

# A JEWISH CENTER ATTEMPTS TO IMPLEMENT ITS JEWISH PURPOSES; A PROCESS STUDY OF A JEWISH CENTER BOARD

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**T**ODAY, Jewish community centers in the United States and Canada are attempting to provide Jewish experiences, access to Jewish knowledge and participation in Jewish life for its members. It is agreed that this effort will help to safeguard and guarantee creative Jewish survival.

This prime focus of the Jewish Center was initially articulated by Dr. Oscar Janowsky in 1948: "Jewish content is fundamental to the program of the Jewish Center. In its total program, the Jewish Center seeks to develop and enrich human personality and group association. To that end, all resources and skills of informal education and leisure-time planning should be employed." This essence of Janowsky's report was accepted by Jewish community centers throughout the country. During the past 20 years Jewish Centers have had numerous experiences in attempting to put into practice Janowsky's concepts on the Jewish component of the Jewish community center. Today there is a growing concern for developing a richer and more meaningful Jewish education for children, youth and adults.

It is important, however, to see the Jewish component of the Jewish Center movement against the backdrop of American Jewish life today.

## American Jewish Life Today

Jewish life today manifests some of the following disintegrative characteristics:

1. An ever increasing growth in membership in Jewish congregations along with a steadily decreasing participation in synagogue and temple activity.

2. Jewish education for children and youth primarily conducted through the Sunday School with all the shallowness a two-hour-weekly exposure implies.

3. An increasing breakdown in Jewish family life paralleling the patterns of the general community. Evidence abounds: increasing divorce rate, growing intermarriage, problems of communication between parent and child, growing middle-class delinquency rate, and so forth.

4. Contemplation by few American Jews today of their migrating to Israel, despite Israel's enormous need for immigration.

5. A growing pattern of affluent Jews finding primary communal satisfaction in serving on boards of symphonies, art museums, and other cultural endeavors in the general community.

6. A growing rejection by college-age youth of the "Jewish establishment" and the seeking of meaning in life through the hippie movement, Zen Buddhism and various nihilist groups

which are manifest on the college campus.

7. The rapid acculturation of the Jew into general American society with more educational, social and career opportunities than any previous American Jewish generation.

The questions that demand answers are: What is distinctive about being a Jew in today's society? How can a Jew derive personal meaning through his Jewishness?

### **Role of The Jewish Center**

Through the efforts of the National Jewish Welfare Board, there have been numerous regional and national meetings and discussions during recent years on the nature of programming, and the kinds of techniques and emphases needed to provide creative Jewish experiences for Jewish Center members. This search is not unique to the Jewish Center and has occupied rabbis, Jewish educators, the Hillel movement, and many others. The ultimate goal of this probing, soul-searching, conferring, and discussions is a creative American Jewish future.

Professional Jewish Center leaders must recognize that the achievement of Jewish objectives will depend largely on the nature of the thrust of the Board of Directors and the degree of their own commitment. To enhance this commitment, it is important for board members themselves to become deeply involved in questions of Jewish survival and ultimately to evolve a conviction of their own in the important role the Jewish Center can play. Only when the Board of Directors gives a clear and deeply felt mandate to the professional staff can the Jewish Center be creative in this vital area.

In the Jewish community center we find time and time again that the content of board meetings and degrees of

board engagement in vital issues will set the tone and pace of the Center. However, casual conversation with Jewish community center lay leaders frequently brings forth such responses as "I am beset with worries and troubles in my business and when I come to board meetings, I don't relish having major donnybrooks on issues," "I really want to feel good about what the Jewish Center is doing, I think it's important. The policy problems maybe should be left more to the professionals."

It should be recognized that Jewish Center lay leaders are generally quite involved in other sectors of the community, often serving on several other boards and being quite active in organizations. Jewish Center board meetings generally have much in the way of immediate business needing resolution and decision-making, and frequently the nature of the board meeting precludes any deep look at specific problems. Frequently issues are fully processed by committees and presented to the board in quite digested fashion. Jewish Center boards usually meet no more than eight times a year and meetings rarely exceed a two hour period of time.

