



The AVI CHAI Foundation

**For Immediate Release**  
**July, 1, 2013**

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### **The AVI CHAI Foundation Awards \$1.7 Million to Schechter Network to Strengthen Schechter Schools**

The AVI CHAI Foundation has awarded the Schechter Day School Network at United Synagogue nearly \$1.7 million in grants that will enable the day school network to enhance its ability to strengthen North America's 43 Schechter schools.

In addition to AVI CHAI's capacity building and programming grants, a substantial challenge grant from an anonymous foundation was also awarded, bringing the total to nearly \$2 million.

"These grants are transformative, enabling us to provide an unprecedented level of service to our Schechter schools," said Dr. Steven C. Lorch, president of the Schechter Network board. "They will generate extraordinary momentum for our programs, the immediate beneficiaries of which will be our schools, the gifted educators who teach in and lead them, and their students."

As part of its spend-down strategy The AVI CHAI Foundation has made capacity building and programmatic grants to key institutions that it believes are central to a strong Jewish day school field. "We are delighted to partner with the Schechter Day School Network in its efforts to re-imagine and re-launch itself," said AVI CHAI's Susan Kardos. "We have a deep commitment to North America's Schechter schools and the serious Jewish content and character they embody; we hope our grantmaking will help the SDSN provide high-quality services that member schools want and need."

The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism will remain for the immediate future the institutional home of the Schechter Network, which is pursuing separate incorporation as a not-for-profit organization. The Network's new strategic plan calls for a new leadership team that will include a new executive director, a development professional, education programming professionals, and field consultants.

The Schechter Network has announced Dr. Jon Mitzmacher as the new executive director, following the retirement of longtime leader Dr. Elaine Shizgal Cohen at the end of June 2014. Mitzmacher is a nationally recognized expert in the field of 21st-century learning, and his school, the Martin J. Gottlieb Day School in Jacksonville, a Schechter Network school, has done pioneering work in the field. Mitzmacher will be taking on full-time responsibility for leading the Network as soon as he finishes his term at his current school.

### **About the Schechter Day School Network**

The Schechter Day School Network advances educational excellence and collaboration among Jewish day schools that share its dual commitment to tradition and modernity. The Network serves the needs of its community of schools for connection, innovative Jewish programs, professional development, and advocacy.