. Judaism as a religion was competing with such forces, institutions, and ideas as large waves of immigration, Socialism, Zionism, labor unions, etc. Thus, programs surrounding "Americanization" thrived in the JCCs and in other social service agencies. In fact the Janowski Report states, "A mood of negation, of disavowal of Jewish traditional values, began to permeate the centers (23).

The Great Depression of the 1930's proved to be a driving force in the structure and purpose of Jewish social service agencies. For example,

in the JCC Association there was a move for their services to include the greater population, not just the Jews. Therefore, their programs turned away from education to social action and reconstruction (Janowski Report, 13). Also, during the time of the Great Depression, the majority of the Jews in Los Angeles had begun to turn to public agencies for assistance. The Jewish communal agencies became unable to meet the needs of their society during the Depression. Perhaps marking a stark break in moving away from a church based / religious based social welfare assistance. Institutions, such as the Jewish Social Service Bureau, continued to help financially those Jews who were indigent, but also started to move towards assisting families interpersonally through offering education programs and counseling (Goldstein and Gurvis, 51). The Great Depression saw the push for a shift towards the government taking primary responsibility for relief efforts, rather than sectarian social service agencies.

The wave of immigration began to cease following World War One, and essentially came to a halt with the recently created United States Immigration Quotas of 1921 and 1924. The late 20's were marked with a "religious depression" impacting all traditions, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish. It seems as though a religious depression preceded the financial depression. The early 1930's saw all of the various cultures and religions deeply effected by the Depression. Following the Depression, Jewish

social positions began to be strengthened and government assistance in public funding continued to increase. Despite these economic constraints and the tendency towards assimilation, Jews continued to give what they could, as they witnessed a rise in anti-Semitism overseas accompanied by increasing anti-Jewish sentiment within the United States. Also, one might note that donating to a "secular" Jewish agency was a mark of one's tie to Jewish ethnicity and culture; rather, than a link to one's piety as implied by synagogue affiliation.

Alongside of the impacts of financial giving, another factor in the history of these Jewish communal agencies was the professionalization of social workers. During the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Jews were graduating from social work programs, directing their energies to saving other Jews. This phenomenon brought forth a tension for some of these professionals. Their Jewish identity encompassed the need to care for one's fellow Jew, while social work and its accompanying schools of thought taught a more secular humanism. According to Goldstein and Gurvis, "the emphasis on self-determination of the individual was opposed to an emphasis on strengthening Jewish distinctiveness" (44).

This area of tension would be repeated in a different format later in history. However, with regard to this time frame, Goldstein and Gurvis refer to an article from Morris and Freund, seeking to answer the question

about what makes Jewish social work agencies "Jewish". Goldstein and Gurvis summarized their views on this topic as follows:

One view was that the future of Jews in America lay in successful assimilation into American life and institutions. To the extent that Jewish agencies aid this process, they were justified. Otherwise, only synagogues should be retained as parallel institutions to churches. A less extreme view was that Jews should accept American culture and values but should also maintain links to their Jewish identity. Jewish institutions then were to be seen as formalized methods of linking the individual to their Jewish identity. A Jew more focused on group survival urged that all Jewish organizational efforts be geared towards strengthening Jewish identity, but in a broader context (44).

Gerald Bubis addressed this tension as well, noting the historic conflict between Jewish ideas and the social work values, especially with reference to the educational preparation of professionals for the Jewish community service. Bubis added that the tension shifts in leaning from one side to the other depending on the relationship the Jewish community may be experiencing with the non-Jewish society ("Challenge", 331).

Following the 1930's and the rise of Hitler, another kind of conflicting tension would develop in the Jewish community. This was a period in which Jews focused their efforts on assimilating into the general culture, by achieving rights to attend university. Jews sought to be accepted as part of the middle class. With the smaller number of immigrants and Jews entering middle class status came a shrinking

percentage of Jews relying on financial assistance from Jewish agencies. However, this was also a time of growth in the realm of Jewish ethnicity. During this period, the JCCs were challenged by the Jewish Welfare Board to infuse more Jewish content into their programming, instead of operating as a neighborhood non-sectarian center. The Janowski Report reflects this approach when it stated that,

The centers were readily willing to accept this recommendation partly due to historical events that were occurring at the time. The tragedy of the Holocaust, the Russian purges of Jews, the Stalin Hitler pact, the rise of Soviet anti-Semitism, and the rejection of Jewish refugees awoke Jews in America to the necessity of self help when it came to Jewish survival (16).

Understanding this context, Charles Zibell in a 1954 article entitled, "Strengthening Jewish Commitment", explained the rationale for why people chose to be involved in Jewish agencies. He related that the board members, volunteers, and professionals needed the Jewish agencies as expressions for their cultural tradition and impulses (199). His article charged Jewish agencies with the responsibility for building a "Jewish tomorrow"; therefore, identifying this as the "Jewish" component in an agency. Quoting Miller, Zibell concludes, "They are social institutions of the Jewish community; they express our historic religious and cultural values" (7).

During the 1950's and 1960's professionals with "Jewish" social work degrees were drawing upon their skills in both the secular and Jewish arenas. Jewish agencies at this time had two objectives: to provide Jewish clients access to opportunities and resources of American life, and to maintain their commitment to social service (G. Bubis "Challenge", 332).

By the 1950s and 60s Jews had become acculturated to American society. They no longer had to reject their Jewish identity to fit into society. They were full-fledged citizens who had very little of their heritage left. They began to search for meaning in their Jewish identity, which spurred their involvement in Jewish education and culture (Janowski Report, 17).

It was not just in the JCCs that a call for greater Jewish programming and a return to integrating "Jewish" began occurring throughout Jewish institutions and agencies. All Jewish social agencies felt this pull to enrich Jewish education and commitment. This also appeared in the education of Jewish professionals. This time period is certainly associated with inspiring the creation of Jewish communal service schools. These new professionals would receive Judaic training, along with the more traditional social work and public administration preparation. The Jewish professionals would work within and beyond the realm of social work providing an understanding of non-profits, as well as,

serving as Jewish role models and teachers for the agencies that they were being asked to serve.

Another reason for the development of these schools can be attributed to the emergence of Israel as a part of the Jewish Federation's fundraising agenda. The birth and growth of the Jewish State proved that Jews as a people could survive and even prevail. The impact of the "Six Day War" victory in particular lifted the spirits of the American Jewry and stirred feelings to strengthen and be engaged with one's heritage.

According to the Janowski Report, the creation of the State of Israel prompted American Jews to appreciate their rich history and embrace it rather than ignore it (17). Jewish aid overseas continued to be the focus of the monetary contributions to the Jewish Federation.

A desire or interest in one's heritage brought Jewish culture out within the privacy of one's home. Jews no longer had to reject their religious identity to fit into the larger culture. For the most part, Jews had already achieved at least middle class social status. As individuals, they flourished in such areas as business, banking, musical theatre, and the broader entertainment industry. While Jewish religious practices and observance levels suffered, Jews started to search for new meaning regarding their Jewish identity. This search led to greater involvement in "Jewish education and culture" (Janowski Report, 17). One should note



that the building of beautiful and large synagogues was as popular during this time as it had been in 1937. Synagogues were seen as not necessarily representative of Jewish religious observance but rather exemplified a return to one's ethnic roots.

This "return" could also be identified in the seemingly "secular" social service agency of the JCC. In conjunction with the Jewish Welfare Board's challenge to the JCC for a new programmatic and ideological mind-set for the organization, the Jewish Welfare Board provided a list of "crucial needs for American Jewry". The Janowski Report explicates on these recommendations on pages 21-27. The authors of this thesis will summarize this important list of "Jewish" needs below:

1. The strengthening of Jewish identity will positively affect Jewish survival. This includes providing definitions of Jewish identity, enhancing Jewish knowledge, and allowing such awareness to permeate the Jewish Community Centers activities.
2. Working to strengthen the Jewish family in assisting in the improvement of family relationships. This could be done through the provision of experiences for the whole family.
3. The JCCs were charged to refine its role in regards to detecting and working with personal and social difficulties in efforts to reduce them.
4. Another Jewish need was to increase a sense of community. The JCC could play a role in lessening fragmentation. It could participate in Jewish communal social planning and

with the Jewish Federation. Community building could happen through partnerships with other Jewish social service agencies, synagogues, and other organizations.

5. Jews needed further development in public affairs programs in regards to both Jewish and general societies' problems. The JCCs could educate its members on issues and provide programs for acting on these issues.
6. Another suggestion was to use the arts more effectively, providing for Jewish enrichment.
7. The JWB charged the JCCs with providing sound policies and practices in regards to open membership, Shabbat programs, social action issues, and how the Centers relate to the general community.
8. Jews needed a better understanding of how American Jews relate to the Jews in Israel. American Jews should know how to assist Israel in its development.
9. The final charge was to develop effective and new leadership for the JCCs and the Jewish community on whole.

Such an extensive list reflected a return to "Jewish peoplehood" as a culture outside of religion. The JCC would act on these recommendations throughout the next several decades.

Another factor in the 1950's ethnic revival was the impact of the Holocaust, and the minimal role played by American Jewry in assisting their brethren. Jewish support for Israel and for other Jewish communities worldwide has been linked to this reality. Jews were able to shift their focus outside of the United States because of three factors: immigration

into this country declined, thereby shifting priorities; the middle class status of the majority of American Jews reduced local demands; and the corresponding increase in public funding allowed Jewish donations to the Jewish Federation to take on new responsibilities. However, this literature review would be incomplete if it did not mention that after World War Two there was an overall decline in voluntary fundraising. The American society had faced a round of inflation and rising costs that lessened the purchasing power of families and individuals (Goldstein and Gurvis, 24). Thus, by the 1960's the spirit of looking inward and awaking Jewish ethnicity was vibrant and accompanied by caring for Jews both in America and abroad. However, overall monetary donations and funding for these projects declined in relationship to the decline in purchasing power.

The Federal government's expanding domestic role in public funding occurred between 1930-1960. During the years of 1963 to 1965, Congress added 170 new grant programs, essentially doubling all of those projects already in existence (Goldstein and Gurvis, 12). When an agency began to receive money from Federal sources a dual allegiance developed creating a pervasive tension within the organization. When the Jewish Federation and its agencies accepted public funding, they also accepted a new reliance on a funding stream that would obligate them to alter their program parameters. The federal government's increased role in meeting

public welfare needs caused all of the private social service agencies to redefine their organizations' roles in relationship to the government (Goldstein and Gurvis, 18). Also, the Jewish social service agencies' government sources of support continued to increase during this time, leading to a corresponding decreased allotment from the Jewish Federation. "By and large they have moved from a position of primary responsibility for welfare concerns, to one of secondary importance; from independence to increasing dependence", summarized Goldstein and Gurvis (18).

Federal funding not only created a dilemma for the Jewish social service agencies involving government support and the Jewish Federation dollars, but it also opened the door for a shift in funding priorities by the Jewish Federation. With government taking greater responsibility for public welfare, the Jewish Federation could allot money to Israel and to increasing Jewish education and identity programs. However, a primary worry of the Jewish Federation was the loss of influence they might have on these agencies, as less dollars invested from the Jewish Federations alleviated the sense of reliance by these agencies on the communal system. The Jewish Federations altered their role in order to maintain some sense of serving as a clearing-house and central authority. Many Jewish Federations began to provide a variety of incentives such as: central

purchasing, central services such as printing, laundry, and insurance; in addition to providing space for several social service agencies to be housed together, fiscal services such as book-keeping and payroll, grant writing services, public relations services, advocacy in the political process, and cooperative local planning (Goldstein and Gurvis, 85).

Government funding changed the entire scheme of how the social agencies served the public, including the shift of sectarian agencies to a non-sectarian status. The populations served by the Jewish Federations' agencies expanded beyond the bounds of caring for one's own, to caring for an entire community. Goldstein and Gurvis mark this dual relationship with a concern for the issue of the Jewish identity of an agency. They argued that such identity would depend primarily upon whether the organization received Jewish communal financial support or was in some other way connected to Jewish life (49). When an agency moves beyond serving Jews and receives decreasing support from the Jewish Federation, the question of identifying an agency as "Jewish" or "non-Jewish" appears to be of significant concern.

The status of whether a Jew or non-Jew is being served by an agency may play a role in this attempt to define the "Jewish" component of an organization. Perhaps this is why in 1971 Charles Zibbell began to ponder whether Jewish social service agencies were truly responsible for

not only the care of Jews but for Judaism itself. He answered his question by challenging these agencies: "They must enhance Jewish identity and strengthen Jewish commitment" (200). Fred Berl, in the 1970's, recognized that the divide between social work as a clinical profession and Jewish social services was no longer distinct or separate.

I see the "Jewish" aspect as a valuable dynamic for our clinical processes which add to our understanding of the varied elements of social reality and of human experience which our clients bring to us; and I see the clinical as adding to Jewish strength in ways in which it has served the Jewish community all along, non-specific contributions as I call them, and in new ways which are meant to be more specific. This premise of a mutually supportive quality of the clinical and the Jewish has been basic for my training efforts (1).

Following Berl's outlining of the cross benefits of "Jewish" materials in a clinical setting, he suggested that a professional staff member must be instructed in this during his/her training. The article offered new directions that a social service agency must take to include "Jewish" themes. As with the purpose of this thesis, Berl asked that the agencies look at the existing services they were providing through the lens of Jewish assessment. One could do this by questioning what the service offers the Jewish community as a whole, looking beyond the Jewish individual or family being clinically served (3). Following such an assessment, the agency should add specific Jewish components (3). His

third recommendation was to form a bridging alliance using clinical methods between social service community agencies and Jewish education. Such a bridge would allow for a much greater involvement of significant population segments with reference to helping these elements in shaping their Jewish identity (3).

And finally, Berl commented on the most significant change, which was in the development of staff awareness in order to be able to identify the Jewish central elements within the social service operations. This he concluded, "...will carry the assurance of the worker understanding his clients as Jews and seeing their experience as a part of Jewish life and society" (3). Of course his final statement could only apply to the "Jewish" component of the clientele an agency served. Nimmer, in her thesis, validates Berl's theory of a "bridge". She stated, "Clients are motivated to come to Jewish agency because of a feeling of comfort found in a discussion of one's problems with a fellow Jew who offers Jewish opinions" (32). Educated Jewish professionals in the realm of both clinical and Judaica knowledge seemed to be "the bridging factor" for this level of comfort and assistance for Jewish clientele.

Also, Bernard Reisman identified three Jewish areas for Jewish professionals. Professionals require, he suggested, Jewish knowledge, skill, and values. Knowledge consists of an awareness of Judaica, Jewish

literature, religious components, understanding the various organizations in the Jewish community, and an awareness of language (98). The area of skills would include an understanding of tradition as how it relates to current themes, being able to create a Jewish ambiance, and keeping a positive Jewish-self orientation, while accepting others orientation (99). And finally, his criteria incorporated being aware of the Jewish values associated with continuity: the idea of the people of Israel, *k'lal Israel*, and being a role model for Jewish identification. These were his suggestions in a discussion about educating individuals in regards to becoming Jewish Professionals.

The JCC Association was primarily identified with a need for Jewish communal professionals. This body had less interest in the clinical aspects of social services. The JCCs were providing educational programs, physical activities, and space for community involvement. Such institutions that are responsible for programmatic services would also require educated Jewish professionals. In this regard Reisman's article is relevant in discussing how social work professionals and the training of Jewish communal professionals was essential. He concluded that services to the elderly and camp and youth programs required a professional staff knowledgeable and sensitive to Jewish concerns and traditions, while also being responsive to the needs of the clients (5).



Referring to those utilizing Jewish social service agencies, Reisman noted, "These are clients that seek services specifically under the Jewish auspices because they want to receive the service in a setting with out Jews".