The following case study of a Jewish community center attempting to re-define and give a new thrust to its Jewish purpose demonstrates the creative possibility for infusing a Board of Directors and ultimately the Jewish community center with enthusiasm and commitment for carrying out its Jewish goals and purposes.

### **One Center Reexamines Its Approach to Jewish Programming**

Our Center recently relocated in suburbia, moving from a midtown area. It experienced a very sizable membership growth immediately following the move to suburbia and today approximately 30 percent of the Jewish fam-

ilies of the community are represented by one or more of their members in Center membership. Until recently, the Center's board was primarily composed of third and fourth generation American Jews of Western European background. In recent years there has been considerable change in lay leadership and today it is mixed. The Board of Directors is made up of people, however, who are primarily affiliated with reform congregations. The minority who belong to conservative and orthodox congregations are quite verbal and don't hesitate to express their thinking about the Center's Jewish purposes.

Throughout the more than 80 years of this Center's history, full programming has been conducted after 1 p.m. on Saturday, this day being seen merely as another day of program, and an extremely busy one, with participation on Saturday almost equaling that of the total remainder of the week.

During its history, this Center Board of Directors, as those in other parts of the country, has experienced its share of internal struggles. Such questions as the proper location of new facilities or the propriety of programs dealing with provocative and controversial issues of the day have occupied the board's thinking. Over the years the board has found it necessary to evolve policies reflecting compromise and occasionally inconsistencies.

Several years ago the following issues prompted a reexamination of the Jewish purposes and practice of the Center.

1. A Center-sponsored scout troop conducted activities Friday nights and Saturday mornings in basic violation of the Center's Sabbath policy which banned activity, other than that of a religious nature, from sundown Friday until Saturday at 1 p.m.

2. The observance of Kashruth.

3. Traveling to and participating in programs elsewhere on Friday night and

Saturday morning when the Center was closed for the Sabbath.

4. The appropriateness in the Center's country camp of children rising to the singing of Hatikvah. Several board members were present when this happened and expressed the feeling that the national anthem was clearly the Star Spangled Banner and that standing to sing Hatikvah was not appropriate.

5. The degree of Jewish programming—some lay leaders and members felt there was too heavy a Jewish emphasis in the Center program. At the same time others were critical that the Center was not sufficiently Jewish.

6. Rabbinical ambivalence about the proper locale for the Center's growing informal adult Jewish educational program. Some rabbis felt that the Center was usurping the role of the synagogue.

#### **Developing Sabbath Policy and Program Guidelines**

The Center president, in response to these situations, appointed a special Goals and Objectives Committee of the Board of Directors to carry out the following charge:

RESOLVED, That the Jewish Center conduct a study of the Jewish component of the Jewish Center program with a view to developing the following:

1. Program guidelines to help the Jewish Center implement and give meaning to the stated Jewish Center purpose of "helping the individual as an American to develop security and satisfaction in his religious and cultural background by furthering his understanding and appreciation of and participation in Jewish life."

2. Policy guidelines around questions that have come up in relation to the Jewish Center and its observance of the Sabbath.

When this recommendation of the president was presented to the agency's Board of Directors, unanimous approval was given even though many members of the board were not fully cognizant of the implications and meaning of this

examination in depth. Approval of the charge and the formation of the committee appeared to many board members as merely another piece of agency business farmed out to a committee. The president, in appointing the committee, attempted to choose as representative a group of people as possible with different backgrounds, different orientations, and different feelings about things Jewish. He was able to take full advantage of the very unique quality of the Jewish community center, namely that it is beholden to no one ideological group and rather represents the total Jewish community.

In accepting the charge from the board, the Goals and Objectives Committee projected for itself a careful nine-month timetable. The study was to include education, fact-gathering, membership involvement and the study and formulation of recommendations, leading to board action. The committee chairman, a dynamic young physician associated with the Jewish Center since boyhood, worked closely with one of the Center's executive staff members. Among those who shared their thinking with the committee at various stages of deliberation were the executive of the Jewish Federation, leading Reform and Orthodox rabbis, a prominent Jewish psychiatrist, the chairman of the Swimming Team Committee, the scoutmaster of the Center troop, as well as a cross section of some 25 members representing the board and Center participants.

