HAROLD HAS ASKED ME to give you my perspective on the development of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation (HGF). I am happy to do so because this gives you an opportunity to look through my personal lens, as a wife and fellow traveler in the world of Jewish philanthropy, at the work of HGF and the motivation behind some of its decisions.

Harold often says that his desire to better the Jewish world started when he was a boy growing up in the 1930’s in a very anti-Semitic environment in the neighborhood of Auburndale, Massachusetts. As he matured, that desire increased as he began to accumulate wealth by managing, buying, and selling apartments, at first locally, then nationally. This pattern repeated itself when he created the Foundation 15 years ago, at first supporting Jewish life locally, then nationally. This pattern repeated itself when he created the Foundation 15 years ago, at first supporting Jewish life locally, then supporting projects and partnerships nationally. It is a cycle that has occurred over and over again as he began to create programs where his most creative, entrepreneurial ideas took shape.

His entrepreneurial spirit and eye for undervalued assets has been his modus operandi—whether that means buying apartments in an economic downturn, bankrolling awards for teachers of excellence, or funding challenge grants to inspire “giving”, especially within the Jewish camping movement. Whether apartments, teachers or camps, we are looking at assets that have been undervalued and need an appreciative eye and a strategic plan to raise them up. Harold offers that in many ways. His “bag of tricks” usually includes leveraging money by providing challenge grants in various multiples, helping other Jews feel good about their philanthropic giving, scouting for talented people, and providing technical assistance to emerging organizations willing to learn.

Harold and I understand that giving money away strategically is hard work. We are deeply grateful to the people who mentored us, especially Michael Steinhardt, Jeremy Pava, Winnie Sandler Grinspoon and Rabbi Irving “Yitz” Greenberg. We have learned so much from their guidance. The HGF board, too, is a source of inspiration. They take their work seriously, as does the Foundation’s amazing staff of over 40 people.

But what is really behind Harold’s philanthropic spirit? I believe that people who face their own mortality profoundly understand that it is indeed a gift to be able to think about one’s legacy. Harold and I recognize that we are here on this earth for a heartbeat in the great scheme of things. There is something very basic in our core that makes us feel that our being here on earth has somehow, somewhere, made a difference.

I have read that “legacy is more about how you live in this world than how you leave it.” This is definitely true in Harold’s case. There is a sense of urgency that surrounds his daily life,
something far bigger than himself, a sense of wanting to be intimately tied to thousands of years of Jewish history and assuring its continuity. In a very real sense, by examining his past, he began to realize what truly mattered to him.

What matters to Harold is inspiring others to give back to their communities, especially trying to redirect the 80% of Jewish philanthropic money which goes to non-Jewish institutions.

Harold hopes that his Jewish philanthropy—$72 million gifted to Jewish causes in the Foundation’s first 15 years—will excite others to do the same. What amazing things we could do with our wealth to better secure the Jewish future, if only those who had the means also had the inclination!

That is why Harold believes in partnerships, challenge grants, and taking people on long walks. Our annual summer gatherings in Aspen, Colorado, which give people a chance to walk and talk together and collect new friends, are really all about “networking” without an agenda. We come home from Aspen inspired by people, ideas and opportunities to put more people together the following year.

What drives us is the demographics of the Jewish community. We are a minority among minorities with a negative birth rate. Yet, we Jews have made a great contribution to the world with big ideas—ideas that last, a people to be proud of, a culture worth continuing, a value system worth emulating and children worth educating Jewishly—formally and informally. This motivates us to reach out to unconnected Jews. We know from the “thank you” notes we receive regularly from people who have sampled Jewish life through our work that they are glad for the experience.

We believe with all our hearts that being Jewish gives our lives meaning and purpose, satisfaction and growth. It stabilizes our lives and our families’ lives in a world that grows ever more unstable. Our personal enrichment helps lift the tenor of our conversation with each other and those that are drawn into our ever-widening circle. We want people to know that connecting to community can be inspirational, and that ultimately all our creative juices can flow as we mentor each other. Committing ourselves to the Jewish present will ensure a vibrant Jewish future.

