

Jewish Federation of Greater Phoenix: NowGen Giving Circle

Blaine Light and Jonny Basha met in high school through BBYO. When they graduated college in 2012, Jonny brought Moishe House to Phoenix and Blaine moved in shortly after. Wanting to bring people together to give back collectively, they gathered nine of their friends and others from the Moishe House community to form a giving circle. The first cycle of their giving circle ran from 2014-2015 and made 5 grants, allocating \$19,500. After its successful first cycle, the circle moved under the auspices of the Federation to become part of the NowGen initiative. Fast forward to 2022, the NowGen Giving Circle has twenty-five members and grants between \$20,000 to \$25,000 each year.

After relocating to Seattle in 2018, Jonny duplicated the successful giving circle at the [Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle's NowGen](#) group, which is still active.

Andrew Gibbs, NowGen Director for the Center for Jewish Philanthropy of Greater Phoenix, says “[the giving circle] really gives emerging and young philanthropists, and future philanthropists, an opportunity to see an allocation process from start to finish. To learn and understand the processes of how you create an application, how you decide who will be eligible, how you decide how much each group will be eligible for, and how to work with others to allocate joint resources.” Gibbs states that it can be a challenge for young professionals in their 20s and 30s to feel like they are making a difference. The NowGen giving circle is an opportunity for them to meet like-minded individuals and make a noticeable impact on their community. They have funded full programs, like their local BBYO’s training program.

Giving circles are a powerful vehicle for building a pipeline for leadership and philanthropy in communities by educating lay leaders about Federation’s work. Gibbs explained that he’s seen many former participants go on to leadership roles at Jewish Federation, Foundations, and throughout their Jewish community. Blake and Jonny are perfect examples - they both joined JFNA’s National Young Leadership Cabinet last year, along with two friends whose first Federation involvement was the NowGen Giving Circle. This is just one of many examples that demonstrate the power of giving circles in bringing new donors into the Federation and Jewish philanthropy pipeline who grow their giving and leadership.

Learn more or join the NowGen Phoenix Giving Circles [here](#).