The Goals and Objectives Committee requested each of the Center's Program Department committees (Pre-School, Childrens, Physical Education, Older Adult, Youth, Adult, and Camping Services) to review existing practice and policy in the areas of inquiry and to report reactions and recommendations to the Goals and Objectives Committee. At the meetings of the Goals and Objectives Committee, each depart-

ment committee was represented and expressed their department's thinking.

Also, a questionnaire, addressed to sixteen large Jewish Centers provided important comparative information. This survey dealt specifically with the stated policies and the actual practices of these Centers in regard to programming on the Sabbath. Among the nine conducting programs on Saturday, the broadest variations of practice was reported. While this data was not given excessive weight in the final determination of local policy, it nevertheless provided a basis for comparison.

This intensive process of study and consideration, continuing for more than six months, involved some twelve committee and sub-committees, a total of over 200 board and committee members and a dozen professional staff. After six months of study, the Goals and Objectives Committee chairman presented to the Board of Directors, a digest of the deliberations and a tentative document stating certain premises and a number of program guides, and concluded with policy recommendations.

There was no attempt to discuss this material fully at the board meeting but a plan was presented for examination in depth by members of the Board of Directors for a weekend. This weekend to be known as a "Discuss-In" was to take place in conference facilities at a nearby state park. This intensive in-depth examination of all pertinent facts and opinions would hopefully result in much greater understanding of the issues and clear recommendations to be presented to the regular meeting of the Board of Directors immediately following the "Discuss-In."

#### **Deliberations Bring Feelings to the Surface**

Before examining the "Discuss-In" and its conclusions, it might be helpful to examine some of the subjective feelings

and attitudes which were manifested during the committee's and sub-committees' deliberations. From the earliest meetings, during the search for facts and the evolving of philosophy, committee members expressed directly and indirectly their own internal conflicts and feelings regarding being Jewish. Some of the varied expressions indicated a desire for assimilation and an ambivalence about the Center's Jewish program and degree of Jewish orientation. The possibility of any limitations being imposed upon the scouting and swimming groups provided a vehicle for some to express great admiration for these two programs and the values which derive from them. Concern was also expressed that the imposition of Sabbath time limitations and of Sabbath emphasis on programming would lessen the meaning of these programs for participants. It was a difficult question for some board members to relate to.

There were as many positions taken in the deliberations as there were varieties of motivation. For some, the rejection of the idea that the Center play an important Jewish role merely reflected a personal reaction to the harsh demands of an orthodox childhood. Still others, alarmed by the increase in intermarriage, insisted on every possible Jewish activity as a quick antidote. For some, there was a fear of ghettoization. Others advocated adapting to the demands of modern life and tossing aside every relic of "archaic practice" in which category they would include not only observance of the Sabbath but every program providing an identifiable Jewish experience. Others did not openly attack efforts toward Jewish survival, but preferred their assignment to the synagogue or temple. Other board members clarified their thinking as to the important role for the Center in relation to creative Jewish survival.

### **Role of the Professional Staff**

Professional staff played a crucial role during the entire process of deliberation by committee and sub-committees. Some of the personal conflicts that different chairmen felt had to be dealt with by staff in private meetings. Support had to be provided for those who hesitated to express themselves in meetings. At times, positions were taken by staff members at committee and individual face-to-face meetings. Staff served as ego-ideals and value bearers and sometimes this action resulted in considerable hostility being directed toward them.

Discussions on basic questions were stimulated by staff at meetings of the various program committees to deal with philosophical and practical effects on program. Professional staff members used their skills and their knowledge to give depth and substance to these deliberations. Blending conflicting attitudes, drawing out hidden feelings, facilitating an acceptance of differences, keeping the focus on the basic goal of positive Jewish survival were but some of the areas in which social work insights and techniques were utilized. This creative use of self by staff proved once again that sound group work processes have applicability to board groups as well as the traditional club setting.

