Southern Arizona Jewish Community Pathways to Enriching Jewish Life



A Message from the Steering Committee

With a sense of deep commitment to and responsibility for all who choose to engage in Jewish life in Southern Arizona, we are pleased to share a collection of recommendations and prospective pathways, to provide guidance and insights as we leverage the data we have gathered and recommendations we have received in leading our community forward. This document emerged out of a robust community process and is rooted in data collected by Rosov Consulting. This process has presented us with an opportunity for **bold action** to propel our Jewish Community for the coming decades. The need for this process was evident well before the pandemic arrived, and the pandemic has only strengthened our resolve to address long-standing needs and opportunities.

We—the Steering Committee—as part of the community are committed to rolling up our sleeves with you to examine how we might reimagine the role(s) we can play in and for our respective institutions in plotting our path ahead. The coalescing of the Jewish Federation and the Jewish Community Foundation under a single CEO is a first step in a series of changes to enable our communal structures to rise to meet the evolving dynamics of our community.

We are committed to honoring the past and the institutions and approaches that have brought us to this juncture even as we recognize that we may need to shift direction or abandon some structures as we explore and incorporate new avenues and destinations. Traversing these pathways will inevitably shift the landscape—for the better—as together, professionals and volunteers, we aim to address the needs and interests of our diverse community as identified through our community process.

With the Pathways to Enriching Jewish Life, we are inviting the community into a perspective shift: from one that advances institutions and agencies as the center of Jewish life to one centered on impact for our constituents and our community, and from one that relies on "how we have typically done things" to one that asks "how can we do this differently to achieve better outcomes for all?"

As we continue to progress through this process, we are excited to animate working groups that will explore how best to tackle the opportunities and intricacies that lie ahead.

Signed by,

The Steering Committee Members Anne Hameroff, Deborah Oseran, Shelly Silverman, Jeff Katz, Helaine Levy, and Keri Silvyn, who have served our community in various leadership positions for many years.

Preface

Why Pathways?

Just as we rely on clear navigational directions when we travel from one location to another, a set of communal pathways can help clarify the directions the community hopes to move in and identify critical milestones along the way. At the same time, there are often multiple pathways to the same end goal.

This document is designed to do three things:*

- **1. Align Priorities:** Pathways are tools that level the playing field for the whole community—when members of a community can see the terrain ahead, they can better navigate the path. The conversations can move from where are we going to how are we going to get there? And ideally, how can we help each other get there?
- **2. Communicate Value:** The pathways communicate priorities and becomes a tool for discussing how best to invest in those priorities.
- 3. Organize Planning: The pathways document directs the conversation toward strategy and resource allocation in service of the community reaching its destination(s). It can help prepare the community to be alert to new and emergent variables and pivot as appropriate. It can also help all members of the community make informed decisions about progress and ask important questions: Should we take this detour? Do we have enough gas (resources) to make it to the next stop? Should we slow down or speed up? Do we need to add a stop on the way? Have we identified the best driver(s) for any given segment of the path?

^{*} The three functions outlined here are informed by *Building a Community Roadmap* (The Community Roundtable, 2014), which describes the process for developing a community roadmap or, as in this case, a community Pathways document.

A Word About Community Culture

It is not enough to define the paths or even develop an action plan with clear timelines and accountabilities. Knowing that any change—even toward something positive—is nearly always very challenging for those involved, success is more likely if community members intentionally cultivate the qualities and dispositions that support working through challenges and embracing change. The following list of necessary dispositions emerges from Rosov Consulting's conversations with professionals on the ground, in communities across the country, who have been working on the type of changes we describe in this document:

Trust	Trusting that all parties involved are well intentioned and share a common goal.

Humility	Understanding that each individual's needs and opinions must be balanced with
	the good of the whole.

Collaboration Making sure that all voices are included in the process and that the group is

working together.

Learning Seeing the process itself as a valuable opportunity for learning and growth, not

just a way to get to a decision as quickly as possible.

Patience Allowing ideas to develop and be refined over time, with the realization that this

process may not be quick or smooth; it requires persistence and perseverance.