Therefore, the Jewish Community Centers have been reviewing their Jewish component both in regards to its programs and in reference to staffing. In 1984, Chazan and Charendoff would offer specific criteria to enhance JCC ideology. They devised two standards. The first required accountability to the Jewish past, and the second was to provide a foundation for moving the work of the JCC away from "what is a Jew" to "what a Jew ought to be" (22). Programmatically "Our Jewish Renaissance" a piece written by Dubin, described the JCC as a learning center for contemporary Jewish issues and their relevance to Jewish texts in regards to a method for approaching individual Jewish development through the Centers (35). Dubin also placed responsibility on the JCCs staff. He stated the JCCs must infuse "accountability" as a measure of their programs' success. Since "Jewish" is supposed to be an integral component of the JCCs programs, than the professional staff should be held accountable for this component in staff evaluation and supervision (36). Dubin added that financial constraints were not an excuse for the leaving out of any Jewish component. A budget must match up with the organization's belief system. He went so far as to say, "... the lack of

money is no excuse for not hiring a staff person to serve in a Jewish capacity" (37).

Also in regards to the JCC was the lay leader participation. Its one thing for a staff to be Judaicly knowledgeable and trained, and its another if the lay leaders are also informed. The Janowski Report would recommend the development of a new form of lay leadership from the JCCs. According to Kaplan and Ritz, who in 1989 reviewed the role of lay leadership; the JCC had met this challenge. These authors also recognized that established leaders were giving readily but did not use the services provided by such agencies. These donors were lay leaders that respected and gave authority to staff, who was charged with running the operations of these agencies. However, the relationship in most Jewish social service agencies would change to that of a partnership with the staff members. The social service agencies could provide a place for the lay leadership to participate. The JCCs served as one such environment. According to their study conducted in 1989, "JCC board members showed that 93% belonged to a congregation, 60% had visited Israel at least once, 89% contributed to the community campaign, and over 33% participated in adult education" (Kaplan and Ritz lecture). Lay leadership was active, Jewishly identified, and utilizing services provided by Jewish social service agencies.

This development of a partnership between lay leaders and professionals played an integral role in the furthering of Jewish identity and community from 1970 until the present. Kaplan and Ritz go so far as to say that the relationship should not be a partnership but a "team-based" on respect and trust (lecture). Their lecture also called for not only a Jewishly educated professional staff that brings in the unique shared history, but also that a lay leadership needs to be Jewishly knowledgeable before they can be effective leaders in the Jewish community.

Barry Shrage, the current President of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Boston, its Jewish Federation, believes whole-heartedly in the formation of a Jewishly educated lay leadership. Mr. Shrage speaks very eloquently on topics of Jewish education, and places it as the focus for the activities of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP). That Federation still supports a variety of agencies financially but also continues to build strong partnerships with synagogues, Jewish schools, and more. The CJP provides several programs based solely on Jewish education designed to meet the needs of the greater Boston Jewish Community, through programs such as *Me'ah* and *She'arim*. His essential claim is that one cannot be Jewish without Jewish knowledge. Therefore, through the partnerships with the local Hebrew College and area synagogues, the Federation coordinates and provides funds for Judaic

classes for all Jews regardless of affiliation. He has found a greater commitment, sense of community, Jewish identity, and a seemingly healthy Jewish community as a result of this inward focus. The CJP has by no means given up its support of Jews around the world, or the local poor, but it has transformed the role of the Federation to include serving beyond the boundaries of other Federations. Similar to the JCCs investigation of its "Jewish" component for the time period, the CJP found another response for the current state of Judaism in America. The need isolated by Barry Shrage required an adjustment in the Federation's approach to Jewish education and the Jewish components in its daily functioning.

Recently, Cohen and Eisen produced a study identifying the "marginal Jew". These Jews primarily identify Judaism at the margins of their life and rarely affiliate with formal Jewish organizations. The groups estimated size encompasses 60% of the population, while 20% are completely un-affiliated, and 20% are extremely active (8). This study is relevant in defining Judaism for today's American society and in identifying the needs of the society. Cohen and Eisen concluded that the construction of Jewish meaning in America primarily occurs in a private sphere, not in public institutions such as synagogues. They commented:

If moderately-affiliated American Jews do not come to synagogue or join organizations or give to federation philanthropic campaigns as often as these institutions' leaders wish they would, it is not because they do not care at all about being Jewish. It is rather that they care too ambivalently (6).

Their study also isolated that these moderately affiliated Jews take issue with the "choseness" of the Jewish people. This group has demonstrated that they care deeply about what is happening to non-Jews, as much as, what may be impacting Jews (19). "Therefore, they do not feel obligated to give to Jewish causes, like the Federation, more than secular ones" (19).

Interestingly, the study found that most of the moderately affiliated Jews kept a close circle of Jewish friends around them (21). However, this group recognized that they had many non-Jewish friends, as well. Also, the woman in a relationship is the determining decision-maker with regards to level of Jewish activity in education and family involvement (24). Another item of note was the dependence on the Jewish calendar for religious identification. Most of those studied observed Pesach as a family holiday (25). Cohen and Eisner state, "...family is the major source of meaning in life for our respondents and so Jewish meaning is largely found there as well" (25). Heightened Jewish feelings and family memories occur around the Jewish High Holy Days, Chanukah, Pesach,

and *yartzeits* (the anniversary of a loved one's death), which are scheduled around a Jewish calendar.

Needless to say, the Judaism's role in the American society has had several faces. It continues to change over time as history influences identity. So too, does the role of the Jewish professional continually evolve over time. Bubis summarized this idea with the following statement, "The roles, tasks, and titles of professionals changes over time, so too the Jewish community that they served" (332). There are factors that impact the Jewish community. These include: immigration, anti-Semitism, World War One and World War Two, public funding, the development of Jewish social work and Jewish communal service schools, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the welfare of Jewish communities worldwide. All of these factors have shaped and defined what is "Jewish" in the community, and within the social service sector.

### III. METHODOLOGY

After a review of literature published by the Los Angeles Jewish Federation and the Jewish Community Centers in regards to the Jewish factor within their respective organizations, these writers noted there was a significant gap between the in-depth view the Jewish Community Centers had taken in identifying their Jewish component and that of the Jewish Federation. This discrepancy illustrated an opportunity for further research in regards to the Jewish Federation. Although the Jewish Federation's publications assisted in determining some basic Jewish factors, a further detailed approach would be necessary to isolate how these basics were being incorporated into the daily functioning of the organization and into the personal experiences of the staff, the lay leaders, and the related agencies. Therefore, these writers have focused their research specifically on the Los Angeles Jewish Federation in how it incorporates "Jewish" within its working structure, while keeping in mind this specific location in relationship to other federations in geographically diverse regions.

The intent of this research is to fully answer the following:

1. Define the Jewish values, philosophies, and practices.

2. Examine whether it is necessary to infuse Judaic symbols and content within the work environment.
3. Determine if the Jewish Federation's Jewish component is appropriate or oppressive.
4. Discover staff and lay leaders personal views and experiences regarding the Jewish aspects of their work.
5. Compare the Los Angeles Jewish Federation with other Federations in varying geographic regions in the United States to make recommendations.

By examining the above through comprehensive research, these writers were able to synthesis the findings and provide some suggestions and perhaps guidelines for the enhancement and maintenance of the Jewish component within the Jewish Federation.

In order to best assess the objectives above, this study will focus on the entire Los Angeles Jewish Federation, with a special emphasis on the City and Valley locations. These sites were isolated due to their physical size and number of staff, as well as, the greater amount of access these writers had to these sites. This thesis will explore the topic with the identified heads of each Jewish Federation site and through a selected group of individuals employed currently or in the recent past with the Jewish Federation. In addition, a slightly larger but still specific group of



lay leaders will be approached. Together the researchers will gather as much information as possible in a fairly short period of time, present it in the narrative format organized around common themes, and follow this up with recommendations.

To assess the Jewish component, these researchers utilized primarily an ethnographic approach. The ethnographic method was chosen to aid the researchers in identifying how or if "Jewish" is a social reality for those working in relationship with the Jewish Federation. Since, the researchers primary goal was to gather information in regards to the paradigms outlined above, a qualitative approach was necessary. Initially, the writers held some pre-conceived notions of a lack of "Jewish" in the Jewish Federation. The ethnographic study aided in removing such bias by exposing the writers to the working culture of the organization from the observations and experiences of key informants within the Jewish Federation structure. Expanding upon this ethnographic study, an analytic survey was distributed to lay leadership. After a few of the qualitative interviews were conducted, the researchers were able to identify significant themes in order to best address the final interviews and write the qualitative survey.

### Qualitative Sample

Initially a list of 20 names was compiled as a possible sample group to interview. Dr. Steven Windmueller, a former employee with the Jewish Federation, provided some names, along with the suggestions of the individual writers. Nevertheless, a sample of 15 representing a variety of backgrounds in relationship to the Jewish Federation was approached. Variables considered included: age, job title, gender, length of employment in a federation, and geographic location. In addition, the initial sample sought to include interns, professional staff members, past employees, active lay leaders, and graduates and non-graduates of a Communal Service program. Thus, even though the sample was not random, a broad-range of individuals was isolated in order to assess fairly accurately the Jewish component of the work environment within the Jewish Federation.

Each individual was contacted by phone and provided with a quick summary of the goal of the study. Often, upon phone contact the individual requested a detailed e-mail with further explanation, which the writers responded to within one day. Upon phone contact, 13 of the individuals indicated an eagerness to be interviewed and exhibited a fairly warm demeanor. However, one individual after three scheduled attempts

at an interview had significant and unexpected family issues that kept him from being able to share his experiences. Another individual was difficult to reach to interview in person due to scheduling issues and unwillingness to be interviewed in the home or workplace. Also, one of the above was uncomfortable as a new employee to be quoted within the text of a thesis; therefore, in order to respect his needs he was dropped from the sample. However, two individuals who were not responsive to a formal interview did offer a few informal comments over the telephone that provided a helpful background context to the Jewish Federation. In total ten interviews were conducted. For a complete list of those interviewed and their respective titles see Appendix II.

90% of the interviews were conducted in the individual's current work location, and 80% of the interviews were conducted by only one interviewer at a time. The remaining 20%, the other two, were the interviews of the Executive Directors of the Los Angeles Jewish Federation and the Boston equivalent of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies. In these two cases all three researchers were present for the phone interview of the Boston representative and in the workplace of the Los Angeles representative. The length of the interviews varied from 30 minutes to 2 hours. At each interview, the researchers requested permission of the interviewee to tape their interview, explaining that this

would ensure the most accurate representation of the information they would be sharing with the researchers. All but one of the sample cohort agreed to the request.

The interview consisted of asking a series of questions that had been reviewed by Dr. Bruce Phillips, a well respected primarily ethnographic researcher at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion. This careful review assisted the researchers in re-formatting the questions to be more open-ended. The question outline consisted of 14 questions, and a copy can be located in Appendix I. Although each researcher attempted to use these questions as a guideline in the order that they appear, the interview did not always proceed in the exact sequence. Often, the researcher would vary from the sequence to expand upon a comment the interviewee brought up in his or her response. Also, different individuals had various knowledge, sometimes more extensive in relationship to one question than to another. Essentially, as researchers, the writers did not follow the questions or their sequence if it would inhibit the flow of conversation, idea, or content of a person's narrative. Although extensive exploration of a particular detail may have led into a tangent, often these pieces were incredibly valuable within the synthesis of the information gathered.

Interestingly, the researchers tried to keep the wording of the questions as simple as possible; however, not everyone was able to answer the questions as they had been worded. Often the interviewers reworded the questions and offered examples in order to generate a fuller response from those being sampled. Such attempts at being flexible aided in providing a warm and seemingly non-judgmental interview process.

However, one might note a slight limitation in the rapport of an interview set out to examine the "Jewish" in an organization. The researchers attempted to provide an open and accepting setting; however, one employed in or directing an organization, which is being closely examined, may have a heightened sense of need to protect their organization from scrutiny. Therefore, a seemingly natural tension exists between the interviewee and the interviewer. On the whole, the rapport between the interviewees and interviewers was comfortable.

Another note about the order of the questions was the slightly repetitive nature that some questions elicited in the answers received. Initially some questions were designed to follow up on the previous question, but if the interviewee had expounded on the initial question than the follow up was often unnecessary and skipped. However, if the researchers felt even further elaboration could be provided the question was pursued. One example of a questions that elicited a redundant

response included questions eight, "How does your organization recognize religious holidays, Jewish and non-Jewish?" And question nine,

**Revised:** What are some examples of the different kinds of individuals that work in your work place? Do different religious backgrounds affect the work environment? Can you give some examples?

**Original:** What is the religious composition of the primary recipients of your work? Does your work output or effort change depending on the composition of those who benefit from your work?

At the completion of each interview, the interviewee was thanked and asked if they had any other thoughts they wanted to share. At this time, many expressed their interest in the end product and a peaked curiosity as to how the Jewish Federation really does employ "Jewish" in the organization. Following the interviews, each recording was transcribed into a word document for further organization of the information shared. The observational data was sorted utilizing a coding system. This system enabled the researchers to review the data through a system of headings of themes with the addition of the researcher's own theoretical notes. The coding empowered the researchers to locate reoccurring themes and statements, which helped provide a basis for the quantitative portion of the research.

### Quantitative Sample

Typically surveys test a hypothesis. The five items, for which researchers were seeking answers from the qualitative research, were merely in reference to data collection and not a hypothesis. However, this analytic model allowed the researcher to check their initial results and theoretical analysis of the data collected. The survey served as a bridge, answering the lay leader portion of question four in the objectives and providing evidence for accurate thematic development of the interviews.

Constraints of time, access, and financial limitations exceedingly restricted the researcher's ability to gather data from the lay leaders. Assessing whom the researchers would realistically have access, set the tone for a quick survey format. There was little time for intensive interviews and not many relationships to existing lay leaders affiliated with the Federation. Therefore, the researchers met with Dr. Steven Windmueller for further recommendations and contact information to lay leaders he felt would be open to participating. His specific consultation was sought as Dr. Windmueller was previously the Director of the JCRC and is currently the Director of the Jewish Communal Service School at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion. Dr. Windmueller

provided a short list of handpicked individuals, some of whom he contacted for prior approval.

The rest of the limited sample came from a group of lay leaders that were attending a meeting for Planning and Allocation at the Jewish Federation Valley-Alliance. One of the researchers was conducting the meeting and felt this was an appropriate group that would provide accurate feedback readily. The researchers had thought of distributing the survey to a larger group but did not have access to distribution themselves. The writers of this thesis felt that a Jewish Federation employee handing out the survey, without explanation of the project from the researchers themselves would result in skewed data. As some being surveyed may resent having to fill out the quick survey, others may not understand its purpose, and yet others may have felt they needed to fill out the survey in a certain format in case the staff member read them over.

Therefore, the survey group consisted of a total sample size of 21 responses. The spectrum included 12 male and 9 female responses. Four of the responses came from those recommended by Dr. Windmueller. While 17 responses came out of the Jewish Federation Valley-Alliance meeting, of which 4 respondents commented they participate most often at the City site of the Jewish Federation. The average age of those surveyed was between 55-65 years of age. For further analysis of the sample group



refer to the chapter in regards to the quantitative research and its accompanying charts.

The list of people provided by Dr. Windmueller was approached through a phone call. Those that were reached and agreed to fill out the survey had the choice of receiving the survey either by fax, e-mail, or U.S. Postal Service. No individuals chose the U.S. mail. However, six individuals agreed to complete the survey of which four were returned. Each of these individuals received a short note and the survey with its introduction material. Since, they had been contacted by phone most of the individual's questions and concerns had already been answered by one of the researchers.

