

21/64

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR //

The Jewish community mischaracterizes new ideas and new ventures as having great risk. Maintaining the status quo at this time of unprecedented change is indeed the greater risk, and projects supporting change tend to be better investments.

Housed at the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies (ACBP), 21/64 has become a new venue for discussions of multi-generational philanthropy and the creative models that are emerging from the next generation. I feel fortunate to work with my partners, Andy and Charles Bronfman, who are neither averse to new models nor to change, and because of this, ACBP and 21/64 have the flexibility needed to adapt within an evolving community.

I was recently reminded of this when Andy said that the Jewish community mischaracterizes new ideas and new ventures as having great risk. Instead, she believes that maintaining the status quo at this time of unprecedented change is indeed the greater risk, and that projects supporting change tend to be better investments. I am coming to believe that she is right.

If we compare a philanthropic portfolio to any other investment portfolio, we begin to see the analogy. There is risk in every investment, so we choose our allocations in search of value, diversifying the portfolio to mitigate risk and optimize reward. We are comfortable contributing substantially to Federations, United Ways and other umbrella charities because, as with mutual funds, we decrease our risk and trust others to make incremental tactical judgments. But if we want more contributions going to Jewish institutions and not increasingly to universities and hospitals,

we have to be willing to diversify further.

Once we find our equivalent of a mutual fund and select a few blue chip agencies, can't we afford to fund a small cap company or a dynamic entrepreneur who has taken on a new venture? Why shouldn't these larks exist in philanthropy like they do in financial investing? I believe that one of the most exciting developments in the last number of years is the growing number of social entrepreneurs who want to make a difference in the Jewish community.

Encouraged by these emerging leaders, I am particularly pleased to be involved with **Slingshot**, a resource guide described in this volume of the 21/64 newsletter. After assembling this inspiring guide, we knew we also had to formalize our support of these new ideas, and we have done so through the creation of a *Slingshot Fund*, a dedicated portion of our philanthropic portfolio designed to support innovation. We would be glad to work with anyone who is interested in doing likewise.

As always, we look forward to hearing your feedback and hope you will be in touch if you are interested in working together.

Best,



Jeff Solomon



At the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies (ACBP), we have dedicated significant time to Jewish peoplehood and examining the issues that the next generation brings to light. 21/64, a division of ACBP, was established to serve other families, foundations and communities who seek to engage the next generation in Jewish life. We take a multi-generational approach to working with young funders, family foundations, federations and other groups to articulate their values, explore their visions for the Jewish community and develop their own analysis of Jewish life.



BARRIERS TO FUNDING //

After several years of exploring their values and visions, Grand Street members identified a barrier to their own funding.

As readers of this newsletter have heard before, 21/64 also facilitates *Grand Street*, a burgeoning network of young Jews, ages 18-28 years old, who are or will be involved in their families' philanthropy. After several years of exploring their values and visions, Grand Street members identified a barrier to their own funding. The revelation was as simple as it was powerful: they could neither understand the Jewish landscape nor perceive how to navigate it.

They realized that the Jewish community has a tradition of responding creatively to challenges, but they only knew of one or two communal institutions that their parents and grandparents funded and did not know how to find additional projects and organizations that offered the right combination of vision and leadership.

In an effort to respond to this simple barrier, we created *Slingshot*, a resource guide to Jewish innovation that we plan to produce annually.

METHODOLOGY //

We sought the advice of our colleagues in the Jewish philanthropic world.

Instead of assembling this book single-handedly, we sought the advice of our colleagues in the Jewish philanthropic world and asked them about groups that inspired them. This garnered a list of more than 100 Jewish organizations of virtually every size and shape, representing a broad range of geography, denomination and longevity.

By tracking which organizations were identified by the most people, we narrowed the list down to 88.

We then asked 25 foundation professionals with expertise in Jewish life to evaluate those 88 against four criteria: *innovation, impact, leadership, and organizational effectiveness.*

SLINGSHOT //

Slingshot is a resource guide to Jewish innovation that we plan to produce annually.

While *Slingshot* was catalyzed by the needs of young Jews in Grand Street, this book is meant to be used by funders of all sizes and ages who want to support innovative Jewish life.

Readers may not like every entry, and the list is not meant to be comprehensive, but we invite people to thumb through the pages, as there is certain to be something for everyone. From large or existing organizations that continually evolve in order to remain relevant (like the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in

Connecticut) to small, niche projects looking for nascent-stage support (like the Jewish Salon in Toronto), this eclectic list is a testament to the spirit of innovation that is the hallmark of our community.

We encourage readers to find their favorite entries and take "*slingshots*" to propel a number of projects forward. We also invite readers to follow up with organizations in the book, now that the simple barrier of lack of knowledge has been lifted.



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SLINGSHOT FUND //

Try devoting a small percentage of your annual allocation to existing organizations with creative projects, or to start-up initiatives.

In order to lead by example, ACBP has established a *Slingshot Fund*, a small percentage of our annual giving set aside to support Jewish innovations of the next generation.

Many funders do not want to change their giving plans to include what appear to be “risky” ideas of young social entrepreneurs, but how will we ensure the continuity of the Jewish future without believing in the next generation?

Whoever you are—whether you give away \$500 or \$5,000,000 annually, to established projects or to innovative ones—we ask you to consider setting up a Slingshot Fund of your own. Try experimenting with innovation by devoting a small percentage of your annual allocation to existing organizations with creative projects, or to start-up initiatives. This small portion can become an important yet manageable component of your overall philanthropic portfolio and an enormously sustaining gift to the community.

EXPERIMENTATION //

Experimentation does not have to be risky; rather, it can and should be strategic.

Jewish history has always been one of challenge and response. Our community has consistently evolved and adapted to the challenges and changing realities in America. Only by supporting new ideas and visionaries who provide new models for community and meaning have we been able to transcend those challenges in the world around us.

Experimentation does not have to be risky; rather, it can and should be strategic. Consider what you are passionate about, conduct research and fund a couple of innovative projects that resonate with both your values and your interests. If you do not know how to find such initiatives, feel free to use *Slingshot* as a resource to inform your giving.

Lastly, do not hesitate to be in direct contact with organizations and their leadership to follow up and discuss results. Only by working together can we become partners in ensuring the future of our community.

SLINGSHOT



For a free copy of **SLINGSHOT**, or for more information on how to work with

21/64 in your own community, email us at info@2164.net.