

# ▶ Jewish Teen Foundations

## growing philanthropists.

Jewish teen foundations provide teens with the opportunity to engage in hands-on philanthropy while learning the Jewish values of *tzedakah* and *tikkun olam*.

Jewish teen foundations are powerful models of experiential Jewish education that introduce teens to collective grantmaking. This group process is guided by Jewish values and provides teen philanthropists-in-training with opportunities to gain new leadership skills.

Jewish teen foundations go beyond a simple *mitzvah* project or fundraiser. By engaging teens in collective philanthropic giving, these programs help them understand the Jewish obligation of *tzedakah* on a much deeper level.

Acting as a foundation board, teens often contribute their own money or fundraise for the collective grantmaking pool, which may be matched by the institution or a local donor. This method of granting pooled funds is also known as a “giving circle.”

At JTFN, we believe these early experiences with strategic philanthropy will both strengthen a teen’s engagement with Jewish life and ensure his or her commitment to lifelong giving, based on Jewish values.

## what teen foundations do.

While each teen foundation operates with varying specifics that fit the institution and the community, nearly all Jewish teen foundations follow the same programmatic group process:

- ▶ Explore Jewish values
- ▶ Create a mission statement
- ▶ Learn about grantmaking and the non-profit sector
- ▶ Distribute Request for Proposals to non-profit organizations and review grant proposals
- ▶ Conduct site visits
- ▶ Learn about building consensus
- ▶ Make group decisions on where to award grants
- ▶ Celebrate and share their grant decisions with the greater community

### real decisions.



### Jewish Teen Funders Network

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## Jewish institutions.

Jewish teen foundations exist within a variety of Jewish institutions:

- ▶ Day schools
- ▶ Jewish community centers
- ▶ Jewish community foundations
- ▶ Jewish education agencies
- ▶ Jewish federations
- ▶ Summer camps
- ▶ Synagogues

## Leadership lessons.

For teen members, Jewish teen foundations provide the opportunity to learn and practice valuable leadership skills. Alumni of these programs have reported entering college with important life-long skills:

- ▶ Working in a group
- ▶ Listening to others
- ▶ Disagreeing with someone else respectfully
- ▶ Building consensus with a group
- ▶ Presenting ideas
- ▶ Forming an opinion
- ▶ Public speaking

By creating a safe space, while encouraging participants to make real decisions and with real impact, program leaders help teen foundation members develop important skills. Many go on to hold leadership roles in college and beyond.

## big questions.

Jewish teen foundation members are presented with deep, challenging questions throughout the program. Questions include:

- ▶ What is Jewish giving?
- ▶ What Jewish values are important to you?
- ▶ What issues do you care about?
- ▶ Should our funding help Jews specifically, or a more general population?
- ▶ Should our funding go to Jewish or secular organizations?
- ▶ Should our funding be local, national, in Israel, or international?
- ▶ Where will our money have the greatest impact?

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***JTFN helps Jewish professionals and lay leaders start Jewish teen foundations in their local communities. Learn more about our work at [www.jtfn.org](http://www.jtfn.org).***

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