Professional staff members quickly found that committee deliberations had reverberations throughout the community. Individual rabbis expressed their reactions to certain phases of the fact-gathering and deliberating process when members of their own congregations raised questions. Staff members, on several occasions, reached out to various rabbis to interpret the purpose and objectives of the study. Staff attempted to help the rabbinate understand that there was no desire to usurp the role of the

synagogue or temple but rather to complement and support it.

It is important to point out that professional staff members of the Center had conflicting feelings about the degree of Jewish emphasis. As individuals, they too share many dilemmas. There is, however, one vitally important basic difference. The fact that a trained social worker chooses to use his professional skills in a setting, nominally at least, dedicated to positive Jewish survival, implies a personal commitment voluntarily undertaken. This, of course, is not to deny the possibility that *personally*, he may have conflicting opinions.

It was necessary for the senior members of the professional staff to spend considerable time in staff discussion, staff meetings and sub-staff meetings reviewing progress to date, eliciting attitudes of staff, and in helping make them a part of the process so they not only could function properly with committees, but also feel a sense of mission in terms of the direction the agency was going. Staff, through this process, evolved clear goals and objectives and attempted to motivate and move committees towards these end objectives. It took enormous discipline for the staff to allow a process to take place and not allow their concern over ultimate acceptance of the goals to adversely affect committee functioning.

In the protracted course of Board and Committee deliberations, the staff had many occasions to examine its thinking collectively and individually. To say that there was eventual unanimity would be inaccurate. However, a very positive staff consensus was achieved. This fact was significant in freeing the workers to play more effectively their professional roles in working with laymen on the various committees. It might even be said that the influence of staff upon the laymen was crucial at

times in keeping the process going toward resolution.

#### Recommendations of the Goals and Objectives Committee

In keeping with the charges originally given, the Goals and Objectives Committee presented two recommendations. These were founded on certain premises and basic policies which the committee expressed as follows:

- A. There is a crisis in Jewish life which threatens the survival of the Jewish people.
- B. One of the goals of the Center is its commitment to enrich its members' understanding of, participation in, and appreciation of his Jewishness and Jewish life.
- C. The Center closes its doors from 6:00 p.m. on Friday to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday as a mark of Sabbath respect, and to set the day apart from the remainder of the week. This is also the time of organized religious observance in temples and synagogues. The Center is open from 1:00 p.m. on the Sabbath because on this day people may want to recreate creatively and wholesomely.

The Jewish Center's responsibilities are:

1. To encourage the development of special programs in consonance with the Sabbath.
2. To try to offer, on another day, any non-Sabbath type program offered on Saturday.

The committee then suggested the following guidelines as tools for developing programs in furtherance of these premises and policies:

- A. *Sabbath Guides*:
  1. Visual aids, signs, music in the lobby, special displays.
  2. Oneg Shabbots as a regular feature of the children's group program.
  3. The introduction of a course on Jewish heroes and appropriate sermonettes as an adjunct to Saturday children's activities.
  4. Jewish storytelling in the Library.
  5. Intensification of effort to build up the Adult Sabbath hour.
  6. More intense efforts to have the Sabbath observed as a special day in camps and

on trips and encampments. The Jewish Center has an even greater responsibility to children when the child is in the Jewish Center's total charge for a 24 hour period or more.

*B. Other Jewish Programs*

1. Special attention to develop program for the college age group. A special membership plan has already been adopted. The Center might assist locally by making facilities available to members of Hillel or to the local Jewish college age youth generally, or program with Hillel.
2. Special family life discussion groups to help people come to grips with how they want to live Jewishly--groups for young married, people with young children, holiday workshops, etc.
3. Encouragement to performing and exhibiting groups, such as the Art Committee, Orchestra, Center Players, to have Jewish purposes of Center permeate their program.
4. Additional performing groups in the Jewish arts.
5. Experiment in children's program with a Jewish educational group, providing content different from Sunday School curricula.
6. Use the house organ for education and interpretation as well as program announcements. (Essay contests, etc.)