As for the 17 at the Planning and Allocation meeting, one of the researchers explained the focus of the thesis and in turn responded to any questions. The group filled out the surveys following the conclusion of the meeting, and the surveys were collected on the spot. This insured a greater return rate than the ones that had been distributed by fax machine or e-mail; all of the committee respondents were relieved of any responsibility for returning the survey themselves.

The survey consisted of four theoretic questions relating to relevant research themes and three questions primarily regarding demographic concerns. It was two pages in length, but consisted of seven

brief questions. These questions utilized a variety of research methodologies. For example one question provided a "Ranking Assessment" when it asked, "On a scale of 1-5 (1= the least, 5 = the most) rate the degree to which you feel you are "Doing Jewish" when participating in a meeting at the Jewish Federation?" Another method appears in questions one and two, which provided a list of relevant answers with boxes for each sample unit to check where they apply. The third question provided three blank lines for the development of the individual's personal reasons and thoughts for why he or she donates money or time to the Jewish Federation. This question also asked the individuals to provide "Relative Placement" by listing the top three reasons in ranking order. To review a copy of the survey, refer to Appendix III.

Due to a limitation of time, the survey questions were not pre-tested for accuracy. However, Dr. Bruce Phillips reviewed the questions, and changes were made upon his recommendation. The researchers agreed to completely throw out any question whose response was not consistent with the attempted question being asked. However after analysis of the material, no question was removed. The questions covered several of the outlined objectives. This is seen in question one, which focused on the theme of objects and symbols that the researchers

identified as possible Jewish components in the Jewish Federation from interviews and personal visits. The second and third questions referred to the objective of defining Jewish values, philosophies, and practices. Question four in combination with the others allowed the researchers a much better understanding of the objective, "discover staff and lay leaders personal views and experiences regarding the Jewish aspects of their work".

### Limitations

In theory, the qualitative research approach enabled the researchers to make observations in a "Grounded Theory" model. However, as mentioned earlier such close observation of an organization through an individual working within it may cause the interviewee to alter the content of his or her response. Meaning that however comfortable the interview process was for the interviewee, one must assume there was a level of reactivity to be considered in compilation of the research. For example, some of the sample may have been more reserved in their feedback, and yet others too expounding in order to impress the researchers. Thus, a certain amount of uncertainty exists and the researchers kept this in mind while reviewing the field-notes. However, the use of the follow up

analytic survey, aided in assessing the accuracy of the data collected, and therefore minimizes this limitation.

In relationship to this survey this study attempted to be as comprehensive as possible; yet there were several other limitations, which may not necessarily have been highlighted within the sample descriptions above.

1. Three different interviewers conducted the interviews, each with her style. One elicited further explanations and tangent conversations away from the survey, while the others stuck primarily to the questionnaire guidelines. Therefore, the length and content of each interview varied with the interviewer.
2. The time of the interview may have played a factor in the willingness of the interviewee to truly be able to engage in the interview. For example, one person interviewed during his workday allotted exactly 30 minutes for the interview, and this included the time he spent taking his phone calls. Also, those who were interviewed at the end of the workday may have been distracted in a desire to leave the office.
3. Although the researchers tried to keep an open mind to what is "Jewish" in the Jewish Federation, the researchers had previously been exposed to negative responses to such a

question. This may have skewed the approach to a particular question. Also, one of the researchers has her own personal insider knowledge as she currently interns at the Jewish Federation Valley-Alliance.

4. The authors tended to interview people with whom they had previous interaction. Most of the interviewees were comfortable with the author's presence, but this could have tainted their responses in exaggerated manners or with thoughts unrelated to the questions.
5. The sample of the study, whether in the qualitative or quantitative portion, was not a random cohort. Rather each group was purposively chosen. However, an attempt was made to make sure that the limited numbers within each cohort were comprehensive and broad enough to represent the diverse demographic backgrounds.
6. The timing of the quantitative survey may have provided a difficulty in receiving accurate responses. Passing them out by hand was a wonderful technique; however, they were passed following an evening meeting when individuals had been excused to go home. Therefore, answers to the surveys may have been abbreviated in thought and in length. As most of

these individuals worked all day than attended this meeting at night, many of them might have been anxious to leave and not desired to fill out the survey completely.

While a strong basis for examination and analysis of the data exists, one must consider the above inherent limitations. The researchers note that further exploration and interviews could extend the breadth of this topic and enhance the study. However, all of the material collected provides a serious base for analysis for both the Los Angeles Jewish Federation and other non-profit Jewish organizations interested in identifying what is Jewish within them. As religion is a choice in America and Jews have become fairly accepted by the populace, the concern of Jewish identity and continuity continues to increase. What makes an organization Jewish, appears to share the same concern as the general Jewish community, which has begun to examine the Jewish identity and continuity crises. The authors believe this study is a step forward in identifying, labeling, and demonstrating that a Jewish organization may already have or can have a "Jewish" component.

#### IV. THE LOS ANGELES JEWISH FEDERATION

##### Presentation of Findings

The following section consists of three chapters that will explain the authors' findings through both qualitative and quantitative research. The first chapter gives detailed information about the Los Angeles Jewish Federation as an organization. The values, practices, and environment of the agency are explored.

The second chapter is a comprehensive overview of select professional staff members at the Los Angeles Jewish Federation. The findings outline each professional's path towards working within the Jewish communal world, their views of the Jewish component within their work, who is on their staff, and what staff development entails in their office.

The last chapter includes quantitative information gathered from a questionnaire that was sent to Los Angeles Jewish Federation lay leaders. The survey explores the way in which lay leaders view the Federation as being Jewish.

These three chapters include thorough research that will explain what the Jewish is within the Jewish Federation.

### Mission Statement

The mission statement of the Los Angeles Jewish Federation is as follows:

The Jewish Federation seeks to mobilize and integrate financial, human, and organizational resources within the Greater Los Angeles Jewish Community to foster a sense of common Jewish purpose; to strengthen Jewish constituencies in order to enhance Jewish identity; to meet critical human needs in a Jewish context; and to intensify our bonds with our people worldwide.

The word Jewish is stated six times in this statement of the organization's purposes. Hebrew or Yiddish words or terminology are not used. Perhaps due to its length or its complexity, it was understandable why none of the professionals interviewed were able to articulate the mission in its entirety. In fact, none of the professionals interviewed were able to quote even one portion of the statement. Rather, most of them explained that their work expresses and allows them to carry out the broad mission through specific actions.

The professionals interviewed spoke about the Jewish Federation as an organization that is the central component of Jewish life in Los Angeles. Through its annual campaign, the Federation funds a variety of Jewish social service agencies, educational, and secular programming. In addition, the Federation works to improve Jewish life in Los Angeles and



internationally. It strives to build community and uphold specific Jewish values. One professional explained:

Ultimately what it [the Jewish Federation] means is or perceives itself to be a central planning and organizing body of the Jewish community. And in the totality is community life including the core values of *chesed* and torah, education, commitment of caring, rescue and relief. I think the Federation cannot have a simple mission because the work of the Federation is complex but it's ultimately about Jewish continuity and Jewish responsibility.

Another professional spoke of the mission statement in a similar fashion:

It talks about mobilizing the financial human organizational resources in order to improve Jewish life. It talks about offering services in a Jewish context. Furthering the Jewish identity through the enhancement of Jewish education. It talks about *Klal Yisrael*. In terms of the reinforcement of the concept of Jewish people-hood and mobilizing the various resources to do so.

Although the professionals could not quote the mission statement verbatim, these two examples demonstrate the professionals ability to recognize the Jewish component within the Federation's mission. As a result, the Jewish Federation rewrote their mission statement in order to incorporate a Jewish context. This revision was done in committee composed primarily of lay people. The purpose was to infuse Jewish values directly into the work at the Jewish Federation. One professional spoke about how Jewish values "played itself out in planning and

allocations because, when you analyze a program or evaluate a program and it is necessary to be funded by the Jewish community.”

The idea of adding Jewish values makes a powerful statement to the professionals that work within the Jewish Federation, the lay people who volunteer there, and the community as whole. Adding Jewish values to its mission reinforces the idea that it is a Jewish agency. Jewish Family Service, a constituent agency of the Jewish Federation, also rewrote their mission statement to enhance the Jewish aspects. Like the Federation, they looked at the basic values that underlie the agency and tried to bring those values to the forefront. Through a process of education and debate the mission statement was changed. This process was explained by one professional:

Certain members of the board wanted to make certain, that while these are the underlying Jewish values, that we did not exclude service to non-Jews. Of course, Jewish values can be considered non-sectarian because we are asked to repair the world and that's not just the Jewish world.

### Values

Federation professionals typically identified five Jewish values as underlying their work: *tzeddakah*, *tikkun olam*, *gimilut chasadim*, being created in God's image, and respect for humankind were all mentioned as

values present in Federation work. *Tzeddakah* and *tikkun olam* were the two values mentioned most frequently.

*Tzeddakah* has two different meanings which both were referenced by professionals. The first is charity. Fundraisers explained that by raising the money that goes to social service agencies, they are in essence performing acts of charity. The second is the idea of *tzeddakah* with its literal translation of righteousness. In this way, the work that professionals are doing leads to a sense of justice. All people, Jews included, are given the services they need and thus are being treated "in God's image."

*Tikkun Olam* is defined as the repairing of the world. Through the action of fundraising, money is raised in order to fund projects and partnerships that work towards improving the lives of many people. In addition, the social service agencies that are under the auspices of the Federation, work towards improving both the physical, mental, and general life of the community. Various professionals commented on the idea of repairing both the world. Interestingly, one person explained that the direction of the secular world reflects the direction of the Jewish world. "When things are good for everyone else, they are usually good for the Jews". This reflects the idea of helping and repairing the entire world because it has an impact on the Jewish world. Another way in which the

value of *tikkun olam* is expressed is through the Federation's annual Mitzvah Day. This event gives professionals and lay leaders a chance to volunteer and make a marked difference in their community.

*Klal Yisrael* was another value mentioned by a number of professionals. The Federation raises money and creates programs that address the needs of communities on a local, national, and international level. The most widely publicized work is done in Israel. It is therefore assumed that this is a contributing reason as to why most professionals mentioned this value. In addition to its support of Israel, the Federation also raises money to support the Former Soviet Union as well as other European countries. Also, the Federation supports a variety of Jewish programs locally, regardless of denominational affiliation.

Strengthening community and helping Jews in distant lands is related to another value commonly mentioned by Jewish professionals, the value of building community. Through programs, services, and funds, the Federation helps build community both in Los Angeles and abroad. Linking Jews across sections of the city has become a large center of attention for the Los Angeles Federation. There are plans to increase the number of these partnerships in order to add to the sense of a bridged community.

The 2001 Federation Super Sunday phone-athon used an explicitly Jewish theme. The values of *Torah*, *kehillah*, and *tikkun olam* were used in the advertisements for the event, in solicitations for gifts, and as a theme for the day. This was a step in bringing these Jewish values to the forefront. An educational program was organized for professionals, lay leaders, and public both about the work the Federation does and how these three core values underlie their work. Although recognizing this only as a small change Jewish professionals hoped that the transformation could continue with the exploration of other values.

One Jewish professional had a unique perspective on Jewish values in the work place. She thought that Jewish values were reflected in how people were treated. This included, treating employees no matter what their role is in the agency with respect, not embarrassing people publicly, and being honest with the agency and with the people you work with and the people you work for. She explained:

You talk nicely to people; they talk nicely back to you. You do not embarrass people in public. You can rebuke for mistakes but it's how you do that. It's how you work and ask people for things in a moral and ethical way. You account for every penny. You account for your own time. .... Those are best business practices. That sounds awfully like *Pirke Avot* and *Torah* and rabbinic commentary to me.

It seems as if Jewish values drive the work that many professionals do at the Federation. While the specific values are not always spoken about, they are always present. In other ways, however, professionals have chosen to emphasize the values that are part of their work, either by using specific language or performing specific acts that exemplify those values.

### Jewish Symbols

A number of professionals in the Los Angeles Jewish Federation believed that the placement of Jewish symbols throughout the building contributed to a recognizable Jewish environment. The authors asked each professional, "What items, practices, and philosophies make your work environment Jewish?" Most answers dealt with how the physical environment of the Jewish Federation can be viewed as "being Jewish." The displays of Jewish symbols such as *mezuzot*, *menorahs*, and the logo of the federation, were all mentioned as being a noticeable way in which the environment is infused with Judaic content.

The most widely recognized Jewish symbols, according to the Torah 101 Web Page, are *mezuzot*, *tallit and tzitzit*, *menorahs*, *yarmulkes*, *magen David*, *t'fillin*, and *chai*. These symbols represent physical objects

that are associated with various Jewish customs and practices. The Jewish Federation professionals believe that the placement of these symbolic items in their work place establishes a Jewish environment.

Nearly all the Federation professionals mentioned the *mezuzah*. A professional commented on the placement of *mezuzot* in the Federation. "You walk in and there's a *mezuzah* on the front door." Another professional agreed, "There's *mezuzot* on our doors, on all the agency doors."

The Jewish people are commanded to place *mezuzot* on the doorposts of their homes. This serves as, "a constant reminder of God's presence and God's commandments". The Torah website further explained the significance of the *mezuzah*.

The commandment to place *mezuzot* on the doorposts of our houses is derived from Deut. 6:4-9, a passage commonly known as the *Shema*. (Hear, from the first word of the passage). In that passage, God commands us to keep His words constantly in our minds and in our hearts, by (among other things) writing them on the doorposts of our house. The words of the *Shema* are written on a tiny scroll of parchment, along with the words of a companion passage, Deut. 11:13. On the back of the scroll, a name of God is written. The scroll is then rolled up placed in the case, so that the first letter of the Name (the letter *Shin*) is visible (or, more commonly, the letter *Shin* is written on the outside of the case).

The case and scroll are then nailed or affixed to the right side doorpost on an angle, with a small ceremony called

*Chanukat Ha-Bayit* (dedication of the house - yes, this is the same word as *Chanukah*, the holiday celebrating the rededication of the Temple after the Maccabean revolt against Greece). A brief blessing is recited (Torah 101).

The placement of *mezuzot* within the Federation shows that there is a level of acknowledgment of the importance of adhering to certain Jewish traditions. Though it is common to find *mezuzot* throughout both the Valley Federation and its campus and the Goldsmith Center Federations, it is not a symbol that is placed on every door within the buildings. The Federation professionals explained the placement of *mezuzot* is by individuals on their own doors, Federation is not involved. One employee explained, "Not every room in the building would have a *mezuzah*, unless someone thought of putting that there."

The issue of placing *mezuzot* within the rebuilt Milken Community revealed the complexities associated with as simple of an object as a *mezuzah*. A Valley Alliance professional related the issues that surfaced when dealing with the *mezuzot* question during that period of resettlement.

It was really interesting. If you want anecdotes, when I was at the Valley office the Milken Center had a lot of damage as a result of the earthquakes. We moved out of the center for a while but when we moved back we decided to have a *Chanukat Ha-bayit*. Actually a *mezuzah* had been given as a gift from one of the synagogues for some earthquake crisis counseling that I had done. So we have this *Chanukat Ha-bayit*. We invited the whole building to this



really wonderful event and we had Rabbi Jacobs and Rabbi Feinstein there and I had discussion with the staff the week before saying that anyone who wanted to hang a *mezuzah* on their office door we could also use that time as an opportunity to do so. And it led to this completely unexpected discussion because the people who in their personal lives were quite observant, including someone who's background was a Jewish educator, was quite adamant about putting a *mezuzah* on the door on his counseling door because he didn't want people to feel that there were any expectations about their level of Jewish knowledge, observance, etc. Another member of the staff who had never been affiliated with a generally weak Jewish background, who certainly never incorporated anything Jewish into any of her program said this is so important to me and I want people to know when they walk in that whatever we do in this office is in a Jewish environment. It just led to this remarkable discussion and I think half of us put up *mezuzot* and half of us didn't. And that's fine. I think it's important for individual staff members, I think it's important to talk about it and for the ambiance of the agency to encourage that discussion whatever the outcome is. I think it's important for the agency to have a *mezuzah* but it's important for the offices to have this conversation.

