

Annual Fund Committee 2006-2007

In the beginning, there was the recognition of a need: We must do a better job of fundraising for The Jewish Center (TJC). The cost of running The Center was outpacing our ability to raise funds.

Budget years 2004-05 and 2005-06 produced operating deficits. It was costing more to run the day-to-day operations of TJC and to maintain our aging facility than we were generating through dues and our fundraising efforts. We had to dip into our reserves both years just to meet our operating costs.

The revenue produced by dues was never meant to cover all our costs. However, to have raised dues to a level to do that would have placed an undue burden on our membership. In fact, absent any fundraising at all, we would have had to raise dues by 24% to cover all of our costs.

As with any congregation, TJC generated income through various fundraising activities. Unfortunately, our past fundraising efforts neither met our needs (to cover 12% of our costs to balance our budget) nor our expectations.

Our annual fundraising consisted of 4 components: The Kol Nidre Appeal; a major fundraising event; secondary events; and sustaining dues. The Kol Nidre Appeal generated approximately \$50,000, from about 40% of the congregation. Sustaining dues covered another \$35,000. In a good year, our best fundraising events (like the 2005-06 Night in Persia) would combine with the secondary fundraisers to contribute another \$100,000. Yet we still ran an operating deficit. We needed to do better, both in dollars generated and in congregational participation.

A Fundraising Task Force was established. It studied the best practices of other synagogues, queried experts, and spoke with staff and lay leaders at other congregations. It became apparent that Annual Funds, often used as a replacement for a Kol Nidre Appeal, have proven enormously successful. And the call went out again, and the Annual Fund Committee, made up of 19 congregants and professional staff, was formed.

We wandered in the desert. We were about to enter an uncharted land, trying to change the tradition and culture of giving to TJC. We had no idea what reaction to expect to the concept of an Annual Fund and to the concept that it is a congregational responsibility to donate.

We knew where we wanted to go, and set our first year objectives based upon the need to increase fundraising by 22% to balance our 2006-2007 budget. That translated into raising \$240,000 from a significantly larger percentage of the congregation. The objective of the journey seemed fraught with uncertainty.

To smooth the path as much as possible, the Annual Fund Committee took several actions. It:

- Developed a slogan that became its guiding principle, “Support The Jewish Center of Our Lives.”
- Promised that there would no longer be a traditional Kol Nidre Appeal, as long as we were meeting our projections.
- Agreed to an end to high-cost social events designed to raise funds, but rather to hold social events for which attendees would only be charged fees necessary to cover actual costs.
- Established six target levels of giving:
 - Giborim Heroes \$5,400 and above
 - Amudim Pillars 3,600 - 5,399
 - Shomrim Guardians 1,800 - 3,599
 - Bonim Builders 900 - 1,799
 - Tomchim Supporters 500 - 899
 - Haverim Friends 180 - 499
- Decided to give recognition, on a donor wall, to these levels

The committee communicated with the congregation through a variety of modes including letters in the Newsletter, a brochure, and an FAQ sheet. We also held a telethon one Sunday evening.

By the High Holidays, the Annual Fund had received pledges in the amount of \$200,000. The Kol Nidre Appeal didn't have to be made. We no longer had to reach out to members for sustaining dues contributions.

However, we could not stop before raising the full \$240,000. We did not wish to have to pull from our reserves. We kept on communicating with the congregation through the Newsletter and our membership responded.

We entered the Promised Land. We balanced our budget and started to replenish our reserves; 339 donors pledged \$288,058. As of May 2, \$273,681 had been paid. The cost of the fundraising effort through the Annual Fund was only \$8,700, far below the \$45,000 that had been budgeted for fundraising through the traditional means.

We increased our net annual fundraising by 43% or \$85,000 over 2005-2006. This was double the targeted 22% increase.

Name		Donors	Pledged	Paid	Balance
Giborim (Heroes)	\$5,400 & above	12	\$64,836.00	\$56,089.54	\$8,746.46
Amudim (Pillars)	\$3,600 - \$5,399	14	\$51,228.98	\$51,228.98	\$0.00
Shomrim (Guardians)	\$1,800 - \$3,599	36	\$67,325.00	\$64,900.06	\$2,424.94
Bonim (Builders)	\$900 - \$1,799	43	\$43,106.45	\$40,537.45	\$2,569.00
Tormim (Supporters)	\$500 - \$899	59	\$31,792.35	\$31,256.10	\$536.25
Haverim (Friends)	\$180 - \$499	120	\$25,379.43	\$25,379.43	\$0.00
	Up to \$179	55	\$4,390.00	\$4,290.00	\$100.00
Total		339	\$288,058.21	\$273,681.56	\$14,376.65

As of 5/2/07

It was a good start, but just as the Israelites faced challenges so do we. TJC needs even a greater commitment. The committee looks forward to greater congregational participation next year and in the future.

With many thanks to all those who chose to *Support the Jewish Center of Our Lives*.

The Annual Fund Committee

Richard Fishbane, Annual Fund Co-Chair

Nancy Lewis, Annual Fund Co-Chair

Susan Falcon, Fundraising Co-Chair

Walt Meyer, Fundraising Co-Chair

Stuart Axelrod

Rabbi Adam Feldman

Michael Feldstein

David Goldfarb

Irene Goldfarb

David Greenberg

Linda Grenis

Mark Killingsworth

Mark Merkovitz

Linda Meyer

Jerry Neumann

Joyce Sokolic

Jesse Treu

Marissa Treu

Bob Weber

Ross Wishnick