



A 2020 Vision

“When the Children of Israel stood at Mount Sinai to receive Divine Revelation, the Holy One of Blessing, said to them: ‘Bring me good guarantors that you will keep my Revelation and then I will give it to you.’ They replied: ‘Sovereign of the Universe, our ancestors will be our guarantors.’ Said God them: ‘Your guarantors need guarantors themselves, for they have not been without fault.’ They answered, ‘Our prophets will be our guarantors.’ God replied: ‘They have also not been without fault.’ Then the Israelites said: ‘Our children will be our guarantors.’ To which God replied: ‘In truth these are good guarantors. For their sake I will give it to you.’” (Song of Songs Rabbah, 1:4)

As much as the Jewish people are a people of memory, we are even more a people of hope, with a future orientation animated by a belief that the best is yet to come. It is in this spirit that the Reform Movement is embarking on a Campaign for Youth Engagement. We acknowledge that in 2011 only a minority of *b’nei and b’not mitzvah* in North America, including but also transcending the Reform Movement, remains actively engaged in Jewish communal life by the time they graduate from high school – in congregational and day schools, youth groups and immersion experiences in areas such as social justice and Israel engagement.

We are committed to strengthen connections between Jewish youth and Jewish communities and to support and nurture congregations that strive to excel in engaging Jewish youth. **By 2020 we aim to engage a majority of Reform Jewish teens actively in Jewish communal learning and living in order to guarantee a vibrant and dynamic Jewish future.** We commit to investing in people who work with Jewish youth and families, to providing excellent, ongoing training, and to developing a career path and a valued role for adults who dedicate themselves to leading and serving our youth. The success of the Campaign for Youth Engagement will entail **a systemic cultural shift throughout the Reform Movement that prioritizes building relationships** with peers and adults involving:

Youth

- The expansion of affordable and accessible immersion experiences for Jewish youth
- The diffusion of exemplary congregational and communal efforts to engage Jewish youth
- The collection, analysis and sharing of data relevant to the recruitment, retention and involvement of Jewish youth in Jewish life

Youth Professionals

- The creation and nurturing of a profession for adults who devote themselves to Jewish youth
- The elevation of *kavod* (status) for adults who work with Jewish youth
- The participation of increasing numbers of adults who teach, mentor and support Jewish youth in the HUC-JIR Certificate in Jewish Education with a Specialization in Adolescents and Emerging Adults and other training programs that may become available to those who work with youth in multiple settings

Resources

- The creation of innovative educational and experiential strategies and programs designed with and for Jewish youth
- The expansion of affordable and accessible immersion experiences for Jewish youth
- The support and diffusion of exemplary congregational and communal efforts to engage Jewish youth

Partnerships

- The commitment to collaborate with organizations and individuals within and beyond the Reform Movement that share the overall campaign goal
- The Movement-wide collection, analysis and sharing of data relevant to the recruitment, retention and involvement of Jewish youth in Jewish life
- The recruitment, infusion, and allocation of human and financial resources from philanthropic individuals and foundations required to enable the success of the Campaign for Youth Engagement.

We will know that the Campaign for Youth Engagement has been successful when rather than being the exception it becomes the norm that Reform Jewish teens experience social, emotional, spiritual, moral, and intellectual growth within the context of a vibrant, caring, and inclusive Jewish community.

Therefore, the Reform Movement resolves to:

- a. Place full-time Jewish Youth Professionals throughout North America, in accordance with the policy adopted by the URJ Board of Trustees (adopted June 11, 2010) and designate a senior leader at the URJ with responsibilities for youth engagement.
- b. Increase camp enrollment significantly by the year 2020 and recruit a substantial number of new participants in the Parent/Grandparent Ambassador Program who will advocate for camp and other Jewish immersion experiences for youth.
- c. Champion the HUC-JIR Certificate in Jewish Education for Adolescents and Emerging Adults and develop training programs for Jewish professional and volunteer leaders who mentor Jewish youth, including a continuing education track through professional affiliates.

- d. Provide recognition for congregations that integrate Jewish youth into their communities in exemplary ways and advocate for the inclusion of Jewish youth in meaningful roles throughout the Reform Movement.
- e. Expand the innovative curricular and programmatic resources available for youth and their families beginning in early childhood and continuing throughout the life cycle in congregations, day schools, camps and other Jewish educational settings.
- f. Support the future launch of the Reform Youth Professionals Association (RYPA).
- g. Lower the financial barriers that currently prevent the involvement of some Jewish youth in immersion experiences (including early childhood education, camp, day school, L'taken Seminar, Mitzvah Corps, and Israel experiences).
- h. Collaborate with organizational partners within and beyond the Reform Movement that are dedicated to the aim of engaging youth in Jewish learning and living.
- i. Provide annual reports on the status of the Campaign for Youth Engagement.
- j. Implement a long-term development effort in order to provide the funding that will enable all items listed above.