Finally, the following recommendations were presented:

*Recommendation #1.* The Center reaffirms the importance of its Jewish objectives and the development of programs reflecting this renewed commitment.

*Recommendation #2.* The Center reaffirms its policy of being closed Friday evening and Saturday until 1:00 p.m. This policy shall apply equally to all activities under the Center's auspices on or off the premises. The Center shall not sponsor activity requiring travel beyond the local area during the closed period. Exceptions on or off the premises can only be for religious services or other obviously "Sabbath Type" activities.

**The Board "Discuss-In"**

As the culmination of the deliberative process that had begun nine months earlier, agency board members gathered for some 14 hours of intensive considera-

tion of the recommendations of the Goals and Objectives Committee. Despite the provocative nature of the board "Discuss-In," there was considerable difficulty in securing a large board participation. People had a variety of rationales and excuses as to why they could not leave the city overnight to participate. Since the Board of Directors, prior to the "Discuss-In," had not been intensively involved in the consideration and since few board members were involved in the committee deliberations, those who had not been involved found little or nothing of interest in the materials that came to them about the "Discuss-In." They tended to feel that it was "just to discuss some Jewish themes and Jewish programs." Those who had been intimately involved in the earlier process had a greater commitment and anticipated the "Discuss-In" with great eagerness. This gathering began on Saturday afternoon with a two-hour bus ride from the Center to a setting chosen to facilitate the maximum concentration free from distractions. Preparation included providing each participant with a portfolio of pertinent material including a number of reprints of provocative articles by leading thinkers on the subject.

To provide background and a frame of reference, arrangements were made for an erudite and thought-provoking keynote speech delivered by a leading local rabbi who was also a trained social worker. To participate in the discussions that followed, the planning committee also invited to the opening sessions spokesmen for the Scouting Committee, for the Swim Team Committee, and for the orthodox point of view. These men were invited because of their special concerns related to the decisions being considered.

The discussions generally remained on the level of calm reasonableness, fair consideration of other points-of-view,

and a constant search for compromise courses of action consistent with principle. Early in the discussion, it was apparent that general consensus existed around acceptance of recommendation number one, which was later adopted. This became the basic principle around which subsequent discussion revolved. To reaffirm Jewish objectives and "develop program reflecting this renewed commitment" was not difficult to agree to. The real questions were the kind, quantity, frequency, setting, auspices, and timing of programs that would best accomplish these objectives. The guidelines presented by the Goals and Objectives Committee were accepted as samples of the program everyone could agree on.

The real controversy centered around recommendation number two, dealing with policy related to scheduling activities on the Sabbath. Immediately coming to the surface were feelings reflecting denominational views. Concern was expressed by some that a small orthodox minority was being catered to if restrictions were placed on Saturday programs. The issue was sharpened by a strong request by the Boy Scout representative that this group remain free to continue its weekend camping program on the grounds that Scouting could not exist as a character-building force if limits were placed on Sabbath programming. The suggestion that travel to the campsite occur before sundown on Friday with a "Sabbath type" program planned Friday night and Saturday morning was rejected by Scout representatives and others as unfeasible and artificial.

The other request was made by the Chairman of the Swim Team Committee for permission to engage in swim meets on Saturday morning. The contention was that the positive values of a swimming program would be vitiated if such competition were eliminated.

The counterpoints presented stressed (1) that many program opportunities were possible at times other than Saturday morning, and (2) that minimal respect for Sabbath observance by all Jews was involved and that the Jewish Center, therefore, had an obligation to observe and respect it as a matter of principle. To make exception for two groups, representing a small fraction of membership was unjustified since it would inevitably lead to numerous other exceptions that would ultimately negate the objective enunciated in the first recommendation.

The Saturday discussion session lasted late into the night and after adjournment, bedroom discussions continued into the early morning hours, reflecting the intensity of involvement by the board members. Upon reconvening at the morning session with non-board members no longer present, consideration focused on the adoption of the following revised recommendation number two:

**RESOLVED,** That the Board of Directors of the Jewish Community Centers reaffirms its long standing policy of closing its Centers on Friday at 6:00 p.m. (or earlier if sundown comes earlier) and remaining closed until 1:00 p.m. Saturday. No activities whatsoever, whether on or off the premises, are to be conducted during such time period. Any activities undertaken during such time period by any individuals who may be members shall not be construed in any manner to be sponsored by or identified as an activity having any connection of affiliation with the Center.