The incident created a higher level of reflection about the Jewish character of Federation. Though the use of *mezuzot* was not made uniform among all Valley Campus employees, the discussion that resulted was a step towards defining the substance of a Jewish environment.

The *menorah* is another common Jewish symbol, and it was mentioned by a number of professionals as being an element of physical Judaic manifestation. The *menorah* as a Judaic symbol had different connotations for each professional. It was seen as an object used during

the holidays, as a piece of Judaic art to be displayed, and as the symbol used in the Jewish Federation logo.

The *menorah* is far more than the opposite of a Christmas tree:

One of the oldest symbols of the Jewish faith... The *kohanim* lit the *menorah* in the Sanctuary every evening and cleaned it out every morning, replacing the wicks and putting fresh olive oil into the cups. It has been said that the *menorah* is a symbol of the nation of Israel and our mission to be "a light unto the nations." (Isaiah 42:6). The sages emphasize that light is not a violent force; Israel is to accomplish its mission by setting an example, not by using force. This idea is highlighted in the vision in Zechariah 4:1-6. Zechariah sees a *menorah*, and God explains: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit." The lamp stand in today's synagogues, called the *ner tamid* (literally the continual lamp; usually translated as the eternal flame), symbolizes the *menorah* (Torah 101).

Despite its universal Jewish symbolism, the *menorah* is most prominent during the Christmas season. One Federation professional reflected that, "The most Jewish we get is a *Chanukah* party where we light the *menorah*." The *menorah* in this respect is seen as an important Jewish symbol used for a holiday celebration. Another professional remarked, "If it were holiday time, there would be things around.... ya know, a *hanmukiah* around in the reception area or whatever." This suggests that during Jewish holidays Jewish objects are more widely displayed through the Jewish Federation building.

The use of the *menorah* was also described as Judaic art within the Federation. One professional stated, "We are happy to have *menorahs* and other Jewish objects on display."

The logo of the Federation also has ties to the *menorah*. Many professionals and lay leaders believe the logo to be symbolic of the eternal flame or *ner tamid*. One professional exclaimed, "The concept of the flame has always been a part of the Federation logo, which I think is a very Jewish symbol." The *ner tamid* is described to be the symbolic version of the *menorah*. One professional explained that the logo was constructed not only of the eternal flame, but that it is a version of a *menorah*. They clarified this for the authors by saying, "It's a *menorah*... a seven branch candelabra and the flames make the letters JFC[Jewish Federation Council]."

### Physical Jewish Environment

The employees within the city and valley Federation sites all stressed that the physical environment of the Federation expresses its core Jewish identity. The use of Jewish art work, the display of Biblical and Talmudic text, and the display of Judaic objects were mentioned by a

number of professionals as being ways in which the physical environment of the Federation was Jewish.

One professional argued that the use of the word Jewish within the Federation contributes to a Jewishly infused atmosphere.

We have the word Jewish on our door and the word Jewish on our [business] cards. And the word Jewish plastered all over this place. Therefore if nothing else, the place where I work is labeled a Jewish institution.

A professional at the Goldsmith Federation site discussed the ways in which the redesign of their building was consciously infused with Judaic references. "I think that the building itself has clearly Jewish elements in it, especially in the redesign; there was clearly the use of the Jerusalem stone when you first walk in."

The importance of creating a Jewish environment was stressed by a number of professionals. A professional at the Valley Alliance discussed the degree to which the Jewishness needed to be emphasized. He explained that though it is important to create a Jewish atmosphere at the Jewish Federation, it does not need to be established as a religious organization. The symbols and Judaica infused in a Jewish Federation should not have to equal that which is infused within a synagogue.

The Jewish cultural component is what we need to emphasize here. We are not a synagogue so we need to be perceived as a social service, cultural and educational institution. So I think that the symbols that would be typical in a Synagogue aren't necessarily required here. We are much more in the vein of the Skirball. That's an example of what I'd like to see this building represent. It's an ongoing work in progress. It's not a museum in the way that the Skirball is, it's a community facility that should encourage artistic and creative approaches to Jewish life.

The Valley Alliance is in a unique position from that of most Federations in that it is housed with a Jewish Community Center. Many professionals believe this proximity strengthens the sense of working in a Jewish environment because JCC programming spills over into the Federation. One professional spoke about this unique situation.

Well, in the Valley we're in a building that housed all the agencies and more importantly the JCC. The JCC celebrated the Jewish holidays mainly in the nursery school. So you always got to here the kids singing *Shabbat* songs, every Friday they would go up to the balcony and sing *Shabbat* songs. And on *Purim* and *Simchat Torah* they would march through and parade around all the offices. And that sort of lent a tone of Judaica, and we had a *Sukkah*. And every year we would have an all staff and all campus dessert in the *Sukkah* one afternoon during *Sukkot*. And we would do... we tried to do a *Hanukkah* lunch once a year with all staff. When we usually, except for summer, when we usually tried to have an all staff gathering we always did it around a holiday.

The Jewish Community Center also displays a "Traditions on Wheels" cart in the front lobby of the Valley Campus. A Valley Federation professional explained,

The lobby right now, for example has a traditions on wheels cart that was made possible by a grant through us. There are rotating exhibits, there's stuff about *Purim* and there's books and there's ritual objects and that changes.

The establishment of this cart is a symbol of the partnership that occurs between both the West Valley Jewish Community Center and the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance in trying to create a Jewish environment.

The use of Jewish artwork within the City Jewish Federations as well as the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance location was mentioned by a number of professionals. One employee revealed, "I have Jewish art in my office." Other professionals spoke of how the display of either Jewish art work, or art by Jewish artists within the building itself helped enhance the Jewish environment within the Jewish Federation.

The Jewish Federation Valley Alliance helps to fund the Finegood Art Gallery. This is a gallery within the Valley Campus that displays changing exhibits by Jewish and non-Jewish artists. One professional

explained a few of the exhibits that have been on display in the Valley site.

We have an exhibit on Jewish tapestries; we have a Jewish art council that does Jewish artwork. We have an archeological piece here. We are hoping that we will have a few pieces from a collection of woodwork, which was accumulated by a Jewish art collector.

Though the placement of this gallery within the Valley Campus contributes to a unique feeling of Jewish environment, the professional professed their desire to establish a larger representation of Jewish artists. "I wish we had more Jewish sculptures and could represent more Jewish artists."

The Goldsmith Federation site and the Valley site both house libraries that have a large number of Jewish books. A gift shop filled with Judaica art and objects also is prominently featured in the Valley Campus.

An effort is also being made within both locations to display pieces of Jewish text relevant to the location. A Goldsmith Center professional explained, "There's Jewish text that's around the building in various places." A professional from the Valley Alliance commented on how Jewish text is used within their building, "There are quotes on the wall out by the gym. I believe there is also another quote from Jewish text talking about the value of health and fitness." Jewish texts are also used to establish the Jewishness of the environment. A professional spoke about

the display of the *parshat hashavuah* or Torah portion of the week within the Valley Campus. "If you notice when you walk in the Federation, walk in to the Valley Campus and you look to the right, and you will see *parshat hashavuah* near the library."

### Jewish Practices

The Jewish Federation professionals articulated that the creation of a Jewish environment was not limited to the physical elements of a building or a campus. They explained that the policies and practices within a Federation are also instrumental in creating a Jewish working environment. One can impart a sense of Jewishness at the Federation through the celebration of holidays, through the use of synagogue and agency partnerships, through the education of the surrounding community, through a *kashrut* policy, through personal infusions, and through working with a general sense of "*yiddushkite*".

Jewish professionals sometimes use Jewish holidays as a means to Jewish ends. The Jewish Federation celebrates the Jewish holidays through various ways. Some professionals use holidays as an opportunity to educate staff and lay leaders, while others use these celebrations to connect with other agencies housed in the same building.



Some professionals see the holidays as merely a chance to get out of work early. A number of professionals felt that the Jewish holidays are not celebrated enough within the organization.

One professional commented on the way in which holidays are sometimes integrated with programs.

A lot of our events are incorporated with the Jewish holidays and *Shabbat*. A lot of the Young Leadership events get together to celebrate a Jewish holiday. VIP couples got together under a *sukkah* and had *Shabbat* dinner together.

A Jewish Family Service professional described how they use the holidays as an educational opportunity for the staff.

We have a committee of a variety of people called the Above and Beyond Committee and they want to send out information before every Jewish holiday to all of the staff so that people know why we are closing and that is actually material that we developed in the J in JFS committee instead of having one big worksheet, they will be doing it before every holiday. So I think that the process in the agency is to heighten the awareness of what it means to be a Jewish agency not in a way that it diminishes the scope of our services or the diversity of our staff but underscores where this agency sprang.

A Valley Alliance professional explained the way in which holidays are generally celebrated in the Valley site.

We do observe the Jewish calendar; we are not fundamentally a religious organization. We work in a somewhat secular way but we try to inculcate not only Jewish values but also Jewish traditions. We encourage participation and some degree of recognition of the celebration of the Jewish holidays. We try to be more

inclusive in connecting the Jewish holidays and Jewish observance.

*Shabbat* is another holiday that was discussed throughout the interviews with professionals. *Shabbat* is not necessarily celebrated weekly within the Jewish Federation, but the employees are allowed to leave early on Fridays so that they have time to prepare for the holiday. One professional explained that the general policy of the Federation is to not work or have programs on *Shabbat*. "We would say we're not having this because it's *Shabbat* and this is a Jewish organization and we're closed."

Sometimes organizational imperatives violate *Shabbat*.

Interestingly, sometimes it became necessary for the professionals to work on *Shabbat*.

There would be times we came in on *Shabbat* to work because you had to do it, or if a layperson wanted something on a Saturday night you'd work on *Shabbat* to get the Saturday night thing going. For the most part we tried not to do that, and tried not to have things on the Jewish holidays. And not the secular ones either.

Another professional commented on the fact that *Shabbat* is rarely celebrated within the office.

I've been in other office situations where there have been *oneg Shabbat* celebrations. We've done them here from time to time but the current culture doesn't seem to

promote it because we are so stretched and we just don't have time for ourselves.

Partnerships with synagogues and Rabbis enhance the Jewish ambiance of the Federation. The Federation currently employs a Rabbi who has been instrumental in trying to bring Jewish text and concepts into the Federation on a regular basis. An employee commented about emails that the Rabbi sends out weekly to all Federation staff. "I'd say something weekly that I've noticed and what I've liked as a Jewish educator is Rabbi Mark Diamond sends out the *parshah* online."

Many professionals were proud of the partnerships that have developed with the local rabbinic community.

We get a lot of Rabbis that are engaged in discussion on a number of issues. We do a lot of consultation with rabbinical leadership on synagogue leadership, we make them our partners.

Another professional commented on the wealth of knowledge that the Rabbis have brought to the Federation.

With the Rabbinic community and HUC (Hebrew Union College) and the UJ (University of Judaism) being right here, there is an incredible wealth of Jewish knowledge and expertise here. We are really lucky when we bring in speakers; we have a lot of excellent ones. I think we do a lot to enhance people's Jewish identity through those processes.

The practice of synagogue partnerships was also mentioned a great deal by the Jewish Federation professionals. The Federations work with local synagogues to provide social services, to provide Jewish education for the community, and to be mutually helpful to one another. A Federation professional commented on this mutually respected relationship by saying,

We've seen a great deal of partnerships evolve between the Federation and the synagogues. We try to deliver social services under synagogue auspices; in conjunction with synagogues we work with our agencies in that regard. We have task forces which try to bring all of the Jewish organizational life together in a consistent geographic way. So I think on all those fronts we're highly respected in the religious community.

The Los Angeles Federation was one of the first organizations to give grants to synagogues. One employee explained,

The Council on Jewish life was the first body, the first federation in the United States to make grants to synagogues, although some of them were for social welfare focuses more and more to try and direct them into Judaic focuses, looking at the issues of adult education, trying to focus into a more strategic fashion.

The Council on Jewish Life has continued their relationship with the synagogues through their synagogue grant program. Grants are given on a yearly basis to fund synagogue programs.

A professional at the Goldsmith Center stressed the importance of this partnership.

It's the wave of the future. The Star program that Bronfman and Steinhart have started. Federation clearly understands that synagogue life is the backbone. In fact it is known that synagogue members demographically, give more to the Federation Campaign than non-synagogue members. So really they are both going to build each other.

The professional continued by exemplifying how the Federation's Israel Experience Program has helped to build a relationship with the local synagogues.

The synagogue grant process that I talked about before, is one that we are now trying to focus. We are trying to be strategic in how the money is spent. It is not an enormous amount of money but there is enough seed money and it can be used effectively for a number of resources. Another example is the approach we've used to fund the Israel experience program, for teenagers and college age. We participate in the Birthright program but before Birthright we have a parallel program but with a different philosophy. Our Israel experience has made the synagogue partners in recruiting the people and partnering to financially supporting to get them to Israel. We engage with the synagogues when they come back. We felt that was very important for that model rather than birthright.

The Jewish Federation Valley-Alliance has created a leadership development program in conjunction with local Valley synagogues and Jewish agencies. The program, called the Advanced Leadership Seminar,

is comprised of weekly adult educational sessions with Rabbis and leaders within the Jewish community. The Valley-Alliance specifically targeted potential synagogue and agency leaders to take part in this program. The goal was to help these community members to develop their skills in order to become more effective leaders within their synagogues and agencies.

Jewish education of the Jewish community was regarded as being an important practice to the Jewish component of Federation. The content of the education varies. One Jewish Federation professional spoke about educating the community on the importance of building a Jewish identity. Another stressed the significance of continuing Jewish traditions.

While it may seem like a cliché at times, I think it is basically our mission to serve people in that fashion, to encourage their educational development, acknowledge a Jewish life, attempt a Jewish identity and at the same time make sure that people are well cared for that they know there is a community there that can provide basic services when people are in need, that we can be there, that its not limited to people that we know but to people that we don't know, in the tradition of Maimonides.

Adult Jewish education occurs through leadership development programs such as the city's UJ program and the Valley's Advanced Leadership Seminar. Funding for these types of programs has increased recently, as one professional explained,

The Federation made funding available for all different fashions and forms of Adult Jewish education. We've recently taken a major adult education program in conjunction with the University of Judaism in the synagogues.

The Young Leadership division at the Jewish Federation runs many of these programs. One professional commented on why the majority of these educational programs occur within this division.

Most of the leadership development programs are particularly for the younger leadership, there is much more of an interest and desire to have exposure to Jewish source and Jewish history and Jewish civilization, and Jewish tradition.

A grant was given to the Federation by the Star Foundation in order to allow the Federation to examine how adult education can effectively be imparted to the community. A professional commented,

The Star alliance gave us a large grant, one of the largest because we decide since we are such a diverse community, that we wanted to look at adult education beyond the programs we are doing at the UJ but we knew this was a mixed bag in Los Angeles that we put together a consortium of congregations and institutions of higher learning together with the Federation, to really see if we could make an assessment of what the need is.

This assessment of need could conceivably be difficult considering the large and diversified nature of the Los Angeles Jewish community. It is therefore necessary for those working at the Federation to understand

this nature and cater to the many parts of the Los Angeles Jewish community. The professionals seem to recognize the unique character of the Los Angeles community and are trying to create ways of serving the diverse population.

One employee described these challenges,

In my opinion it's a highly fragmented community and the nature of our work is to try and improve the nature of Jewish life in the community in general as part of Los Angeles.

The Federation tries to engage the various groups within the Los Angeles Jewish community in joint communal activities. A professional spoke about how the Federation has been trying to bring together these various facets of community life.