For Harold and me, HGF has been the major means of expressing our commitment to the Jewish present and the Jewish future. In the hope of inspiring others, we want to tell you a bit about the Foundation’s most significant programs: The PJ Library, the Grinspoon Institute for Jewish Philanthropy, the Grinspoon-Steinhardt Awards for Excellence in Jewish Education, and the B’nai Tzedek Teen Philanthropy Program, among others.

Thank you for allowing me to share my perspective with you.
and the early years of child-raising are often the starting point for families to explore the kind of home they would like to create. We believe it is critical to ensure that all Jews feel a part of the Jewish community and are inspired to raise their children with Judaism in the home.

The PJ Library (“PJ” for pajamas) in partnership with local communities regularly provides Jewish families with young children high-quality children’s books and other tools that foster intergenerational Jewish learning in a way that is both fun and readily accessible. This often creates a gateway for deeper Jewish involvement within families and the greater Jewish community.

It is a very special time at the end of the day when parents and children snuggle up with a book. Reading stories and listening to music together are among the most powerful and nurturing early childhood experiences. The PJ Library program turns these special moments into Jewish moments which will remain with children the rest of their lives.

Compiled by early-childhood educators and literature experts, the book and music list comprises high-quality selections on themes such as Jewish holidays, folktales and Jewish family life.

Open to all Jewish families with young children in participating communities, the PJ Library makes a special effort to reach unengaged and marginally engaged families.

The PJ Library was initially inspired by Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library.

THE PJ LIBRARY PROGRAM PROVIDES

• Free monthly mailing of an age-appropriate Jewish children’s book or music CD.
• Resource material to help families use the selection in their homes.
• Supplementary programming to create community with other young families.
a literacy program which Harold Grinspoon sponsors in Springfield, MA. The PJ Library was launched in Western Massachusetts in December 2005 as a model that could be implemented by other communities.

Now, some three years later, more than 100 United States communities offer the program to their local families, and several others are targeted for launching in 2009. Approximately 40,000 children receive monthly gifts made available by local funders and community organizations. Also in 2009, the program will become international with five Canadian cities joining The PJ Library family. We are exploring the possibility of bringing The PJ Library to other cities and countries, including Israel.

The PJ Library in a community is a collaboration of local funders, Jewish communal organizations (Federation, JCC, Central Jewish Agency, etc.), local programming professionals and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. Together, we are not only getting books to children, but also, through community programs, bringing families together for book-related activities that further enrich the PJ experience. To inspire local communities around the country to launch The PJ Library in their areas, HGF significantly underwrites both subscription fees and funding for PJ Library program professionals. More than 90 communities of all sizes have benefited from the HGF grants.

The PJ Library is a gift; it is FREE to PJ families. By providing this gift, local funders are welcoming young families into their Jewish community. In 2007-08 the HGF invested over 2 million dollars in the program. The PJ Library is actively seeking new funders to help expand the reach of the program in local communities.

Please visit www.PJLibrary.org to learn more about the program.

“I just wanted to drop a line to let you know how much our family enjoys the books and materials from The PJ Library. I was not raised in a Jewish family, but my husband and I are trying to teach our kids (ages 4 and 1) about their Jewish faith and culture. I’m learning myself as we go along, so it has been such a nice benefit for me to have these wonderful, age-appropriate materials arriving at our home. The Runaway Latkes has become a favorite, and my daughter has been playing the Chanukah music CD daily on a repeating loop. The PJ Library’s choices are always so wonderful, and I’m very grateful for the help in encouraging our kids to explore their Jewish identity.” —A PJ Mom from Concord, MA

“To be able to provide Jewish books and CDs to families who might otherwise not have access to them was exciting enough for me. To discover that a whole system of selecting materials and mailing them was already in place made it easy to provide the funding to make this wonderful program a reality in New Haven. As a grandfather of two, I was delighted to discover this way of passing my heritage on to a new generation.” —Andrew Eder Funder of The PJ Library
Influenced by research

which showed that Jewish overnight camping plays a key role in the Jewish identity of a broad spectrum of young people and recognizing the need to help camps financially, the Harold Grinspoon Foundation created the Grinspoon Institute for Jewish Philanthropy (GIJP) in 2004. Its mission is to stimulate Jewish philanthropy by providing mentoring services to nonprofit Jewish overnight camps and a limited number of other Jewish nonprofit organizations.

