

JYPI Alumni

Recent program alumni serve as mentors to current program participants. The current participants benefit from relationships with experienced young philanthropists who are close to their own age. The alumni – still in high school themselves – are able to strengthen their own leadership skills while maintaining their commitment to *tzedakah*. JYPI's first alumni are just now in their first years of college. Ultimately, JYPI hopes to involve these older alumni as well.

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Our Program

In this section, you will learn how the JYPI grant program is run:

- Selection of teen participants
- Selection and pre-screening of grant applicants
- Activities at each JYPI session (orientation, site visits, funding and closing)
- Ways in which Jewish life and learning are integrated into the teens' experience
- JYPI's budget and program costs
- Fundraising for JYPI matching funds

JYPI's program structure accommodates teens' busy schedules and meets their desire for enriching, empowering experiences. 8th – 9th graders meet for nine sessions, including an orientation session, site visits to potential grantees, a funding session, and a closing event. 10th – 12th graders have a more compressed schedule of five sessions, including all of the same components but with fewer site visits.

Recruitment and Selection of Teen Participants:

JYPI markets the program to teens through synagogues, youth groups, Jewish schools, and other community venues. Word of mouth is a powerful marketing tool – many of the participants in the 8th – 9th grade group have been the younger siblings of JYPI alumni or their close friends. Teens who would like to take part in the program fill out an application (see appendix) and submit it, along with a check for the minimum donation to the program, to the JYPI office. JYPI has found that, in many cases, parents take the initiative in signing up their teens for the program. Generous subsidies are available for teens who would like to participate but are unable to meet the program's financial obligations. JYPI has operated primarily on a first-come, first-served basis in a non-competitive application process. However, the organization has made a conscious effort to balance demographics among participants, drawing youth who attend different schools, have varying levels of religious observance, are interested in different social causes, etc. After the program's first three years, all available slots for teen participants were filled, and new groups were added to accommodate additional participants. In JYPI's fifth year, all one hundred available slots were filled and an

extensive waiting list has been established. To enable active participation and discussion by all members of the group, JYPI limits the groups' size to 30 participants.

Selection of Grant Applicants:

JYPI's adult facilitators interview representatives of pre-selected nonprofit agencies and invite approximately five of them to submit JYPI Grant Applications (see appendix). Completed applications provide background information about the organizations and descriptions of the projects within a space-limited format so that the applications do not become overly burdensome for the teens to review. The entire agency selection and grant application process is completed before the program's Opening Session (excluding teens' the opportunity to select additional organizations for funding).

Opening Session:

The Opening Session sets the stage for those that will follow, introducing logistics of the program and inspiring the youth and their parents as they embark upon this philanthropic journey. The session includes both the teens and their parents (for 8th – 9th graders) and typically lasts 2 hours. During the first hour, teens and parents learn about the values of *tzedakah* and social responsibility, often from a guest speaker. They also get an overview of the JYPI program (since the teens are often unsure about the structure of the program before their orientation) and are introduced to staff and adult facilitators. During the second hour, teens take part in themed ice breakers (see appendix) that help them get to know each other as they begin their exploration of philanthropy and Jewish values. At the same time, parents gather in another room to learn more about what they can expect from the program and their own roles in encouraging conversations about philanthropy at home. At the end of the evening, youth are given the proposals that were submitted by potential grantees, so they can review the written materials in advance of the site visits. They also receive a primer on the grant making process, which includes guidelines for evaluating grant proposals; the program schedule; the site visit guide; and the grant evaluation sheet (see appendix). The real learning experience begins as the teens embark upon the site visits.

Site Visits:

Site visits to potential grantees bring the proposals to life for the teens. Having the participants visit organizations and meet with staff and clients (if applicable) helps their understanding of the organization while giving them first-hand experience with community needs. Site visits also help them to better conceptualize the diverse web of agencies that works in a community. Site visits typically take place on Sundays and last for approximately 2 ½ hours. The visits are planned and facilitated by JYPI staff and adult facilitators. The teens arrive at the sites either via private cars (carpools among parents) or on buses arranged by JYPI. They appoint a youth note taker for each site visit that, along with an adult note taker, circulates notes immediately after the visit. This helps keep the experience "fresh" in the teens' minds.

Components of the Site Visits:

1. A site visit begins with the teens and JYPI adult facilitators reviewing the agency's grant application and the agenda for the day.	(20 minutes)
2. An icebreaker/"group dynamic" exercise or Jewish learning activity	(20 minutes)