We do some work with Chabad now. And we have an ongoing commitment to creating a facility that recognizes the various traditions and practices in our community. We also I think have been better at working with various ethnic sub-groups within the Jewish community. We have Russian Jews who we provide services to, the Persian community that we are more connected to. But the Valley Jewish Festival is the best example of an all-inclusive Jewish experience, which really brings everyone together. And I think that's why it's so powerful, because all aspects of Jewish life become represented at the Valley Jewish festival.

Federation faces a daunting challenge with meeting the community at it's various levels of comfort. *Kashrut* is one such example in trying to



find a level that is neither too demanding nor too trivial. The Goldsmith Center, Metro West Site and Valley Alliance all spoke about having kosher facilities. However, the policy regarding the *kashrut* standard is flexible in order to meet the comfort level of the community members that utilize the Federation's services.

A professional from the Valley Alliance explained the necessity of meeting the community where it is currently positioned.

It is necessary to start where your client is. The Valley Alliance programs are not always *kosher* because sometimes that's not on par with the culture of the community that is being served. That is the reality of what this community is like. It's important to create an inclusive nature of community work; we are here to serve the community. We are here to be accepting.

Though the *kashrut* policy in the Valley Federation can be loosely interpreted, the City's rules regarding *kashrut* appear to be less lenient. A professional from the Metro West Federation facility ensures that all events that they are in charge of are strictly *kosher*.

This professionals insurance that the *kashrut* policy be followed at their events is an example of how professionals within the Federation can personally choose to infuse their own Jewish values and practices in order to create a more Jewish environment. The practices that will be discussed

here deal with more communal occurrences. Strictly personal infusions of Judaic practices will be discussed in the next chapter.

Many professionals within the Valley Alliance have consciously tried to infuse more Judaic concepts within the work that they do. These practices are not mandated by the executive but are personal. Not all professionals within the Valley follow these customs. Yet, some Valley professionals incorporate Judaic content within their work through *d'vrai Torah* at meetings, by incorporating the Hebrew language in places appropriate, and by infusing Judaic content where possible.

Two Valley Professionals mentioned that they begin many of their meetings with a *d'vrai Torah*. One professional explained how they purposely changed the format of the meeting to include this Jewish practice.

It used to be that we started with introductions and ended with good and welfare, I know in the committees that I've worked with and pretty much across the board, we've tried to change their lingo to have a stronger and more obvious Jewish component, calling it *d'var Torah*. This gives people an opportunity to do some Jewish learning. At one of our women's department meetings I gave a *d'var Torah* on how to give a *d'vrai Torah*, which the women really appreciated.

These same Valley professionals mentioned that many people within the Valley Alliance have tried to incorporate the use of the Hebrew language into their meetings and general work. A Valley employee

commented on how Hebrew is infused into the agenda of Federation meetings: "At the end of the meeting instead of doing good and welfare, we do *mazel tov* and *mishaberach*. So it puts a Jewish spin on good and welfare and teaches them what *mishaberach* means." Many professionals also tend to sign their letters with "*b'shalom* or *l'hitraof*".

Another professional spoke about how small additions of Jewish concepts and content can make a marked difference on the atmosphere of the Jewish Federation. She commented on how she tried to add Judaic content into elements such as gifts or awards.

When we gave awards, instead of a miscellaneous piece of plexi-glass with your name and a logo on it we tried to find Judaic symbols and words of wisdom from *Pirke Avot*. I mean we gave antiquities sometimes, but the idea was they were antiquities from Israel

Many Federation professionals mentioned the value of working with a general sense of "*Yiddishkeit*". "*Yiddishkeit*" in this regard is defined as dignity and honesty. The professionals saw this as a practice utilized throughout the office. They saw this as an element that clearly helps to create a Jewish environment at the Federation. One professional explained the balance that occurs in creating a Jewish environment.

I think it is a balance between those elements of "*Yiddishkeit*", text study, and other things that are clearly Jewish how they go in the work and carrying out functional activities that are not distinctly Jewish.

Another professional described in further detail about what working with "*Yiddishkeit*" means.

If one were to look carefully at business practices the best business practices are based in this that Jews believe. You talk nicely to people; they talk nicely back to you. You do not embarrass people in public. You can rebuke for mistakes but it's how you do that. It's how you work and ask people for things in a moral and ethical way. You account for every penny. You account for your own time. You don't cheat on your own business expenses. When you say lunch cost 10 bucks and you only spent 4. Those are best business practices. I don't know, that sounds awfully like *Pirke Avot* and Torah and Rabbinic commentary to me. Don't cheat, don't lie, be nice.

One professional explained further how "*Yiddishkeit*" was taught to the members of the Planning and Allocations committee when dealing with agency grant presentations.

The P & A department had to be taught to have *rachmanas* (compassion) for the people that were presenting. But I didn't use the word *rachmanas*... I used the words "you may not attack, you must be nice, you know this is informational ask questions". But, I think the asking questions is sort of a Jewish model. And when they are deliberating they won't specifically come up with a Jewish value, but the way they discuss it is so Jewish. You answer questions with questions and you bat it around till you've given everyone a chance to talk about it.

### Conclusion

The Jewish Federation professionals were clearly able to articulate the Jewish values that underlie their work. The use of the

Jewish values within Super Sunday helped profligate this awareness. It helped stress the importance they play within the work of the Federation.

The use of Jewish symbols throughout the city and Valley sites were noted as well. The placement of the *mezzuzah* on doors within the Federation showed that there is recognition of Jewish tradition in the environment of the Jewish Federation. However, the professionals interviewed explained that the placement of *mezzuzot* were not mandated by the Jewish Federation; they were personally placed by Jewish Federation professionals. It is difficult to enforce the placement of Jewish symbols throughout all areas of the Jewish Federation considering the number of non-Jewish people that work within the organization.

The importance of creating a Jewish environment was stressed by a number of professionals. The inclusion of Judaic text and symbols in the design of the new city Federation site shows that there is a level of Judaic consciousness in reference to creating a Jewish environment. The Valley site is housed in an environment with many Judaic symbols, due to its shared location with the West Valley Jewish Community Center.

There is a level of Jewish practice seen within the Jewish Federation as well. The Jewish Federation is closed for Jewish holidays, yet there is little education as to what these holidays are. The professionals stressed the importance of their community educational programs. However, it appears that the Federation educates their surrounding community but does not make a great effort to educate their employees.

## V. THE JEWISH FEDERATION PROFESSIONALS

A large number of employees work at the Federation. It is impossible to speak about a single type of professional who chooses to work at the Federation. However, many do have similar characteristics. In an attempt to comprehend the Jewish component of a Federation employee's work, four key areas were explored: 1) the motivation for working in Jewish communal work; 2) the professionals view of the Jewish component in their work; 3) who composes the staff and how diversity affects the work environment; and 4) staff development.

### Personal Histories: Why work in a Jewish agency?

There are a variety of reasons why professionals choose to work in a Jewish agency, like the Federation. Common explanations included finding meaning in their work, making positive changes to their own community, and a sense of challenge in their work. One professional explained

I became committed to working in the Jewish community, because I found a great deal of meaning in it. I found it to be a powerful instrument of social change in America; to me that's important.

Another professional spoke specifically about the uniqueness of Federation work.

It is a very challenging task but its exciting, rewarding, diversified work. Fundamentally, I love the challenge of working in a high-powered community. The Jewish

community is very high-powered and very demanding and very loving at the same time.

Also, it seems as though the majority of those interviewed had strong Jewish backgrounds. Many offered that they affiliated with a Jewish denomination and those spoken about were Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. Some professionals belong to synagogues and Jewish Community Centers, others felt their work was "the largest component in fulfilling their Jewishness."

Jewish professionals professed to find comfort in their work at the Federation, because they were working with and for their own communities. In addition, many of the values that the organization represents coincide with their personal values. One professional explained:

It's from the first moment of my impetus that being in a Jewish institution felt comfortable. Second, I feel that working in an institution works closer to the values of my own lifestyle. The fact that I don't need to ask for special dispensation for Yom Kippur is a real perk to me, because I know so many others in other places who have to go before their supervisors and explain why they can't come to work that day.

Along with varying denominational affiliation, each professional's educational background was different. Yet many of the professionals interviewed chose to earn degrees in Jewish Communal Service, Jewish Education, and Social Work. Each interviewee entered their chosen field



and has remained there for unique personal reasons. One professional spoke about her training and decision to work in the Jewish community.

It was a career choice, I mean I became a Jewish communal worker not a social worker by itself, and I very much wanted to get into this field in order to make an impact on the Jewish community. And, therefore, wanted to work in a Jewish agency to have that impact. In my entire career, I've only worked in Jewish agencies. I have a Double Masters in Social Work and Jewish Communal Service.

Another professional spoke about his journey to Federation work.

Initially my choice to work in a Jewish environment had nothing to do with the "Jewishness." I got a degree in social work and was working for the government. Because, I found that work to be tiresome and not as fulfilling as I hoped, it was suggested that I look into working at the Federation. I got my first job at Federation and loved it. So, I got involved almost "by accident" but stayed in Jewish Communal Service, because I became very passionate about it. In terms of the communal dynamic and what I thought was a much more palpable sense of meaning to work in a Jewish environment.

Many professionals spoke about the importance of working in a place where they felt a strong connection to the agency's mission. While this work can be difficult the motivation of fulfilling a specific mission is what keeps professionals in the field.

I think that most of the people here are Jewish and work for this organization because they believe in the goals and focuses of what it stands for. I learned a long time ago, if you go to work in a Jewish organization and you don't have that commitment to Jewish survival, Jewish identity, Jewish knowledge, maybe not in that rank order, you won't

necessarily stay. There are a lot easier places to work than Jewish Communal life.

### Federation Professionals understanding the "Jewish" in the workplace

Each Federation employee has a unique lens through which they view their work. The authors were interested in learning how various professionals understood the Jewish component as it relates to their work. The question that was posed in order to prompt this discussion was, "Do you think you do Jewish work?" The responses were very positive. Many professionals see the Jewish component being expressed both outwardly through personal expressions and in general in the underlying motivations of the Federation. Some of the underlying aspects include values and philosophies.

Identifying the values that the Federation strives to fulfill was not easy. Yet, these Jewish values are central to the daily work of the professionals. The ideas of *tzeddakah*, education, health, rescue and relief, family, youth, and elderly were all reflected during the interviews. One professional commented:

I absolutely believe I do Jewish work. I think what is Jewish is really actualizing the values. Trying to embody *chesed*, *tikkun olam*, *Torah* and *kehillah* in the work that we do everyday.

Another professionals explained the historical context through which the Federation carries out its mission and fulfills its values.

I think ultimately we're about defining the ongoing work of a Jewish community. So, I think there's historical continuity to the work that we do. There is a level of community caring that goes on here, which is fundamentally Jewish that each individual life is sacred, that we care about not only creating a caring community but creating a meaningful community.

Underlying values are expressed through each department of the Federation. For example, the Campaign Department raises money to support social service agencies and various programs affiliated to the Federation itself. The same department also helps to fund local and international communities and local synagogues. Another department, Rescue and Relief, works to help integrate newcomers to this country. The Senior Centers' focus is on helping the elderly population. The variety of social service agencies ensure the health and well being of the members of the community. It became apparent in a number of interviews, that each of these departments fulfills at least one Jewish value, sometimes more. For example, in an interview with the Director of Jewish Free Loan, the authors got a better understanding of how this agency carries out it's Jewish mission.

There is a biblically based philosophy about giving money, and we subscribe to that. Nothing in my day is outwardly Jewish. I know deep down that I am doing Jewish work. I extract certain Jewish principles into the day-to-day operations of this agency.

In addition, the actual money lending services that Jewish Free Loan carries out, all have Jewish values attached. Money for adoption, invitro fertilization, and prenatal care all emphasize the commandment of "be fruitful and multiply." In addition, it emphasizes the importance of family and health. Also, the agency provides loans for education and starting small businesses. These programs emphasize the importance of learning, creating a life for oneself and one's family.

Other programs and services carried out by different agencies within the Federation also have an underlying drive in Jewish content. While interviewing a fundraiser the conversation centered on *tzeddakah* took place. This professional put it so eloquently, when she said:

It's about raising dollars to be transformed. You cannot wrap yourself in dollar bills. You cannot eat dollar bills. You cannot learn dollar bills. But the dollar bills can be transformed into blankets, food, and education.

Here the idea of raising money is related to a Jewish value. In essence people are transforming dollars into justice, economic justice. Examples of such justice include caring for the poor, feeding the hungry, and scholarships and grants related to Jewish education.

When the professionals spoke about the outward Jewish aspects of their work, they primarily discussed their personal infusion of Judaism. Their actions and practices exemplified the "Jewishness" of their department. One professional described how she would place a quote

from the weekly Torah portion outside of her office. She explained that this was her way of adding Jewish content to her environment.

Another interviewee explained that she received permission to place a *sukkah* on the roof of the Federation building. In addition, this professional led study sessions in relationship to the High Holidays and Passover. She explained her own personal commitment in adding these Jewish components to her workplace.

I think in my own small way, by offering some of these studying things, insisting we have a *sukkah*, I am insisting we use the office as an opportunity, and place, to learn and grow. These are small steps that I am highly committed to. No one is telling me not to do it. However, my supervisors are not telling this is a great idea either.

Other ways in which individuals have added their own personal touches of Judaism to their work environment is by placing Jewish symbols, art, and writings on their office walls. Many believe these are permanent reminders of the values in their work. One professional commented "I keep a *tzeddakah* box in my office so I am reminded everyday of what I am doing and where I am."

Another professional stated:

I get the Jewish message because everyday I walk into my office and have the word *tzeddakah* sitting in front of me. I walk into my office and I look at a picture that I purposely have in front of me, like a *shviti*, that speaks of freedom and voice.

Other professionals spoke about having Jewish objects in their office.

I had a *mezuzah* on my door. I had a *dreidle* on my desk. I had a picture of Jerusalem on my bulletin board. And on my bookshelf, I had the *Tanach*, and I had *Pirke Avot* and other rabbinic readings. I had a lot of Judaic stuff... including Danny Segal's stuff about *mitzvot*. I personally had a lot of Judaic stuff.

The Jewish components that these individuals are adding are in no means mandated by the agency, but rather are personal infusions. As an example, the practice of putting up weekly Torah portions did not continue when the professional left her position. It was interesting to note, that this professional had created a folder of the weekly Torah portions with the intent that her tradition would continue, but it did not.

This brings to light the question, does the Jewish Federation really want, need, or even support additional Jewish learning and practices? One interviewee explained the challenge of being Jewish and trying to provide Jewish content in a business environment:

We are in a Jewish business environment and one needs to say, am I doing what I am hired to do and how much is self awareness and how much is serving the donor or the professional is increasing their work productivity?

This balancing act seems to be a concern for various individuals and therefore, has not been settled. Until each office or department makes a conscious effort to hear what employees want and need, they cannot make an appropriate decision about how much, if any, Judaic content needs to be added or taken away. One professional summed up:

A typical day for me is a series of choices deciding what is going to be outwardly Jewish and inwardly Jewish. But choosing how you are going to act outwardly Jewish in a mixed environment labeled the Jewish Federation.

Who is on staff?

It was evident that the professionals of the Federation believe that they do Jewish work and that there are Jewish values "infused" within their work. The authors were interested in learning if the members of their staff understood and could articulate the Jewish values of their work.

Various professionals spoke about the process of hiring new employees. Although the Federal Government has non-discrimination laws, it seems that the Federation desires candidates who have a fundamental understanding of the Jewish community.

I don't hire anyone on my staff who can't articulate a love for Judaism and Jewish life. I feel that staff needs to be able to understand if not articulate clearly, but at least understand that this is about Jewish life and bettering Jewish life.