The GIJP accomplishes its mission by providing expert consulting services to camp lay and professional leaders. In its first four years, the GIJP has focused on helping camps to develop their boards, conduct strategic planning and raise funds. Through matching challenge grants, it has helped bring over $40 million in new funding to camps since December 2005.

Currently, more than 75 camps receive assistance from the GIJP, which delivers the following services:

Consultation: The GIJP makes experienced mentors available to camps, helping them create high-performing boards, develop strategic plans, reconnect with their alumni and other constituents, use donor technology tools, and raise funds.

Challenge grants: To spur fundraising for capital projects and other needs, matching funds are made available for challenge grants designated for groups of camps. Three challenge grant cycles have been completed since December 2005. Another three are in progress; HGF has committed to providing up to $12.1
When we reflect on how much we have accomplished over the past year and how much we hope to accomplish in the future, we realize that it is a direct result of our association with the Grinspoon Institute for Jewish Philanthropy.

— Jonah Geller, Executive Director, Tamarack Camps

million in matching funds for qualifying gifts to camps in the program.

Technology: To address technology needs, the GIJP created the Alumni and Donor Outreach Technology Program. Through this program, camps receive valuable help to determine appropriate software solutions; plan for collection and maintenance of alumni, donor and gift data; and understand best practices in alumni and fundraising technology and processes.


In the area of camping, the work of GIJP complements the work of the Foundation for Jewish Camp under the leadership of Chief Executive Officer Jerry Silverman.

Please visit www.gijp.org to learn more about the program.

“On behalf of Camp Ramah in Wisconsin, I want to personally thank you for the tremendous work of the Grinspoon Institute for Jewish Philanthropy to raise the bar for the entire field of Jewish camping. In just four years, you have helped transform the field.” — Rabbi David Soloff, Director, Camp Ramah Wisconsin

“Harold’s vision of philanthropy was to bring an entrepreneurial flair to accomplish a goal. So it wasn’t about writing a check, it was about sending an individual to help teach the camp how to raise money.”

— Peter Weidhorn, Chairman, Board of Trustees, URJ
B’nai Tzedek is redefining what it means to be a Jewish philanthropist by showing young people that they have the power to change the world through a personal and engaged relationship to lifelong giving. This program is a tool for teens to give tzedakah, participate in innovative educational programming, and learn leadership skills. Locally, B’nai Tzedek also supports a youth foundation which provides teens an opportunity to participate in collective fundraising and grantmaking.

Using bar/bat mitzvah gift money, teens open a B’nai Tzedek fund. A local funder and/or endowment foundation matches the teen’s contribution to create a personal endowment fund in the teen’s name. Annually, teens make a recommendation from their fund to a Jewish nonprofit organization. Since it was initiated in Western Massachusetts in 1998, more than 685 fund holders have made close to $50,000 in recommendations.

Embraced by more than 40 communities in North America and most recently in England, B’nai Tzedek can easily be adapted to fit the needs of each individual community. All B’nai Tzedek programs are funded locally. Resources provided by the HGF staff include technical assistance, best practices, marketing materials, training and networking opportunities. Financial support is available to qualified new communities to subsidize B’nai Tzedek program directors’ salaries for three years.

The benefits to future generations are significant: B’nai Tzedek teaches teens at an early age to be involved in the important work of their community.
The Grinspoon-Steinhardt Awards acknowledge and honor outstanding Jewish educators. The program was created in 2000 with philanthropist Michael Steinhardt and his foundation as a national awards program run by the Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA). Since then, the awards have been presented to over 400 exceptional Jewish educators in day schools, early childhood centers and congregational schools from 78 communities. The teachers are honored annually at the General Assembly of the United Jewish Communities.
HGF is strongly committed to the State of Israel and to strengthening Israel-Diaspora ties. It supports the work of close to 40 nonprofits in Israel, primarily in two areas:

Education, entrepreneurship and health in the town of Afula and the surrounding Gilboa region: HGF’s geographic focus is intended to leverage a relationship that Western Massachusetts already has with this Galilee region through the Israel Grants Program federation system. HGF particularly supports two of the region’s pillar institutions, the Max Stern College of Emek Yezreel and Emek Medical Center. It has also partnered extensively with Unistream to create centers for youth entrepreneurship in Afula, the Gilboa and neighboring Upper Nazareth.

