

# HUC-JIR RECEIVES HISTORIC, INTERDENOMINATIONAL GRANT OF \$3.7 MILLION FROM THE JIM JOSEPH FOUNDATION TO ADVANCE JEWISH EDUCATION

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In a bold effort to increase the number of future educators and to improve the quality of professional preparation and Jewish education they receive, HUC-JIR has been granted \$3.7 million from the Jim Joseph Foundation. Nearly \$12 million in grants from the Jim Joseph Foundation (JJF) are going to HUC-JIR, The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), and Yeshiva University (YU), the three leading training institutions for Jewish educators.

The initial grants, to be administered over a five-year period, will be used as financial aid for students pursuing education degrees or certification in programs that prepare them to work with Jewish youth and young adults, and to assist each institution in planning new and enhanced programs that will attract more educators to the field.

The grants represent the launch of a long-term investment the foundation plans to make in these three grand institutions and model the benefits of interdenominational cooperation and partnership in developing innovative programs, strengthening recruitment and marketing, and embracing educational technology and distance learning.

Rabbi David Ellenson says, "The Jim Joseph Foundation's history-making grant is imbued with a commitment to interdenominational collaboration that charts a new and constructive direction in partnership between the Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Movements in North America. This grant

addresses some of the most glaring needs in the American Jewish community. JJF understands that attracting and educating quality Jewish educators in our institutions is critical to instilling in today's Jewish youth a strong

Jewish identity and maintaining a vibrant American Jewish community. Increasing the quantity and quality of Jewish educators, and giving them the tools to do their jobs effectively, will have a profound and immediate impact on Jewish life."

"Jewish education is the key to the Jewish future, and outstanding Jewish educators are the key to making sure that children, youth and adults have the kinds of educational experiences that will prepare them to create that future," adds Dr. Michael Zeldin, Director of HUC-JIR's Rhea Hirsch School of Education. "We are committed to maintaining the excellence of the professional preparation we provide while greatly expanding the pathways available for Jewish young adults who want to

make a difference in the world through Jewish education, both in and out of the classroom."

"The immediate impact of this historic grant," Zeldin continues, "is that HUC-JIR will be able to grant full-tuition scholarships to students who study Jewish education full-time at the Hebrew Union College. We believe that this will help us expand the number of highly qualified students we are able to prepare to become Jewish educators."

The grants will provide \$700,000 to each institution for each of the next five academic years for scholarships for future educators. The remaining grant funds will be divided among the institutions to be used in the 2009-2010 academic year for planning purposes. The three institutions will work to foster best practices and collaborate on projects when possible to ensure creative new directions and a renewed commitment to the education of future Jewish educators.

In addition, the foundation has agreed to explore support for inter-institutional collaborations that evidence promise for directly augmenting the educational enterprise across institutions. Two potential areas for such development are new technologies for distance learning and marketing of Jewish education as a desirable professional career.

Unique to the grants is also the unprecedented collaboration this partnership represents. To facilitate this cooperation, JJF will convene a steering committee comprised of the leadership of the three institu-



tions. This group will monitor progress of the grant implementation and plan for additional initiatives that will be pursued with JJF's support. They also will explore together how to expand distance learning, marketing, and recruitment.

HUC-JIR's Rhea Hisch School of Education (RHSEO) in Los Angeles and New York School of Education (NYSOE) have educated 408 Jewish educators serving the Reform Movement's congregational schools, day schools, agencies of Jewish education, Federations, Jewish community centers, Jewish camps, and Hillels.

The incoming 2009-2010 cohort represents a 200% increase in enrollment. The M.A. programs include a first year of study in Israel, a curriculum focused on Jewish studies, pedagogy, and leadership development, and a rich program of mentored internships.

The RHSEO is renowned as a center for innovation in Jewish education through its Experiment in Congregational Education (ECE), which re-visions congregational education and directly affect the lives of tens of thousands of Jewish children, families, congregants in Reform synagogues; and DeLeT (Day School Leadership through Teaching), the first-ever program under Jewish sponsorship leading to a California State Teaching Credential. The NYSOE, in partnership with JTS, sponsors the Leadership Institute for Congregational School Educators to enhance the capacity of congregational school educators through seminars, study in Israel, and innovative projects implemented in each educator's school.

The Shimon Ben Joseph Foundation, commonly known as the Jim Joseph Foundation, is committed to the legacy of its founder, Jim Joseph, z"l, devoted exclusively to supporting education of Jewish youth in the United States. Jim Joseph was a dedicated Jewish phi-



lanthropist who cared passionately about the education of Jewish children, youth, and young adults. He believed that focusing on young people was the best way to preserve a strong Jewish faith and proud heritage, thereby ensuring success of the Jewish people for the future.

After completing his master's degree at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, Jim Joseph began a highly successful career acquiring and developing commercial and residential property for his company, Interland Corporation. As he built his business, Joseph donated generously to a wide variety of Jewish institutions and organizations and formed the Jim Joseph Foundation in 1987. Jim Joseph passed away December 19, 2003.

The JJF's Board of Directors and its foundation professionals are building on the philanthropic mission that Jim Joseph pursued – to foster compelling, effective learning experiences for young Jews in the United States. In accordance with Jim Joseph's view, the Foundation recognizes that Jewish learning takes place in a multitude of settings, including but not limited to day schools, camps, youth groups, congregations, college campuses, service learning experiences, community centers, and the like.

"Our commitment is to Jewish education, and the partnership now established with these three institutions through these grants should contribute greatly to advancing this cause," says JJF President Al Levitt. "It is an exciting development for all

who care about improving the quality of Jewish life. We're simply playing our role in helping these institutions, and the educators they educate, reach their full potential and positively shape the lives of Jewish youth."

JJF Executive Director Chip Edelsberg adds, "The Jim Joseph Foundation is confident these three institutions will produce highly qualified educators who will inspire a next generation of young Jews to value Jewish learning. The promise of this initiative is that it will enrich students in their respective programs of study, strengthen each individual institution, and enable us to infuse the field with talented educators whose collective good work will positively impact the world of Jewish education." ■



## How to Apply for the Jim Joseph Foundation Scholarships at HUC-JIR

The Jim Joseph Foundation grant makes possible the first-ever program of full scholarships at HUC-JIR's Rhea Hirsch School of Education (RHSEO) in Los Angeles and New York School of Education.

"We are eager to attract young men and women with a passion for creating vibrant Jewish communities and for passing on Jewish tradition," says Dr. Michael Zeldin, RHSEO Director. "We are looking for candidates who have proven leadership ability and the capacity to excite others about Jewish living and learning. We are particularly on the lookout for individuals filled with ideas for new ways of engaging others. We believe that we can take people with these raw talents and transform them into compelling leaders in Jewish education."

To be eligible, students must be enrolled to study full-time at HUC-JIR. The requirements for the scholarship are the same as the requirements for admission to the Education Program. While applicants do not need to demonstrate knowledge of Hebrew in order to apply, they must demonstrate a mastery of Hebrew at the level of "advanced beginner" by the time they begin their studies. The first year of the program is in Israel.

Please go to HUC-JIR's Admissions website at: [www.huc.edu/link/?x=Apply](http://www.huc.edu/link/?x=Apply)  
Students will be notified about the scholarships when they are notified about matriculation.