While the motivation for bettering the Jewish community is important, another professional pointed out the balancing act that occurs during the hiring process.

I do feel that staff needs to be able to understand if not articulate clearly, but at least understand that this about Jewish life and bettering Jewish life. That to me is extremely important. The trick becomes, the tension becomes, what skills do you want your staff to have, first second and third? I think the Jewish has to come in lower

than how to do certain work. I am a manager who says the highest priority is making the best ask and the best way of talking to your colleagues and donors. So, part of that first value is understanding Jewish motivation.

It seems that a number of departments at the Federation are staffed by all Jewish employees. Other departments have staff with a variety of backgrounds ranging from all sects of Judaism to other religions. One professional pointed out an important fact, "You have to remember that a lot of agencies are service agencies where the Jewishness of the personnel is not perhaps as dominant." For example, in the Accounting Department not all employees are Jewish. This diversity does not seem to be a problem, because the nature of their job does not require them to be Jewishly knowledgeable.

Many of the interviews included a discussion about support staff such as secretaries, maintenance, and computer personnel. They explained that this staff encompassed a wide range of religions and ethnicities. Most professionals felt that this diversity did not enhance or hinder the work environment. One professional commented:

My experience with that for the most part is, if it's handled correctly non-Jewish staff are open to it. They know they are working in a Jewish agency. They find the exposure to Jewish ideas and learning more about Jewish religion, Jewish culture really interesting and fascinating.

Another concurred:

The people who are not Jewish in this office, have either a healthy respect for Jews, a healthy respect for the Jewish religion, a healthy respect for the craziness that comprises



Jewish Communal life. And I think other than Jews working here, understand what they are getting into, because they are coming into a building labeled Jewish. I think people here understand or put up with the Jewish "mishigas".

Professionals also discussed the need for non-Jews working in the Federation to have knowledge about the work that is done at the agency, Jewish holidays, customs, and beliefs. One employee spoke about her expectations of support staff:

I expect them to be cognizant of the various traditions within the Jewish community so that they, in their interactions with people in the community, are able to impart a sense of what the work of the Jewish Federation is.

Two professionals spoke about support staff and their phone contacts with the public. One commented:

It would be helpful if they were knowledgeable about Jewish customs so that they would feel more comfortable explaining things on the phone where programs have a heavier Jewish content or they are focused around a Jewish holiday or something. I think they would be able to explain probably a little more eloquently and comfortably what it is what we are trying to do.

The other explained:

In our business, those people are still meeting the public. A secretary answering the phone should have some understanding that it is the day before Pesach and women are going to be crazed and we can't schedule a lunch during the day on the night of the first *seder*. They should be open to hearing and understanding those limitations. But I would expect them

to understand why a ham and cheese sandwich might not be the correct thing to bring to a Jewish lunch.

The authors wondered if support staff were educated about these Jewish components. It was interesting to note, that only one professional broached the subject.

If they have a question about lingo they asked. But sometimes with the way things were spelled or the way things are explained there has to be a lot of double-checking and things take a little more explanation or need for more background for someone to get the concept across.

There seems to be no formal education for support staff. In the past, a committee at the Federation wrote a guide to Jewish holidays and Jewish lingo in order for non-Jewish staff to gain a better understanding of the Jewish calendar and the lingo within the office. However, none of the professionals interviewed mentioned this guide, and in fact, many spoke of the importance of creating something similar.

The assumption is that they are just going to go along with it. We had one person who was a religious Christian who did not want to work on Sundays, and who really didn't understand the holidays. And most people didn't try to take the time to explain them to her, which I thought was sad.

Another professional commented:

Aside from openly asking for explanations of things, support staff have no way of learning about the Jewish culture. While some are comfortable asking, I realize that not everyone will ask either, because they are embarrassed or they are afraid they may look incompetent to the Jewish staff members. This needs to change.

Another component in regards to support staff is the idea that respect needs to go in both directions. Many professionals felt that Jews, in the office, also needed to be respectful of people who are not Jewish.

I think it's good that they feel comfortable when working within a Jewish organization, and I think it's very important that we respect their religious beliefs, their personal practices and make sure that the work environment is inclusive.

One professional explained that giving days off from work for both secular and religious holidays, is a way that the agency shows respect to the non-Jews in the agency. "They are totally amazed that they get those holidays and the Jewish holidays, and the American holidays, and every other holiday that can possibly be celebrated."

### Staff Development

Staff development is important, because it is one way that employees develop new skills and "brush up" on others. In addition, staff development adds to the sense of unity that exists within an office. Because the Federation is clearly a Jewish institution, the authors wanted to learn about staff development and if it included any Jewish content.

The spectrum of answers in relation to staff development spanned from those who saw a great deal of staff development with Jewish components to those who saw little to none. One professional explained:

Clearly we are interested in a certain degree of ethics and morality. There is a lot of texts and sources that float around here, whether it is things that are read or passed along. We also draw on rabbinical leadership. We've had a number of rabbis speak here over the years. We have a number of Jewish educators by training, so we try to use them to design programs.

Another professional pointed out the idea of having speakers:

A lot of times, not always, but a lot of times the speakers are Jewish and the subject matter of what they are speaking about is Jewish, or whatever their programmatic content is Jewish, either culturally or intellectually, or spiritually.

A professional at Jewish Family Service took a different approach.

Rather than having one staff development program, she spoke about providing an atmosphere where people understood the Jewish components of social work. Jewish Family Service had a rabbi come in and speak to the staff about dysfunctional families in the Bible. At first, staff was very resistant, asking if the meeting was mandatory or if the meetings with the rabbi could be scheduled every other month. However, the professional had already scheduled the rabbi to come in for one meeting a month for four months.

After the first meeting, people thought it was just wonderful, but they said, you should probably not come once a month, you should come every other month. I said, well we've got him signed up let's just continue with once a month. Second session everyone just warmed up more because he's just so engaging.

The professional felt that this engagement with a rabbi led to more Jewish content in the office. People spoke about holidays and in fact the rabbi provided free tickets for High Holiday services. This professional also spoke about giving the social work staff exposure to a rabbi who really understood social work. The rabbi was able to relate texts to social work skills. The professional offered one example:

The *Shema* meaning to listen, to hear, its what social workers do. It is the ability to hear the soul, and what love means, and that social workers come to this work with love and with a calling. It was taking all of these principles and transforming them into social work language.

Because other professionals have said that they didn't want to come to Jewish learning, this professional took a unique approach in getting Jewish materials introduced to her agency. She chose to expose them to the Jewish component of their work in hope that it would spark some interest.

In addition, she commented:

There were people who will come to that and there are people who will say there are people who know more than I do. I don't want to be embarrassed. It's what the staff said...it's not related to my work. And I think it's much related to their work but it is our job educating, to help them build the bridges between the work and the study. We always talk about starting where the client is and in this respect, the staff is the client.

The staff development opportunities that professionals spoke about were infrequent. Perhaps, it was resistance that kept the level of staff development to a minimum. There seems to be an ongoing tension in how to be Jewish in a business environment. One interviewee spoke about her experience with staff development.

We had a trainer come in and work on team building but that wasn't from a Jewish perspective that was from a universal perspective. I think sometimes what we do when we have programs and have a guest speaker coming in from somewhere, like a United Jewish Communities speaker, often we try to get together a special time for the staff to get together and dialogue with that person. I think those are staff development opportunities and most of the time they have a Jewish component to them. That doesn't happen that often though.

There seems to be some sadness in regards to the lack of Jewish component. One professional revealed:

Staff development really has not actively occurred recently. I think there were attempts. I was part of a professional development committee that started that. It didn't have that as one of its foci, but it's not anything that's really materialized. I mean there's certainly an attempt to acknowledge the holidays and you know do something around those for staff but I would say it's not an active component of our organization, unfortunately.

It is interesting to note the tension between a reluctance to have additional Jewish components, and the strong feelings about enhancing the Jewish aspects of the work environment. Two professionals found ways

to help their employees get a better understanding of the Jewish components within their work.

We have a poorly articulated vision for staff development. It depends solely on the manager's motivation to put people in those places. The Jewish component is mostly trips to Israel and those kinds of Jewish cultural things. But if someone were to tell me that they wanted to take a class in Rashi or Talmud, I would be very interested in helping them do that. Anytime someone is doing internal spiritual awareness building only makes them a better employee.

Another professional articulated something similar:

We try to encourage staff development for all staff and believe it should be a combination of skills development and Judaic learning. I will always be supportive of staff members who want to go to conferences or who choose to study.

In addition, it is public knowledge that Executives at the Federation emulate this idea of personal study and personal growth. The President is part of a Wexner group and studies texts monthly, outside of the office. The chairman of the board studies weekly with a rabbi from Aish Hatorah. These again, show the importance of Jewish knowledge and personal growth. This however, is on an individual and not communal level.

While there is some discomfort and balancing that occurs when trying to enhance the Judaic content of the Federation, there seems to be a majority who feel that some enhancement is needed. One professional commented:

We attempt to govern what we do with the use of broad Jewish values. We're interested in giving them exposure to Jewish tradition, Jewish study, and try to offer them the opportunity to Jewish learning. We recently engaged a new director of the board of rabbis, as well as the senior management teams of the federation. Additionally, David Mosznaka of 92nd street Y will be joining the staff to enhance the Judaic content of our work.

A professional also spoke about the opportunities that another Rabbi offered. She was disappointed, however, because she was unable to attend the programs, which were held at the Jewish Federation City site.

I think that Rabbi Diamond offers opportunities. Most of the time we can't go, we get the e-mails but we can't go because we're here and it's difficult to get to the city in the middle of the day

At Jewish Family Service, the professionals are hoping to add Judaic content to their staff development. One person explained:

We are looking in the "J" in JFS committee, we are looking at some of the staff development class to see where we can bring Jewish components in. So even if it is a class on clinical issues, how do the clinical issues relate to the life cycle? We can add something about Jewish life cycle traditions. We've been playing with where that is appropriate.

Another area in which Jewish Family Service is working to enhance the Jewish within their staff development is through the work of their Above and Beyond Committee. Before every Jewish holiday, information is sent to all employees explaining what the holiday is and why the agency is closing. This information sheet is put on each desk or in



an individual's mailbox for each holiday. While this method is more time consuming, it is a more effective and visible. In addition, when the Rosh Hashanah informational sheet was distributed this year, each employee received a bag with apples and honey. This addition put a new and sweet touch to the holiday. One professional commented on the work of the Above and Beyond committee:

So I think that the process in the agency is to heighten the awareness of what it means to be a Jewish agency not in a way that it diminishes the scope of our services or the diversity of our staff but underscores where this agency sprang from. So I think if that continues, that's really wonderful.

### Conclusion

The voiced desire to include more Judaic components in staff training when compared to the reality of a lack of attendance at such meetings is evidence to a clear tension within the Federation and its ability to enhance its "Jewish" components. However, the work the Jewish Federation chooses to focus upon has deep roots in Jewish values, and the research clearly illustrates that the professionals of the Jewish Federation feel their personal Jewish values validated through the work that they do. Some Jewish professionals even choose to increase their Jewishly infused values with outward exhibitions of Jewish art and symbols in their workplace.

The research also indicates another tension within the staffing of the Jewish Federation. When a person is hiring an individual, he or she is often forced to choose between the individual's skill level and his/her basic understanding of Jewish life and a desire to better it. The Federation has many non-Jews employed in its system who are extremely well qualified for their positions. Yet, this forces the Federation to consider the effects of mutual respect between non-Jews and Jews in a "Jewish" work environment.

All in all, the interviewees made clear that their work for the Federation is truly doing "Jewish", even if the work environment itself does not clearly depict itself as Jewish.

## VI. LAY LEADERS

A questionnaire was distributed to Jewish Federation lay leaders in order to examine their perspective of how the Jewish Federation infuses Jewish values, practices and customs.

Lay leaders selected Judaic objects and values they observed in the Jewish Federation, from a list provided on the questionnaire. They also listed and ranked the three reasons as to why they dedicate time and/or money to the Jewish Federation. The lay leaders rated the degree to which they feel they are "doing Jewish" when participating and volunteering for the Federation. The lay leaders were also questioned with reference to demographic data about themselves, including committees on which they serve, their age range, and with which Federation site they were most involved. This chapter presents the findings from the questionnaire.

### Jewish Objects

The authors compiled a list of Jewish objects they had previously observed while visiting the sites of the Jewish Federation and included the list on the questionnaire. The objects included: *menorot*, candles, Jewish holiday decorations, *mogen david* (Jewish stars), Hebrew, Jewish art work,

Torah portion of the week, *Challah*, wine and Judaic text. The lay leaders were asked to check which Judaic object they have observed in their visits to the Jewish Federation sites. Table 1 shows the number of responses each object received; the total amount possible for each category is 21.

Table 1  
Jewish Objects found in the Federation

Jewish Object	# Of Responses
JEWISH ART WORK	20
MENORAH	17
JEWISH HOLIDAY DECORATIONS	17
HEBREW	16
JEWISH STARS	12
JUDAIC TEXT	11
CANDLES	8
TORAH PORTION OF THE WEEK	5
WINE	5
CHALLAH	3

Jewish artwork was the most commonly recognized Jewish object in the Federation, as it was mentioned by all but one lay leader. Perhaps, this is a reflection of the large amount of surveys that were returned from the Jewish Federation/Valley Alliance. This Federation site houses an art gallery which features Jewish art work alongside of art by Jewish and non-

Jewish artists. Also, the Board Room within the Valley Alliance showcases work by Jewish artists.

Jewish holiday decorations and the display of a *menorah* were both noted by 17 out of the 21 lay leaders surveyed. However, the use of the *menorah* could be considered a holiday decoration in itself. The authors found a wider display of holiday decorations at the Valley Alliance location, because of their shared space with the West Valley Jewish Community Center. It is not clear which decorations are being solely displayed by the Valley Alliance versus the West Valley Jewish Community Center.

### Jewish Values

Out of the following Jewish values, *tikkun olam*, *tzeddakah*, acts of loving kindness, responsibility for others, created in the image of G-d, and respecting your elders, the lay leaders chose those they felt were inherent in the Jewish Federation. In addition, the leaders were asked to fill in any other values they believed the Federation represented. Below in Table 2, these responses are outlined.

Table 2

Recognized Values of the Federation

Values Found in the Federation	# of Responses
<b>TZEDAKAH</b>	21
<b>TIKKUN OLAM</b>	19
<b>ACTS OF LOVING KINDNESS</b>	17
<b>RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS</b>	17
<b>RESPECTING YOUR ELDERS</b>	11
<b>CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD</b>	3
<b>OTHER VALUES</b>	3

It is little surprise that all 21 lay leaders circled *tzedakah*, as nearly every professional interviewed indicated this value as well. The value of *tikkun olam* followed closely behind *tzedakah*. Many of the lay leaders know that a portion of the money that is raised at the Federation goes to help communities in need. However, the use of these values in the 2001 Super Sunday Campaign, may have added an additional awareness to them. The authors wanted to determine which values and objects received the most mention within the questionnaires. Table 3 combines the Jewish values and objects into one area in order to display the percent of reference.

Table 3

Percentage of Jewish Values and Objects Found in the Federation

Jewish Values and Objects	# of mentions	% of respondents who mentioned this.
<i>TZEDAKAH</i>	21	100%
ART WORK	20	95%
TIKKUN OLAM	19	90%
MENORAH	17	81%
JEWISH HOLIDAY DECORATIONS	17	81%
ACTS OF LOVING KINDNESS	17	81%
RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS	17	81%
HEBREW	16	76%
JEWISH STARS	12	57%
JUDAIC TEXT	11	52%
RESPECTING YOUR ELDERS	11	52%
CANDLES	8	38%
TORAH PORTION OF THE WEEK	5	24%
WINE	5	24%
CHALLAH	3	14%
CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF G-D	3	14%
OTHER VALUES	3	14%

As shown above, the Jewish value of *tzedakah* was chosen by every lay leader surveyed. This was chosen as the most recognizable aspect that the Jewish Federation embodies. The display of art work was also widely noticed within the Federation as 95% of those surveyed noticed its prevalence.