Flexibility Willingness to adjust and adapt one's own vision and ideas to take into account

those of others.

Vision Ability to imagine a future that honors, but is not limited by, how things have

"always been done" in order to design and build something new.

Leadership Ability to personally model and guide others toward all the qualities listed

above.

How the Southern Arizona Jewish Community Participated in the Process to Develop these Pathways

Our journey with Rosov Consulting commenced in Spring 2019 and included five distinct and sequential phases, each building on the ones that came before. In each phase, care was taken to listen to the voices of our community.



Orienting/Community Listening Tour



The first two phases, "Orienting" and our "Community Listening Tour," helped Rosov Consulting get to know the Southern Arizona Jewish community on our own terms. They made two trips to Tucson to meet with communal leaders, visit their places of work and worship, and, in crafted gatherings, learn about the challenges and opportunities which community members see as most critical to communal flourishing.



Assessing Needs

During the third phase of their work, "Assessing Needs," Rosov Consulting conducted a series of focus groups with populations who are underrepresented or less-involved or -engaged in Jewish activities in the community, reaching over 150 people. They then designed and distributed a needs assessment survey that was completed by just over 1,800 people.



Sharing Back and Meaning Making

During phase four, Rosov Consulting hosted a live community webinar to share the learnings generated in the focus groups and the needs assessment survey. They then began a process to help our community make sense of the implications and set a course forward for our future—conducting six meaning-making meetings with professionals and lay leaders from agencies in the community as well as with a diverse group of community members, ultimately speaking with almost 70 members of our community. Each meeting was devoted to exploring the recommendations that surfaced in the needs assessment and to naming actionable opportunities. Community members and leaders were invited to shape and build on these ideas.



Developing a Vision Enriching Jewish Life and our Pathways Forward

Finally, in phase five, the Rosov Consulting team brought the community's ideas and priorities to the Steering Committee and worked with us to chart a Communal Vision and set of Pathways reflective of all that had been learned to date.

We are eager to share these Pathways with you and look forward to continuing to chart our path forward with action-oriented working groups and a planned timetable for moving ahead.

An Emerging Consensus

As we listened to what our community told us at each stage of this process, we began to hear recurring themes that speak to the kind of community we all want to live in.

In acknowledgment of the diversity of the Southern Arizona Jewish community, there is a desire for vibrant **affinity groups who can weave a rich fabric of Jewish life in their own communities,** as well as come together across geographic, generational, and identity lines to learn and celebrate in ways that build the social and communal fabric of Southern Arizona.

People are also hungry for **multiple entry points to Jewish life** wherein everyone seeking Jewish expression for their lives, be that spiritual or cultural, can find an opportunity that feels right for them and a (micro)community where they belong.

And there is a deep value associated with being a **caring community who finds its highest expression in mobilizing on behalf of those not in a position to provide for themselves** whether that be seniors close to home or immigrants or refugees who would benefit from our activism and support. Social Justice, Community Service, and Tzedakah emerged as defining characteristics of the community, with opportunities for people of all ages, however they identify, to meet the needs of those within and beyond Southern Arizona.



Rosov Consulting has identified four significant strands of work, which, if fully explored and operationalized, can help us to realize the key elements of the Emerging Consensus just described. These strands of work are based on data and insights gleaned from a broad array of people who have varied relationships with and to the Federation and the Jewish community at large. It was important to us to ensure that the pathways to our future as a Jewish community speak to all of us—those who have been actively involved and those who may have been less involved to date. We are gratified that a **rich array of voices contributed to this process.** As you consider these pathways, understand that **no one strand of work alone will do;** rather if we combine efforts to create forward movement in all of the strands, slowly but surely, we will see impact for our community. As you will see, these strands of work follow directly on what has been learned through this community process.

For each strand of work, you will see three dimensions:



What did the Rosov Consulting team help us learn through the multiple stages of their data collection and analysis?



What are the fruitful avenues for exploration that have come from the voices of our community members?

POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND MODELS:

What are the models and resources—sourced by Rosov Consulting—that we should be investigating and building upon from other parts of the country?