Jewish pluralism: HGF supports nonprofits that promote tolerance and democracy in the religious sector, and nonprofits that educate secular Jews about Jewish culture.

HGF supports nonprofits that promote tolerance and democracy in the religious sector, and nonprofits that educate secular Jews about Jewish culture.
The Foundation recognized early the potential of leveraging funding by joining national ventures and partnerships. Harold Grinspoon and Diane Troderman were founding members of the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE). Today, HGF is an active partner with the Partnership for Effective Learning and Innovative Education (PELIE), the Jewish Early Childhood Education Initiative (JECEI), Birthright Israel, the Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA), the Foundation for Jewish Camp, Jewish Funders Network, Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, and The Areivim Philanthropic Group.
Since its inception in 1993, HGF has been dedicated to strongly supporting the local Jewish community of Western Massachusetts. In addition to incentive grants to individuals for Jewish overnight camp and Jewish day school, HGF has stimulated local Jewish life in a variety of ways:

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<th>Signature Initiatives</th>
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<td>• Providing substantial funding for operating costs to five local Jewish day schools and helping them launch endowment and capital campaigns through challenge grants and development consulting support</td>
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<td>• Supporting Jewish educators through the Resource Center for Jewish Education with networking opportunities, funds for professional training and teaching materials, and acknowledgement of outstanding local Jewish educators through the Harold Grinspoon Awards for Excellence in Jewish Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Supporting local synagogues and other Jewish institutions in teen and family education</td>
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<td>• Investing in arts and culture programming by working with local Jewish institutions and with musicians and artists in the region to develop inclusive and high-quality community outreach events</td>
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<td>• Giving grants to individuals to make various experiences financially accessible: youth group activities, Jewish overnight camping, Jewish preschool, Jewish day school and trips to Israel</td>
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<td>• Contributing a $1.5 million challenge grant to the local JCC’s endowment campaign</td>
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<td>• Creating an Unsung Heroes Award to celebrate outstanding professional and volunteer contributors to Jewish life</td>
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<td>• Funding and partnering with the Jewish Federations of Western Massachusetts and the Berkshires on a variety of initiatives including an Israel Desk and a Young Leadership Program</td>
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To motivate camps to secure legacy gifts from loyal donors, the Grinspoon Institute for Jewish Philanthropy launched a 2-year legacy pilot project in January 2008, modeled after the innovative and highly successful Create a Jewish Legacy Program of the San Diego Jewish Community Foundation.

Six selected camps are working closely with mentors to develop plans to approach alumni and donors for legacy gifts. Every camp to date has surpassed its annual goals and therefore has received a $10,000 incentive grant. With this successful pilot project underway, the program has expanded to include 13 more camps.

In Western Massachusetts a parallel program has been set up and is working with 13 organizations in the region in partnership with the local Federations and the Jewish Endowment Foundation.

The Campership Incentive Program

The Campership Incentive Program provides grants, regardless of financial need, to families in Western Massachusetts in order to encourage them to choose a Jewish overnight camp for their children. In 2008, HGF provided grants for a record number of children in Western Massachusetts to attend Jewish overnight camp. The number of grants has increased 5-fold since 1995.

To help Jewish families in Western Massachusetts offset the cost of Jewish day school education, HGF offers a Tuition Incentive Program (TIP), which provides a substantial subsidy for any eligible Jewish child towards tuition at a local Jewish day school. The Foundation has provided over $5 million in TIP assistance to eligible families.

*Funding is available for summer sessions of any length (minimum one-week):
- First time campers can apply for 50% up to $1,500
- Returning campers can apply for 50% up to $1,000

*Please see guidelines at www.hgf.org
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