Table 4 outlines the frequency of response with reference to the number of Jewish objects and values chosen by the lay leaders.

Table 4  
Frequency of Judaic Object and Value Responses

JUDAIC OBJECTS AND VALUES		
# of objects and values mentioned	Frequency	% of respondents who mentioned this many things.
4	1	5
6	1	5
8	4	19
9	3	14
11	4	19
12	4	19
13	2	10
14	1	5
15	1	5
Total	21	100

Table 4 shows that a high number of objects and values were recognized and chosen by the lay leaders as being represented within the Jewish Federation. 19% of the lay leaders marked 8, 11 and 12 objects and values on the survey. This high frequency of mention shows that lay



leaders are able to associate a great deal of Judaic concepts with the Jewish Federation.

### Motivations

Part of the questionnaire asked the lay leaders to identify their top three reasons why they donate their time and/or money to the Los Angeles Jewish Federation. This data was coded into common categories and each motivation was then given a numerical value. This allowed the authors to identify the motivations that were mentioned in order of highest percentage. Table 5 presents the motivations in order of the greatest percentage to the least percentage.

Table 5

## Volunteer Motivations for Federation Commitment

Categories of Motivations	Total # of Mentions	% of Mentions
Jewish Values	7	33%
Continuity/Support Community	7	33%
Helping the Needy	6	29%
Community Building/ Connection	5	24%
Concern	4	19%
Personal Responsibility	4	19%
Jewish Survival	4	19%
Personal Gratification	4	19%
Jewish Identity, Background	2	10%
Service Providers	2	10%
Worthy Cause	2	10%
Giving Back	2	10%
Jewish Education	2	10%
Has the Means to Help	2	10%
Respect of People	2	10%
Israel	1	5%
Love of Country	1	5%
Be Informed about Community	1	5%
Prioritize Needs	1	5%

The surveys indicated that lay leaders are motivated by Jewish values. The Jewish values such as *tzedakah* and *tikkun olam* were repeated in answer to this question as they were within the Jewish values question. Two leaders simply expressed their belief in Jewish values, and their

desire to perpetuate them into the rest of society. These responses were included within the values category as well.

The answers that were categorized as "Continuity/Support for community" section all related to this concept in different ways. The responses relating to the continuity of the Jewish people included, both the desire to maintain the Jewish community, and the expressed desire for the perpetuation of Judaism. The support category incorporated the following response. " It is important for Jews to help other Jews because the rest of the world doesn't care". Another leader in this category also expressed the desire to support the local community.

Helping the needy held the second largest percentage. Some of the answers in this category included a desire to make the world a better place for those in need, and a general love for helping people in need. Interestingly, Israel as a motivation factored very low with only 5% recording this element as a part of their response.

The next section of the questionnaire was designed to discover with which committees and divisions the lay leaders affiliated. The answers were coded into six categories listed as, Valley Planning and Allocations, Valley Alliance Board, Valley Alliance Committee, Jewish Federation City P&A, Jewish Federation Council Board, and other JFC

Committees. Table 6 presents the percentage of lay leaders involved in each category.

Table 6  
Most Common Committees

Categories of Committees	# of People	Percent %
Valley P&A	15	71%
JFC P&A	7	33%
On a JFC committee	6	29%
On Alliance Board	6	29%
On a Valley Alliance Committee	5	24%
JFC Board	2	10%

As expected, the largest percentage of people said they affiliated with the Valley Planning and Allocations Committee, as the survey was distributed and collected at a Valley P&A Committee meeting.

These figures were further reviewed in terms of the frequency that people served on more than one committee. Table 7 lists the percentage and frequency in which people served on other Valley Alliance Committees.

**Table 7**

**Number of Other Valley Alliance Committees Mentioned**

Other Valley Alliance Committees		
# of different committees	Frequency	Percent %
0	16	76%
1	2	10%
2	2	10%
3	1	5%
Total	21	100%

The other Valley Alliance committees and divisions mentioned included the Valley Jewish Festival, the Conejo Task Force, Chaverim, the Budget committee, Super Sunday, and the Women's Division. The responses were fairly unified in this section. Three respondents mentioned activity in the Women's Division, while three mentioned being members of the Super Sunday Committee.

Table 8 shows the percentage and frequency of people that served on other Jewish Federation and Citywide committees. This grouping included a more varied set of divisions. Three responses included membership in the Council of Jewish Life and two who are active in the Women's Division. The remainder of Jewish community involvements

included Jewish Family Services, Jewish Vocational Service, Bureau of Jewish Education, Jewish Community Relations Committee, United Jewish Communities, Jewish Community Foundation, Young Leadership Division, and the Education Sub-Committee.

**Table 8**

**Number of Other Jewish Federation Council Committees Mentioned**

Other JFC Committee		
# of different committees	Frequency	Percent %
0	15	71%
1	1	5%
2	1	5%
3	3	14%
4	1	5%
Total	21	100%

The total number of committees lay leaders were affiliated with is listed in table 9.

**Table 9**

**Total Number of Committees of Volunteer Affiliation**

Total # of affiliations and committees	Frequency	Percent %
1	7	33%
2	4	19%
3	2	10%
4	6	29%
5	2	10%
Total	21	100%

Tables 8 and 9 show heavy committee involvement. The findings show that 33% of the lay leaders interviewed are only affiliated with one committee. It is interesting to note the jump in percentage. One would expect the next largest affiliation percentage to be with two committees. However, the second largest affiliation rate was four committees with 29%. It appears as though one who is involved often dedicates themselves to a high degree. The overall percentages show that 14 out of the 21 lay leaders interviewed serve on more than one committee at the Federation. This shows a high level of Jewish community commitment amongst those interviewed.

Lay leaders definitely saw their work as "doing Jewish". The lay leaders chose on a scale of 1-5, five being the highest degree, the degree to which they felt they were "doing Jewish" when participating in a meeting at the Jewish Federation. Table 10 displays the frequency of responses.

Table 10  
Degree of "doing Jewish"

On a scale of 1-5

"Doing Jewish"	Frequency	Percent %
2	2	10%
3	5	24%
4	7	33%
5	7	33%
Total	21	100%

Two thirds of the lay leaders felt that they were "doing Jewish" when participating in a Federation meeting. This question was designed to discover if the lay leaders connected a feeling of Jewishness to the work that they did within the Federation. "Doing Jewish" in this sense was defined as playing a role within the Jewish community, and seeing this role as being infused with Judaic content and thought.

The lay leaders then marked with which Federation site they were most involved. Table 11 charts these responses. As expected, the majority, or 81% of the people surveyed, showed involvement with the Jewish Federation/Valley Alliance. This should be credited to the large number of Valley Alliance Planning and Allocations Committee members that returned the questionnaire.



**Table 11**  
**Percent of Involvement in Each Federation Location**

Federation sites	# of Responses	Percent %
CITY SITE	6	29%
SOUTHBAY	0	0%
METRO	1	5%
VALLEY	17	81%

In order to better understand the group of lay leaders being surveyed, respondents selected their age range. The ranges included:

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54
55-64	65-74	75-84	85 & over

The range of age is illustrated in Table 12. The lay leaders surveyed represented most of the age-categories. The largest number of people fell within the 55-65 age group, with 43%. Perhaps this higher ratio of older volunteers indicates a greater amount of time given to Federation. Therefore, this age group must have more time to give. It is also a reflection perhaps of the expectations placed on the older generations. A few lay leaders expressed that their volunteer work is something that's

simply expected of them. This expectation is not as prevalent within the younger generations. These adults also do not have as much time to dedicate to volunteer work, as they are either students, starting and raising families, or beginning their careers.

Table 12  
Age Range of Federation Volunteers

AGE RANGES	Frequency	Percent
18-24	1	5%
25-34	1	5%
35-44	5	24%
45-54	9	43%
55-64	4	19%
65-74	1	5%
75-84	0	0%
85 & Over	0	0%
Total	21	100%

Table 13 further explores this finding by showing the correlation between the percentage of committees served in correlation to broad age categories. The findings showed that the majority of the people that served on the Jewish Federation Council Committee, the Valley Alliance Committee, the Jewish Federation Council Board and the Jewish

Federation Council Planning and Allocations committee were in the 55-64 age category.

Table 13

Percent Served on Each Committee Correlated to Age Groupings

	AGE		
	Under 55	55-64	65+
On a JFC committee	14%	44%	20%
On a Valley committee	14%	33%	20%
On Alliance Board	29%	22%	40%
JFC Board	0%	22%	0%
JFC P&A	14%	56%	20%
Valley P&A	71%	67%	80%

Age data was further broken into broad categories of age groupings in Table 14 to see if any connections could be made between the factor of age and the other variables being examined. Table 14 correlates one's age range with the percent of Jewish values and objects identified within the Federation. As the chart shows, the lay leaders within the 55-64 age range, recognized more Jewish objects and values than the other age categories.

Table 14

Association of Age to Number of Jewish Values and Objects Mentioned

	Frequency	Percent %
Under 55	7	33%
55-64	9	43%
65+	5	24%
Total	21	100%

There was an association between the number of committees on which a person served and the degree to which they recognized Jewish objects and values within the Federation.

Table 15 illustrates that the more committees on which a person served, the greater the number of objects and values were accepted and recognized.

Table 15

Number of Committees Served in Correlation to the Number of Jewish Values and Objects Mentioned

# of Committees and Boards	Mean # of Jewish Things Mentioned	Number of Mentions
1	9.9	7
2	8.0	4
3	12.5	2
4	11.0	6
5	12.0	2

The data was further reviewed to examine potential correlations regarding if serving on a specific committee correlated with a higher awareness of Jewish objects and values found within the Los Angeles Jewish Federation. It was discovered that a connection did exist. The members of the Jewish Federation serving on City Committees mentioned the greatest number of Judaic values and objects in the Federation. The next highest correlation occurred with people serving on the Valley Alliance committees. This relationship is shown in Table 16.

Table 16

The Mean Number of Judaic Values and Objects Mentioned in Correlation to Each Federation Committee

	Mean # of Jewish Things Mentioned	Number of Mentions
On a JFC Committee	11.8	15
On a Valley Committee	10.7	16
On Alliance Board	10.3	15
JFC P&A	10.2	14
JFC Board	9.9	19
Valley P&A	9.8	6

The authors were also curious to know if a person's age affected the amount of Judaica observed within the Federation. The findings showed that the middle age group of 55-65 was able to recognize the most

Jewish objects and values within the Federation. Table 17 illustrates these findings.

Table 17

Correlation Between Age and Amount of Judaica Observed

	Mean # of Jewish Things Mentioned	Number of Mentions
Under 55	9.0	7
55-64	11.6	9
65+	9.8	5
Total	10.3	21

In order to understand this phenomenon, the age range was cross-referenced with the affiliation rate in order to establish a connection. The findings showed that individuals aged 55-65 year old serve on the greatest number of committees within the Federation. Therefore, the more committees on which one serves within the Federation, the greater the exposure to the Federation's environment. Because of this more frequent exposure, they are better able to identify those elements that are "Jewish" within the Federation. This finding is shown in Table 18.

Table 18

How Age Affects the Mean Number of Committees Served in the Federation

	Mean # of Committees Served	Number of Mentions
Under 55	2.0	7
55-64	3.6	9
65+	1.8	5
Total	2.6	21

### Conclusion

This chapter showed that there was a clear correlation between one's age and the extent of Federation involvement as well as the amount of Judaic objects and values one was able to recognize within the Federation environment. The 55-64 age range represented the majority of those lay leaders surveyed. This was also the age-range that was able to recognize the most Judaic infusions within the Federation. Perhaps this generation was raised with values that enhanced the need for volunteerism. Or perhaps this age category is so well represented because they have more time to dedicate to volunteer causes. Further conclusions and recommendations will be presented in the following chapter.

## VII. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

### Conclusions

The Jewish Federation encompasses a plethora of Jewish concepts, values, and ideas. All of the lay leaders and professional staff interviewed articulated what they believed to be Jewish about the Jewish Federation. Though all were able to speak about their view of the Jewish in the Federation, many could not make clear connections as to how this Jewishness affected their work or the environment in which they worked. The professionals that did make that connection personally chose to infuse Jewish concepts and practices into their daily work.

The first chapter outlined the specific values, concepts, and practices that were mentioned by Jewish Federation professionals as being infused with Judaism. All of the professionals interviewed defined the Jewish values that could be associated with Jewish Federation work. The most commonly mentioned value included *tzeddakah*, defined as justice, and support for Israel. The Jewish Federation clearly uses the value of *tzeddakah* as an underlying current for the charitable work that it accomplishes.



The professionals were not able to articulate the Jewish Federation's mission statement as clearly as they did the Jewish values of the Jewish Federation. The professionals recognized some of the Jewish elements within the mission statement. However, most responses were vague guesses of what this mission really encompassed. Those interviewed did not utilize the messages held within the mission statement as a reference for their daily tasks.

The observances of the professionals with reference to the Jewish practices and environment of the Jewish Federation varied. Most professionals recognized some element of Judaic content throughout the Jewish Federation.

An important question arose in regards to what constitutes an appropriate Jewish environment with the Jewish Federation. Factors to consider include: not all of the clients being served are Jewish, the Jewish Federation strives to meet the community at its current level of Jewish activity, and the Federation staff consists of a multitude of religious affiliations. In order to assess the appropriateness of Jewish infusion, the Federation must take into account the comfort level of both Jews and non-Jews when stepping into a Jewish environment. One professional noted an example of this when he observed that the Jewish Federation was not a

synagogue, and therefore did not have to establish a religious environment as a synagogue would.

Through the discussions with the Jewish Federation professionals, it was made clear that the Federation does maintain a level of Judaic identity within its physical environment. The professionals that recognized a great deal of Jewish content within their environment were often the ones that personally infused their own touches of Jewishness to their surroundings.

The Jewish Federation Valley Alliance has a noticeable Jewish environment due to their shared space with the West Valley Jewish Community Center. The Center purposely creates a Jewish environment utilizing decorations and a "Traditions on Wheels Cart". The Valley Alliance, however, was instrumental in the creation of this cart. This display of Judaic holidays and materials was made possible for the West Valley Jewish Community Center through a Valley Alliance Incentive Regional Allocation grant. This partnership clearly helps to create a more involved Jewish environment within the Milken Community Campus.

The one Jewish element widely recognized by all professional staff members was the use of the *mezuzah*. Though this symbol is found on many doors within the Jewish Federation, it is not found on every door. The use of the *mezuzah* shows the attempt of the Federation to include

some level of Judaic content into the environment while striving to create a comfort level for those that are not Jewish or not comfortable with Judaic elements. It also shows that the creation of a Jewish environment within the Federation is accomplished mostly on a personalized level.

The redesign of the Goldsmith Center consciously tried to incorporate a Jewish physical environment. The use of Jerusalem stone and the Federation logo clearly mark the building as Jewish. The Jewish presence within the actual office spaces does not appear as obvious as it is at the Valley site. This is perhaps due to the Federation's desire to keep the building from being oppressively Jewish. This would ensure that the clients of all religious denominations that utilize the Jewish Federation's services would feel comfortable and not threatened when walking into this organization.

A level of communal practice has also had a tremendous impact on the Jewish within the Jewish Federation. The two communal practices that have made a significant impact on the Jewish environment include the use of synagogue partnerships and the education of the community.

Professionals in the City and Valley Federation locations mentioned synagogue partnerships. These partnerships represent mutually beneficial relationships for both parties. The Jewish Federation utilizes the rabbinic community to impart Judaic content and meaning into Jewish

Federation meetings and events, while the congregations benefit from the synagogue grant process that occurs yearly in the Jewish Federation.