? WHAT WE LEARNED

The needs assessment revealed a generally low satisfaction with the quality of and variety of current educational offerings in our community. Additionally, having competing educational programs aimed at a very small population is both financially inefficient and a strain on the community's human resources. Community members feel that educational offerings, in addition to traditional Jewish subjects, should speak to a wider array of interests, such as social justice, community service, arts and culture, and environmental issues. As Jewish learning is not only an intellectual endeavor but also an important social connector, the richer and more diverse the learning opportunities, the more likely it is that participants—be they seniors, teens, interfaith families, or millennials—will find their people to connect with. Notably, many felt that community-wide Jewish education would also benefit parents of school-aged children by offering opportunities to connect and learn with peers at drop-off/pick-up times or parent-focused educational experiences.



Centralize and reimagine afterschool Jewish enrichment across the community

Jewish education can be revitalized through a more coordinated approach to education and engagement for the area's youth by moving away from each synagogue offering its own educational program. While current synagogue professionals could and should contribute to this centralized approach, there is interest in creating a new, innovative model that would bring students from across the community together for meaningful, creative, and engaging Jewish education. There are several national Jewish foundations currently exploring a similar concept with the express goal of reimagining existing Jewish institutions like day schools and JCCs to create Jewishly rich aftercare and afterschool experiences. By providing alternatives to part-time Jewish education in the synagogue, there is an opportunity to develop experiences that can appeal to a broader range of families. This pathway might launch as a pilot involving a collaboration between several synagogues and other Jewish institutions to create a community-wide hub for Jewish education.



POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND MODELS: <u>The Jewish Education Project: New Models of Congregational Education</u>; <u>Nitzan Network</u>; <u>Moving Traditions</u>

Create centers for Jewish education and engagement in the community

Sometimes structural changes can ease the way for more substantive change to take hold. Many felt that making Tucson Hebrew Academy (THA) the education hub for community-wide education could be one of the avenues toward revitalizing and strengthening THA by expanding its mission beyond running a day school to include creating multiple opportunities for youth education and intergenerational learning. Some also suggested that this function could be filled by the JCC; although others have suggested that the JCC could be the hub for communal gatherings beyond education, and the Jewish History Museum could be the hub for social justice activities for a broader

range of interest groups. With both a wider aperture and more-focused mandate, each of these organizations could begin to think creatively about partnerships that will serve the community. One strategy that many communities have used to good effect is to create a shared workspace for complementary organizations and initiatives (education, social justice, etc.) under one roof, thereby facilitating collaboration and cross-fertilization to enhance the community's goals.



POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND MODELS: <u>SketchPad</u>, <u>The Hive</u>, <u>Makom Hadash</u>. In Brookline, MA, there is now a partnership between multiple Jewish organizations, several synagogue congregations, and a senior living facility to create a collaborative center for education and engagement: Center Makor/Kehillat Israel/2Life Senior Housing.

Create many more milestone and low-barrier events for youth across the community

Parents of teens expressed strong interest in opportunities for young people across the community to meet each other, with synagogue-based activities being inadequate as they further segment an already small group. We learned that on the few occasions when these events have taken place, teens, in particular, have made new connections that were then deepened through socializing at school. In line with the prevailing research about teen engagement both within and beyond the Jewish community, parents suggested that it is important to give teens a seat at the planning table so that they have a voice in new options and can make more informed choices about how they wish to become involved. Community members pointed to opportunities to build on: making the eighth grade Reform congregations trip to Los Angeles available to all eighth graders, expanding the Jewish Latino Teen Coalition, or duplicating the approach for other intergroup relations relevant to the community.

Beyond events, some communities have successfully created a teen space in an existing institution where all teen program providers gather (and ideally collaborate) and teens can hang out and find each other even when there are no specific activities planned. This concept can also be expanded to include other age groupings.



POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND MODELS: Motiv/San Diego; Jewish Teens Thrive; 4Front Teen

Board/Raltimore ICC: LA Toon Inc. service. Board/Baltimore JCC; LA Teen Innovation Grants; Cincinnati Teen Venture Awards; Club 18 SFJCC; MetroWest Collaboratory; Bamidbar Wilderness Therapy; Shoresh Jewish Environmental Education: IsraelNow



Elevate and Embrace Diverse Approaches to Jewish Life — Spiritual, Cultural, and Values Driven

? WHAT WE LEARNED

Although traditional synagogues provide a spiritual home for some members of our community, participants in the conversations expressed the desire for more gatherings that would bring together wide swaths of the Jewish community, some around specifically Jewish themes (e.g., holidays, Israel) and some without an overt Jewish focus but rooted in Jewish values (e.g., community service). This aligns with the findings from the needs assessment: there is widespread interest in expanding social networks and creating appealing and comfortable spaces and events for those who wish to be connected to the Jewish community but are not finding that connection in the synagogue. Many also want to do away with "members-only" events that limit communication about and access to these gatherings. Finally, young adults and millennials in particular, many of whom are current synagogue members, are eager for different kinds of spiritual expression beyond those currently offered by the synagogues and would like to find ways to create those opportunities whether inside or beyond the walls of the synagogues.



Foster and incubate intimate micro-communities

Manu under-involved segments of the community (e.g., millennials, interfaith families, parents of young children) have expressed interest in participating more but have not found ways that are comfortable for them. With the abundance of organizations around the country working to revitalize Jewish life through creative offerings and initiatives, Southern Arizona does not have to recreate the wheel in this domain. There are numerous models that have demonstrated a capacity to help people feel known, welcomed, and accepted as they gather ground shared interests and commitments. Some like The Riverway Project or the Jewish Emergent Network, are synagogue-based successful experiments to reach new populations. Some like OneTable and Honeymoon Israel create localized community and already have a foothold. Importing or replicating opportunities like those listed below, which emphasize grassroots gatherings that build on the interests of the participants, would go a long way toward addressing the strong need for meaningful social connection in a Jewish context for all generational groups and special populations. An added step to enriching the web of communal connections is to actively seek ways to weave the networks of these micro-communities for broader and deeper communal engagement.



POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND MODELS: <u>Hakhel</u>: Intentional Communities; <u>Jewish Studio Project</u>;
The Riverway Project: Supaggary Village New 100 To The Riverway Project New 100 To The Riv The Riverway Project; Synagogue Village Network; Open Temple/LA; At The Well/SF; OneTable; Rabbis Without Borders; Jewish Emergent Network

Offer community-wide Jewish Holiday events and celebrations

Again, a small community can ill afford splintering precious human and financial resources. There is widespread interest in large, cosponsored events for holidays such as Hanukkah, Purim, and Sukkot. Some have suggested that there might be value in the hiring of "communal" Jewish educators and spiritual leaders not affiliated with a synagogue who would work to promote Jewish engagement,

learning, and connection across the community and within particular special interest groups. As synagogues and agencies begin to explore collaboration around an array of educational offerings, there is the potential for a centralized hub to spearhead this dimension of communal Jewish celebration as well.

Diversify Jewish offerings to appeal to those who seek it and build connections throughout the community

Community members, most particularly Baby Boomers and seniors, are interested in reducing redundancies and prioritizing experiences and modalities that address multiple interest areas and specific populations. Some have suggested that a central professional work to leverage and expand the reach of successful existing offerings and curate new ones. Others see partnerships as the primary vehicle for expanding the reach and appeal of programs to population groups who may not have felt welcome or included in current offerings (e.g., interfaith families, LGBTQ individuals, millennials, young adults) while retaining those who continue to value adult education: primarily seniors. Community members suggested partnerships with such entities as the University of Arizona, the Jewish History Museum, the Tucson Museum of Art, and environmental/climate groups in Southern Arizona. The Jewish Film Festival is widely viewed as a bright spot to be emulated as it embodies several key strengths: stimulating topics with appeal to diverse populations, multiple locations, and engaging conversation and learning. Community members across the generational spectrum are interested in communal dialogue around controversial topics, which could be engaging rather than divisive as long as differing views are respected. Increasing access to the virtual learning can help bridge geographic regions and break down other silos.



POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND MODELS: <u>Jewitathome.com</u>; <u>Project Zug</u>/Hadar; <u>Partners in Torah</u>; Shalom Hartman Institute of North American Dr. 1000 (1997) Shalom Hartman Institute of North America; Programs from the 92nd St. Y; Jewish book clubs— Chai Mitzvah: Resetting the Table



Pursue Tzedek and Tikkun Olam Through Community Service, Social Justice, and **Social Action**

? WHAT WE LEARNED

For many special population groups in Southern Arizona who are less involved today—interfaith families, LGBTQ individuals, millennials, and young adults—their primary expression of Jewish identity is through making the world a better place for all. Many expressed an interest in more opportunities to act on these commitments within the context of the Jewish community and are hopeful that they will meet other like-minded people in the process—as we explore new ways that bring community together—thoughtfully navigating around potential fissures created by divergent areas of need or generational divide. Moreover, many participants in community conversations expressed a desire to see all sectors of the community and all age groups mobilized to serve vulnerable populations within the Jewish community, including and especially seniors wherever they reside, and ensure that Jewish life is available for those in outlying areas of Tucson.

PATHS TO EXPLORE

Provide for priority populations (e.g., seniors, young families) and lower barriers to Jewish life

For some populations, cost and physical access can be a barrier to participation. For those in regions beyond central Tucson (e.g., Green Valley, North West), seniors, and those unable to travel to remote locations, community members spoke about the need for better transportation to and from events as well as more satellite events in multiple locations. Raising awareness about these needs and expanding opportunities for direct service is one way the community can express its care and build bridges to more isolated members of the community. Philanthropy is another tool for mobilizing care. Giving Circles, for example, help educate and activate those who care to move beyond financial support and take personal action on behalf of those in need. Community members cited a JFCSsponsored bake sale for Syrian refugees that brought in many unaffiliated and previously unknown members of the community, and they would like to see more of these events take place.



POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND MODELS: <u>AgeWell Cincinnati</u> brings together an array of Jewish organizations in a coalition designed to coordinate support for seniors, their families, and caregivers; DOROT in New York works to combat social isolation for seniors ages 60–100 through a range of programs including partnerships with synagogues, arts organizations, and youth groups.

Establish partnerships beyond the Jewish Community to contribute to the broader Southern Arizona communitu

Community members would like to see many more opportunities for service projects such as painting a playground, fixing trails, or building homes for immigrants and refugees. This domain is ripe for partnership with civic organizations in Southern Arizona.

Integrate community service and social justice into educational programs and micro-community activities

As the work of enhancing the educational and communal infrastructure described above moves forward, many sectors of the population including youth, college-aged students, millennials, and others will be seeking opportunities to gather with like-minded peers to serve their community. These commitments can be nurtured through educational and spiritual experiences broadly defined.



POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND MODELS: <u>Serve The Moment/Repair the World</u>; <u>Urban Adamah</u>; <u>Ma</u>ot Chitim/Chicago: a highly successful act of an incident of the control of the co Maot Chitim/Chicago; a highly successful set of giving circles within an ethnic community: Asian Pacific Islanders Giving Circles



Strengthen the Communal Infrastructure



? WHAT WE LEARNED

We heard from community members that in order to successfully implement many of the recommendations articulated in the planning and visioning process, certain aspects of the communal infrastructure will likely need to be strengthened or reconfigured. This relates as much to systems and structures (communication and funding models) as it does to human capital (leadership skills and leadership pipeline) and physical spaces.



PATHS TO EXPLORE

Enhance the leadership and relational engagement skills of Jewish professionals and volunteers

In light of the clearly expressed desire for connection and a concern about cliquishness that emerged from the needs assessment, there is a demand for leaders (both at the Executive level and in frontline positions) who know how to welcome and engage diverse populations. Enhancing the skillsets of professionals across the community is viewed as a critical lever and an essential building block for attracting newcomers and those new to Jewish engagement. Similarly, improving the governance capacities for boards across the community can ensure that professionals have a leadership pipeline of partners with whom to chart their organizational course to the future. Finally, there is an untapped opportunity to develop Next Gen leadership among young adults and college students in particular, by facilitating their involvement in volunteer pursuits and equipping them to engage with Jewish life initiatives in the community and by providing strategic partnerships with broader community organizations.



POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND MODELS: Examples for Volunteers: Project Accelerate/OnBoard of the Legacy Heritage Foundation: Evaporate for D. C. in the 100 St. the Legacy Heritage Foundation; Examples for Professionals: M², Clergy Leadership Incubator/ Hazon, Schusterman Fellowship, Wexner Field Fellows

Diversify and expand funding models

The Federation/Foundation is in a unique position to elevate communal priorities identified in this document by staying attuned and responsive to new approaches to funding and fundraising (e.g., Impact Investing, Pooled Funds, Collective Impact, tapping into the growing Corporate Social Responsibility trend). Embracing Donor Advised Funds (DAFs), not a new approach but one whose popularity has not waned, is an opportunity to educate donors about communal needs and priorities while enabling them to retain more control over their dollars. This may be increasingly important with regard to leadership and donor development as we learned that those less connected to the Jewish community are more likely to give to other causes. As it explores its own pivots in this regard, the Federation/Foundation can support other community entities to do the same through shared professional development, capacity building, and collaborating and sharing offerings and services where overlap in interest areas are identified.



POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND MODELS: <u>Jewish Women's Philanthropy Circle of Arizona</u> (Phoenix); Young Jewish Funders of Arizona (Scottsdale); Jewish Women's Fund of Atlanta; Social Venture Partners; Fisher FLIGHT/JFNA; The Jewish Future Pledge.

Strengthen the communal communications network and leverage social media

There is a need for a more robust online presence that reaches diverse populations and generations. This would include a more decentralized platform for disseminating community information so that multiple entities could contribute and communicate in real time. Most community members agreed that the now-discontinued print version of the Arizona Jewish Post fell short as a communications channel, as it did not adequately reach the full range of potentially interested populations. At the same time, attention will need to be paid to the generational differences when it comes to accessing information.

Our Next Steps as a Community

Our committee is gearing up to launch a series of working groups corresponding to the four strands of work described in this document. Each working group, a collaboration of professionals and volunteers, will be charged with reviewing the ideas presented, further exploring the potential resources and models, and developing a suggested plan for implementation.

Given the integrated and interdependent nature of the recommendations, we will seek to ensure that the working groups are representative of our community in a variety of ways with a mix of community partners, volunteer and professional leadership, as well as those members of our community most likely to benefit from the plans under consideration.

We see these working groups as a continuation of our process to involve and engage a broad cross-section of our community and are excited to get started.

Working Group Priorities

- ★ Drive Toward a Community-Wide Approach to Jewish Education
 - Provide greater and more inclusive community-wide education opportunities for school-age youth that deepens their understanding of and connection to Jewish life as well as opens up opportunities for engagement with the world around them.
- ★ Elevate and Embrace Alternative Approaches to Jewish Life Spiritual, Cultural, and Values Driven

Create a more welcoming environment that is easier to access for all through a micro-community platform with offerings that appeal to diverse interests (e.g., the environment, social justice, spirituality, the arts), community-wide Jewish celebrations, and curated spiritual and cultural experiences for affinity groups across the generational spectrum.

- ★ Pursue Tzedek and Tikkun Olam through Community Service, Social Justice, and Social Action
 - Activate all sectors of the community to provide for priority populations and take part in community service and social justice work as expressions of their Jewish commitments—through raising funds, volunteerism, and participation in collaborative ventures with the broader Southern Arizona community.
- ★ Strengthen the Communal Infrastructure

Build the leadership pipeline for current and future communal needs and explore new financial models to sustain the Jewish community and its endeavors.

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge and extend our deep gratitude to all those that contributed and participated in the various stages of this important endeavor. First and foremost, to the participants in our various data gathering efforts that helped to ensure a multiplicity of voices were heard:

1,807 Survey Participants **150** Focus Group participants

155 Community Webinar participants70 Meaning-Making Meeting participants

Major Funders

Paul & Alice Baker Diamond Family Foundation Lex & Carol Sears

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