



The AVI CHAI Foundation

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Matching Grants Program Yields Millions of New Dollars

MATCHING GRANTS PROGRAM YIELDS MILLIONS OF NEW DOLLARS - \$6.8 Million to Benefit Jewish Education -

New York, NY -- December 20, 2004, Joshua Landes, a Wall Street money manager, recently discovered a way to double his money by making his first large charitable donation in support of Jewish education.

This past October, a unique matching grants program organized by The AVI CHAI Foundation (AVI CHAI) and The Jewish Funders Network (JFN) began accepting applications from donors interested in making their first large gift to Jewish educational institutions. The program, which was designed to infuse Jewish education with new donors, was so overwhelmingly received that the Board of Trustees of AVI CHAI, which sponsored the original matching grant pool of \$1 million, more than tripled the size of the matching pool, raising the matching funds to \$3.4 million to match dollar-for-dollar the amount contributed by JFN member foundations and philanthropists who applied to take part in the program.

Through the program, \$6.8 million will be gifted to Jewish education in the next six months, with most gifts being made by the end of December 2004. More than 100 foundations and philanthropists applied to participate in the arrangement, representing contributions ranging from \$25,000 to more than \$250,000. Matches were available for \$25,000 to \$50,000 for donors who were making their first large gift or were prepared to increase their largest previous gift by at least 500%.

As opposed to many other matching grants program where matches are contingent on the institution and/or program being funded, this program enabled eligible donors to focus their first gifts as they saw fit, as long as they were for the purpose of Jewish education. Jewish education ranges widely - from Jewish day schools and summer camps to organizations that aim to enhance Jewish life on college campuses, to those that offer adult education courses, and beyond. The only restriction placed on donors was that capital grants would not be funded. While many of the donors made their gifts to institutions for general operating support, a number of them were made for specific programs or initiatives.

The funds will be used to support Jewish educational institutions in 20 states across North

America, including: Arizona, British Columbia, California, Colorado, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington.

The additional funding was announced by Arthur W. Fried, Chairman of AVI CHAI's Board of Trustees. "Philanthropy is critically important to the success of Jewish education ventures across the country. The message we aim to convey through this program is if you want a quality product, you have to support it financially. It is gratifying to see that this program uncovered a significant number of new donors who see the value of Jewish education."

The AVI CHAI Foundation is a private foundation established and endowed in 1984 by Zalman C. Bernstein, founder of Sanford C. Bernstein and Co., an investment research and management firm. AVI CHAI has two basic goals: to encourage Jews in the United States to become more deeply involved in Jewish learning; and to promote mutual understanding and sensitivity among Jews of different religious backgrounds in Israel. In North America, one of AVI CHAI's primary efforts has been to encourage the growth of the Jewish Day School movement by initiating and funding innovative programs designed to enhance the quality of the schools and to attract greater numbers of students and funders.

The Jewish Funders Network is an international agency, with over 800 member foundation and individual funders that provides leadership, programs and services to help Jewish grantmakers be more effective and strategic in their philanthropy. JFN members understand that their philanthropy goes much deeper than the act of writing a check. Together, they collaborate and plan so that their money can be used effectively. The basis for all JFN programs is the textured world of Jewish values and identity that grantmakers apply to whatever funding decisions they make. JFN represents a broad range of members, from private individuals to some of the largest family foundations in the world. While the bulk of membership resides in the United States JFN members can be found in Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Israel, Australia and elsewhere.

A New Spin on a Familiar Face

"It is important that we, and other funders, recognize the impact of this model of philanthropic leverage. The program's overwhelming success in drawing out new givers, and in empowering them to be creative in their giving, has implications for all areas of philanthropy," explains Lauren K. Merkin, Trustee of AVI CHAI.

"While we have only scratched the surface, the possible future impact of this program is staggering," notes Mark Charendoff, President of JFN. "Not only has \$3.4 million of new money been generated, but we have energized a new cadre of donors who have the potential to keep on giving at this level in the years to come."

"One of my goals as chair of JFN is to get more Jews to fund Jewishly," says Elisa Spungen Bildner, "especially in Jewish education, and especially if they haven't previously. I am ecstatic about the program and the overwhelming response --I only hope that it will entice other funders to step in and pool their resources to create an even larger fund to do this once again."

\$2.5 Million for Jewish Day Schools

Seventy-five percent of the applications for matching funds were for gifts to Jewish day schools,

accounting for more than \$2.5 million. There are currently more than 750 Jewish day schools across the U.S. with more than 200,000 students. The schools, which offer a full-day dual curriculum of Judaic and secular studies, range from traditional Orthodox yeshivas to more modern Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and nondenominational schools. Over the past ten years, enrollment in Jewish day schools has increased by approximately 35,000 students (20%), with nearly 100 more schools open in 2003-2004 than in 1993-94.

"Jews are beginning to realize that only a Jewish education will give their children access to the rich Jewish heritage and that, as informed Jews, they will be better Americans, able to bring the richness of Judaism into the American discourse," explains AVI CHAI's North American Executive Director, Yossi Prager. "It is therefore particularly significant that such a high percentage of the new donors chose to support Jewish day school education, further reflecting the trend we have been seeing over the past ten years."

Aaron Sasson, an immigrant from Iran, had never given to Jewish education in the past, instead preferring to contribute his time and energy to medical and Israel-related causes. Upon learning about the match, he decided to make his first gift to a neighborhood day school, the Contra Costa Jewish Day School in Lafayette, California, because, he says, his charitable experiences have shown him that "those who attend Jewish day school have a stronger sense of commitment to Jewish causes than those who don't. This fostering of Jewish identity is something I want to support."

Andrew Kimmel, a physician in Allentown, PA, saw the matching grants program as his opportunity to make a real difference in his local day school, the Jewish Day School of the Lehigh Valley. "I had just heard about a \$45 million gift to Jewish day schools in the Boston-area. I thought to myself -our community doesn't need that much money, but imagine what I can do for my community with a large gift and the match. At that point, there was no turning back. I was committed."

Dr. Joseph Gindi decided that he wanted his first large gift to benefit educators looking to enhance their own Jewish education, and earmarked his gift for scholarships to the University of Judaism Fingherhut School of Education's MA for Working Professionals Program. Kim Hirsch and Mark Widdman gave their gift to the Hebrew Academy of Morris County for two programs: a school-sponsored trip to Israel for all of the Academy's students, and a marketing and recruitment campaign. Tzvi Gellman decided to thank his alma mater, the Mesivta Menachem of Amhurst, with a new computer center.

Breaking Down the Barrier

Mr. Landes made his gift to the Limmud Foundation, a Philadelphia-based non-profit organization that seeks to assure the continuity of Jewish identity through formal and informal education. His gift was earmarked for scholarships to enable Jewish youth to participate in educational programming that they might otherwise be unable to afford. A parent of three-school age children, Mr. Landes saw the matching grants program as the motivating factor in his decision to make this gift. "I have given to various causes in the past, both Jewish and non-Jewish," he explained, "but never at this level. This program helped to break down the psychological barrier. When I learned about the match, I said "I can do this and I should do this.'"

"Through this grants program, I have more than doubled my money," Mr. Landes adds. "I have become a funder of Jewish education - an investment that will yield returns for the Jewish people for generations to come."

Editors Note: To interview Lauren Merkin or Yossi Prager, please call The AVI CHAI Foundation at (212) 396-8842. They can also put you in touch with the donors referred to above, who are available for interviews. For Mark Charendoff, please call The Jewish Funders Network at (212) 726-0177.