Though these partnerships are utilized to a degree, these authors believe this relationship should be broadened even further. The resources and knowledge of the rabbinic community in Los Angeles could be utilized to a larger degree within the Jewish Federation.

The Jewish Federation has done a wonderful job in helping to educate the community through their adult education programs in partnership with the University of Judaism and the local synagogues. The authors also believe that this area could benefit the community further by expanding the population of educational services. These programs currently serve mostly those that associate within the Young Leadership divisions. Community education should be further explored with other ages as well.

The Jewish community is currently seeking to define its Jewish identity. This trend points to the need and importance for more adult education programs to allow the Jewish community to fully explore their Jewish roles. The Jewish Federation has the potential to gain a larger donor base and more commitment to its campaign by expanding the variety of its services.

Some professionals choose to educate their leaders on a more personal level by including Jewish words or concepts into their meetings. These small touches mark a slight, but noticeable, difference within the Federation. By using the words *b'shalom* or *l'hitraot* in business letters, the professionals are educating their lay leaders. They are demonstrating the importance that Judaism plays in the work that is accomplished within the Jewish Federation.

The levels of Jewish infusion throughout the Federation are further explicated through the lay leader questionnaire. For example, the leaders, who served on more committees within the Federation, were able to recognize more Judaic elements within the organization.

Moving into the composition and backgrounds of the mostly Jewish professional staff of the Jewish Federation, these authors were discovered an overall alignment with the identification of Jewish values both personally and in the work they produced at the Federation. The professionals' backgrounds and motivations for working in the Jewish community were discussed. Many professionals saw working in this field as their "calling" and went to graduate school to earn degrees in Social Work, Jewish Education, and Jewish Communal Service. Other professionals came through other paths but similarly felt the "calling" to work in the Jewish community. Regardless of their background, these

professionals professed a strong tie to the community, a desire to make a difference, and a want to make social change.

The area that appeared to be central among all of the professionals interviewed was the idea that Jewish values guided their work. These values closely paralleled their own personal values. As such, their work provided them with a sense of satisfaction and meaning. The values of *tzeddakah*, meaning charity and social justice, *tikkun olam*, defined as repairing the world, and *klal Yisrael*, meaning all Jews regardless of denomination, were the most frequently mentioned. Other values mentioned included building community, the importance of education, and caring for one's fellow human being.

Professionals were also questioned about staff diversity. Certain departments within the Jewish Federation were comprised of all Jewish workers, while other areas included a mix of Jews and non-Jews. The gender, religious background, education levels, sexual orientation, and culture of these employees varied. Many professional staff members believed that support staff consists mostly of non-Jews.

Staff development was another area explored in the study. It was found that staff development for support personnel is minimal. Professionals want their support staff to be knowledgeable about Jewish holidays and customs, but failed to come up with ways for this education

to take place. There are no notable formal seminars or programs offered to support staff. Jewish Family Service sent their support and professional staff a brochure that explained the meaning and significance of the Jewish holidays. However, there was no indication that the Federation introduced this practice as well.

The responses from professionals varied with regard to the frequency and content of their own staff development. Some professionals felt that few or even no opportunities were offered. Professionals who spoke of development opportunities could not explain if these opportunities occurred frequently or on a scheduled basis. Also, the Jewish component of staff development programs seemed to be minimal. The professionals expressed a desire to have more frequent staff development programs. Professionals expressed the desire to receive training or education on new techniques that would enhance their work efficiency. It is a logical step to add Jewish components into staff development activities considering that most professionals believe that they are engaged in doing Jewish work.

Aside from a lack of interest on the part of staff members, the professionals spoke about the lack of time and funds as reasons why staff development does not occur as frequently as they would desire. Therefore, professionals have been encouraging their staff to take classes and develop

new skills outside of the office. Still, there seems to be a desire and need for more staff development opportunities in the Jewish Federation. Executives have seen and heard this expressed need and have taken steps to ensure that a closer look be given towards staff development activities. For example, the Jewish Federation recently hired a rabbi to work on inserting more Judaic components into the work of the Jewish Federation.

The Jewish Federation of Los Angeles has identified itself as having Jewish components. The professional practices and personal infusions of Jewish concepts and content have contributed to the creation of a Jewish environment. As representatives of the Los Angeles Jewish community, it is important that staff of the Federation be able to articulate the Jewish content within the work and services of the Jewish Federation. Although a few of those interviewed seemed to have an integral understanding of these Jewish underlying values, several might benefit from further exploration of the Jewish components in staff development.

### Recommendations

When the authors began their journey of writing this thesis, finding literature about the Jewish component of the Jewish Federation work was difficult. It was suggested that a close look be taken at Boston's Combined



Jewish Philanthropies' model in light of their publicly recognized Jewish component. The CJP underwent a transformation, one that many professionals believe Los Angeles could benefit. In an interview with Barry Shrage, the Executive Director of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies, the authors began to understand this new model. Mr. Shrage began this process of transformation by asking himself, "How can you have social justice in a Jewish community, if the Jewish community itself isn't Jewish?" Mr. Shrage soon realized that "a real serious Jewish community is an educated community." He defined education as being "knowledgeable and being rooted in its [the agency's] own past and its own spiritual tradition." Mr. Shrage believed this was the only way the community can be "committed to changing the world". In order to increase the education and enhance the "Jewish" of his community, Mr. Shrage developed partnerships with agencies, synagogues, schools and local businesses. This was not an overnight process, it took a number of years and a tremendous amount of dedication.

Utilizing ideas from the Boston model to enhance the Jewish ambiance within the Los Angeles Federation seems to be a logical step. However, one must keep in mind the geographical differences both in distance and in culture that make the replication of this model unrealistic.

Therefore recommendations presented here are based partially upon the Boston model, as well as, upon conclusions drawn from the research of the Los Angeles Jewish Federation. It is hoped that the following will serve as a starting point for dialogue and action regarding the improvement of the Los Angeles Jewish Federation through the enhancement of its Jewish component.

Recommendations 1-5 are ideas or programs that the Jewish Federation currently employs that should be considered for continuation and/or enhancement. Recommendations 6-12 are ideas that professionals have articulated or the thesis authors have created as a result of their research.

- 1) Continue creating themes for Super Sunday. The 2001 campaign's theme included three values: *Torah*, *kehillah* and *tikkun olam*.

Professionals and volunteers benefited from this new component. Not only did it help to educate the community, but it also helped people feel uplifted throughout the day's events and in their solicitations.

- 2) Jewish education of staff and lay leaders should continue and expand. With the addition of a new rabbi on staff, it is likely that this area will be addressed in great detail. Perhaps an informal survey of staff and lay leaders will permit the rabbi to get a better idea of what areas of Jewish education need to be addressed. Perhaps, Jewish education and

staff development can be combined. The uniqueness of Los Angeles can make this easier. One professional commented, "With the rabbinic community and HUC, and the UJ right here, there is an incredible wealth of Jewish knowledge and expertise here." In essence, the Jewish Federation should take advantage of its local resources.

- 3) Currently there is a great level of Jewish education occurring within the Young Leadership division. The authors recommend that this level of education be brought in to include other divisions of the Federation.
- 4) Enhance holiday celebrations. One professional explained:

I wish we would have someone on staff who would take that responsibility and would really gather on Friday afternoons to recognize who we are a little bit more

Jewish Family Service recognizes holidays by having celebrations; perhaps the Jewish Federation can do something similar. Breaking bread on Friday afternoon or passing out apples and honey on Rosh Hashanah are two examples.

- 5) Increase partnerships with synagogues. Many Jewish Federation lay leaders are also leaders at their synagogues; therefore, it is reasonable to utilize them as resources for developing such relationships. Such a development allows both institutions to mutually benefit from the others areas of expertise, such as Jewish education or fundraising.

- 6) The authors feel that the individuals representing the Jewish Federation should be able to articulate the values, practices, and vision of the agency within a Jewish context. In order to do this, the authors suggest not only educating staff, but keeping an up to date reference book with Jewish terminology and definitions, as well as, basic explanations of Jewish holidays and customs. This book should be made available to all new employees regardless of religious affiliation, and it should be kept near the phone of Jewish Federation's phone operator.
- 7) The role of the Jewish Federation should be re-evaluated. It may appear that the Federation is solely a fundraising body; however, this is not the only focus of Federation work. Similar to the investigation and adjustments that the Combined Jewish Philanthropies underwent, perhaps the Los Angeles Federation would benefit from a review. Such a review could allow the Jewish Federation to place a greater emphasis on programs around education, synagogue partnerships, and expand its social services.
- 8) Display the Jewish Communal Code of Ethics, so professionals, lay leaders, and clients can see that there is a standard of practice. In addition, this small document is able to clarify the Jewish component in connection with the employees' work.

9) The Federation may consider undergoing an evaluative process that utilizes its employees to outline Jewish values they personally find relevant within the Los Angeles Federation's services. The authors recommend formalizing such a review into a site specific "Code of Ethics and Jewish Values". This could be displayed and included within the work manuals of the employees. An example of such a point for the "Code" came from one professional interviewed who highlighted the Jewish value of *b'tzelem Elohim*, all humans are created in the image of God. He stated that in working with our co-workers one must treat them professionally and kindly for this is a Jewish value.

10) Increase understanding of the Jewish values that guide the Federation. Perhaps during a New Employee Orientation (entitled Federation 101), professionals, as well as staff, would be educated on the purpose of the agency and its relevant Jewish values. The authors feel this might even increase work productivity, as the staff's relationship to these values become a driving force behind their work.

11) The authors recognize the validity and practicality of starting small. The Federation is a large and multi-faceted system, which may benefit from a step by step review and change process rather than a complete overhaul at once. Making small changes can provide for smoother and

more productive transition. An example of this the authors note came from a professional who suggested each department try and add one Jewish activity to their yearly calendar.

- 12) Get a sense of how much money and time is budgeted for staff development and determine if this is a sufficient amount to support speakers, workshops, and expenses for outside conferences or classes related to Jewish education and Jewish values programming. If the Federation determines a deficiency, it may be time to review this in the budgeting allocation process for future years.
- 13) The authors suggest that more research be conducted on this matter before simply inserting more Judaic components. Recognize the challenges to increasing Jewish components while not creating an oppressive Jewish environment for the staff, interviewing and distributing questionnaires to staff will assist in determining an appropriate level of Judaic infusion.

The research within answers the authors initial question concerning, "What's Jewish about the Jewish Federation?" It suggests levels of identification with Jewish values, a physical environment filled with Jewish symbols and signs, an office-lingo that utilizes common Hebrew and Yiddish phrases, a level of Jewish education, and a staff who

understands they are working for the betterment of the Jewish people. The authors recognize there is Jewish in the Jewish Federation; yet, there is still room for heightening its visibility and room to expand the Jewish components of the Federation!

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## X. APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Qualitative Interview Guidelines

### QUESTIONS FOR IN DEPTH INTERVIEWS

1. **Revised:** Were you around during the recent process of developing a new mission statement? What do you remember about the process and the statement? Should it have the word Jewish in it?

**Original Question:** I know it may be difficult to recall off the top of your head, but do you by chance know the mission statement of your organization? (Does it have the word Jewish in it?)

2. What items, practices, or philosophies make your work environment Jewish? Is anything about it too oppressive or inappropriately Jewish?

3. **Revised:** In what ways do you get the Jewish message?

**Original:** What do you believe is Jewish about your agency/ Federation? (i.e. off for holidays, kosher food only, pictures on walls, greeting on phone is "shalom")

4. **Revised:** Think of a typical day... think of a typical week? What happened that was Jewish? What happened that wasn't Jewish?
5. Why did you choose to work in a Jewish organization? Did the fact that the organization was Jewish affect your choice of work environment?

6. What kinds of Jewish symbols do you readily observe in your work place?

**May be answered above**

7. Can you identify any Jewish values in your work place?

**May be answered above**

8. How does your organization recognize religious holidays, Jewish and non-Jewish?

9. **Revised:** What are some examples of the different kinds of individuals that work in your work place? Do different religious backgrounds affect the work environment? Can you give some examples?

**Original:** What is the religious composition of the primary recipients of your work? Does your work output or effort change depending on the composition of those who benefit from your work?

10. Does your organization have a procedure for staff development? Is there any Judaic content infused in these development activities?
11. When the Federation employs non-Jewish staff, do you feel it makes a difference if they are knowledgeable about Jewish customs?
12. When your organization enlists outside partners for projects, is it important that these organizations have the word Jewish within their overall mission?
14. Do you believe you do Jewish work? What about it makes it Jewish?

## Appendix 2

### Selected Group of Individuals Interviewed

(Listed in Alphabetical Order)

1. John Fishel, President of Los Angeles Jewish Federation
2. Shoshana Hirsh, Past title: Planning Director and Assistant Director of Operation at the Jewish Federation Valley-Alliance
3. Carol Levy, Associate Campaign Director for Metro West Region of Los Angeles Federation
4. Mark Meltzer, Executive Director-CEO Jewish Free Loan
5. Jack Meyer, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance
6. Mitch Orlik, Past title: Executive Vice President at the Columbus, Ohio Jewish Federation
7. Miriam Prum-Hess, Director of Planning & Allocations, Los Angeles Jewish Federation
8. Barry Shrage, President of Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Boston, Massachusetts
9. Stefanie Somers, Assistant Director Women's Division for the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance
10. Sally Weber, Director of Jewish Community Program Volunteer Services, Jewish Family Services

### Appendix 3

#### Survey Questionnaire

**This questionnaire is intended for the lay leadership of the Los Angeles Jewish Federations. Sarah Sirota, Lonee Frailich, and Rachel Botwinick are Hebrew Union College-JIR students that are currently writing their Master's thesis for the Jewish Communal Service program. They are examining if and how Jewish values, practices and customs are infused throughout the Jewish Federation. This questionnaire will help them to gather this information from the perspective of the lay leadership in the Federation.**

---

1. The following are identified Judaic objects often found in Jewish environments. Please check off any of the following you recall seeing at the Federation during your visits:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Menorah                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish Art Work           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Candles                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Torah Portion of the Week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish Holiday Decorations | <input type="checkbox"/> Challah                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish Stars               | <input type="checkbox"/> Wine                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hebrew                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Judaic text               |

2. Please check any of the following values you feel are relevant in your relationship with the Jewish Federation:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Repairing the World (Tikkun Olam) | <input type="checkbox"/> Created in the Image of Gd |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tzeddakah                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Respecting your elders     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acts of Loving Kindness           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: List your own       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Responsibility for Others         | Jewish Values                                       |
- 
- 
- 
-



3. Please list the top 3 reasons you donate money or time to the Jewish Federation:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. On a scale of 1-5 (1 = the least, 5 = the most) rate the degree to which you feel you are "Doing Jewish" when participating in a meeting at the Jewish Federation:

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

5. Please list all areas of the Jewish Federation that you are affiliated with: (Example, Women's Division, Young Leadership, Planning and Allocations)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Which Federation site are you most involved with:

- ☐ Boston
- ☐ Los Angeles/6505 Wilshire
- ☐ Los Angeles/South Bay
- ☐ Los Angeles/Metro West - Sawtelle site
- ☐ Los Angeles/ Valley Alliance

7. How old are you:

- |                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18 - 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 - 65   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 - 35 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 - 75   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35 - 45 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75 - 85   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 45 - 55 | <input type="checkbox"/> 85 & Over |

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

#### Appendix 4

#### Mission Statement for the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles

The Jewish Federation seeks to mobilize and integrate financial, human and organizational resources within the Greater Los Angeles Jewish community to foster a sense of common Jewish purpose; to strengthen Jewish constituencies in order to enhance Jewish identity; to meet critical human needs in a Jewish context; and to intensify our bonds with our people worldwide.