



COURTESY KATEY LINDLEY

L-R: Belinda Lanois, In Kind Coordinator, Rady Hospital; with CBI students Julia Weinstein; Emma Voit; Maili Lampe; Gabriel Rodriguez; Daniela Rodriguez; Jonathan Mandel

Teen Philanthropy

Far and Wide

Local nonprofits help teens bring tzedakah back into their lives

BY NATALIE JACOBS

The Jewish Teen Foundation has grown since the Journal reported on its first year in May of 2015. The second program this year brought together 25 teens from 12 different high schools and six different synagogues to learn about philanthropy while determining where to invest real dollars. The mission for this group was to “invest in organizations that secured essential needs for at-risk youth,” explains Darren Schwartz who used to head the program but has since been brought onto the Federation’s staff to lead its new teen philanthropy initiatives.

Through their own fundraising efforts, the teens raised \$8,000. JCF and individual donors also financially supported the program, which gave the Teen Foundation \$33,900 to distribute to the organizations they vetted throughout the year. Grants were given to ELEM/Youth in Distress in Israel, Just in Time for Foster Youth, Jewish Federation of San Diego, Monarch School, North County Lifeline, Reality Changers, Voices for Children and Yemin Orde Youth Village. Notable to this year’s grant-making focus, the JTF program officers decided to fund infrastructure projects rather than programs, which is usually a focus of grant dollars. Funding for

infrastructure, the teens thought, helps to support an organization’s long-term sustainability.

In addition to running the second year of the Jewish Teen Foundation, the Jewish Community Foundation supported three satellite programs at local synagogue high school classes during this school year. Congregation Beth Israel, Congregation Beth Am and Community Jewish High (which is a collaboration between Ohr Shalom, Tifereth Israel and Temple Emanu-El) each added philanthropy elements to their class curriculum, with support from the Larry Pidgeon Endowment for Young Philanthropists. Here is a quick look at those programs and their results:

Congregation Beth Israel

Katey Lindley’s 12th grade relationship class at Congregation Beth Israel spent weeks determining where to direct their philanthropic efforts for their inaugural involvement with the Jewish Community Foundation’s teen initiative, and then they found out one of their classmates was diagnosed with cancer. What that, their project became clear and the class of 24

Part of the class, which lasts one semester at CBA, covers ways to navigate when donors are overburdened with fundraising requests.

students set out to raise money in support of the Rady Children's Hospital Teen Lounge. Their initial goal was to raise \$360 in order to match the grant amount from JCF. By the end of their school-year-long efforts, the 17- and 18-year-olds found out they had raised \$1,686. The check was presented to Belinda Lanois, in-kind coordinator at Rady's, on May 31.

Congregation Beth Am

Rabbi Matthew Earne has incorporated JCF's *tzedakah* program into his synagogue's 9th grade curricula for the past six years. Each year, the class determines a new organization to grant their \$360. Classes also raise their own funds in varying degrees, mostly through placement of *tzedakah* boxes in other classrooms. Rabbi Earne notes that the students often run into difficulty in raising additional funds, because the synagogue is also involved in its own fundraising efforts. Part of the class, which lasts one semester at CBA, covers ways to navigate when donors are overburdened with fundraising requests. The 23 students in this year's 9th grade class selected a youth group program for Jewish children with special needs, based in Los Angeles, as the beneficiary of their grant.



Participants from this year's Jewish Teen Foundation, run by Jewish Community Foundation, presenting a check to the nonprofit Just in Time as part of their grant-making efforts for this year.

The core curriculum for Beth Klareich's 11th and 12th graders at Community Jewish High incorporated the philanthropy element into the entire school-year-long class. The 28 students heard from guest speakers and embarked on research projects to understand elements of charitable giving like connecting with mission statements and valuing Jewish philanthropy. Klareich says they "more than doubled" the \$360 seed funding from JCF and granted funds to Voices for Children and Make a Wish Foundation. The Jewish high school will incorporate an as yet to-be-determined version of the philanthropy curriculum into its class again next year.

Additional notable teen action

Jewish Family Service also has its own high school program, Hand Up Teen Leadership, which exposed participants to on-the-ground activism in conjunction with Hunger Action Day this spring. Teens from the group visited Sacramento along with Feeding America San Diego on May 25 where they met with legislators, toured the Capitol and took part in a lunchtime rally to raise awareness about hunger issues. ✨



Participant's in JFS's Teen Action Day from left to right: Caroline Sanborn, Aurora de Tagyos, Megan Tankersley, Monique Grimaldi, Noah Jacobson and Anthony Colarusso.