This resolution eliminated any reference to travel since the feeling was that this unnecessarily clouded the basic question. It also sought to rule out the subterfuge of individuals participating Saturday afternoon. After probing the implications of such a resolution for other Center activities, for members generally, for the image of the Center in the total community, and on its rela-



tionship to the various congregations, the discussion drew to a close. After many hours of deliberation, the vote was put and the resolution was adopted by a count of 14 to 5. The recommendation was to be presented for final action to the full Board of Directors.

As the "Discuss-In" ended, several things were clear. The ultimate question of how a Jewish Center might make its most effective contribution to positive Jewish survival was far from answered. Real progress had been made, nevertheless, in understanding the problem. One of the most important side-effects of the "Discuss-In" was the tremendous enthusiasm expressed by everyone present for the great satisfaction in coming to grips with real problems, all of this in spite of a fatiguing two days. The unanimous opinion was that the "Discuss-In" should become an annual event.

#### **Decisions by the Board of Directors**

The setting for the next act of this continuing drama was the meeting of the full Board of Directors. The scene was set by the introduction of the following resolution which was a slight elaboration in word and emphasis of the first recommendation adopted by the "Discuss-In."

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors reaffirms its long standing objectives of providing recreational, group work, and informal educational program, primarily for the Jewish members of the community. The Center reaffirms the importance of such purposes in aiding the individual to develop security and satisfaction in his religious and cultural background by furthering his understanding and appreciation of and participation in American Jewish life.

Again questions, doubts, support, and reservations were expressed in a mixture of reactions. Was the resolution needed? Did it impinge upon the function of the synagogue and temple? Will it con-

tribute to a ghetto atmosphere? Has a Center board the right to legislate for a community? These and other questions were raised. But no one at any time expressed opposition to the basic need for emphasizing the importance of the Center's Jewish purposes and the vote adopting the resolution was 22 to 2.

The second recommendation from the "Discuss-In" was then introduced. The focus of opposition centered on the time of opening and on the question of whether travel or any activity was appropriate during the hours that the Center itself is closed. Strong differences of opinion were expressed, very similar to those heard during the preceding weekend. The board struggled to find a formula to do the well nigh impossible, namely to retain the intent of the resolution without unduly limiting such programs as Scouting and swimming which appeal so strongly for exceptions.

By rejecting this motion, the board avoided coming fully to grips with the situation. Instead it approved the following statement:

RESOLVED, That the Center reaffirm its policy of being closed Friday evening and Saturday until 1:00 p.m. out of respect for the Sabbath.

Threats by the Scouting and Swimming groups and the possible loss of these groups and what these groups symbolized to a number of board members was a key factor in avoiding the issue.

Board members manifested many signs of fatigue and exhaustion from the emotional conflicts that they had experienced during the discussions. The president, on a number of occasions, encouraged discussants to express their point of view as board members of a Jewish communal agency even though in their personal lives they themselves might not be adhering to some of the very policies they were establishing.

It was difficult, however, fully to accept this admonition. The resolution which was passed left to the professional staff the responsibility for deciding when and under what conditions such activities might take place. Several people said, "let the staff resolve this." The professional staff leadership felt it would be extremely unwholesome for staff to make such judgments since the Board of Directors was avoiding its responsibility for setting policy.

### Follow Up to Board Action

A week later the President brought together several board leaders on an ad hoc basis to review further the action of the board. This group finally agreed that the board's recommendation could not deal with Center properties alone but would have to apply to Center activities in other settings as well. Once the board committee came to this decision, their thinking was immediately conveyed to the leadership of the Scout group and the Swimming group.

The executive and president of the agency met with the leadership of both groups, explaining the agency's Sabbath posture. It was pointed out that the program for both groups could be enriched, rather than hampered by carrying out this policy. The lay leaders of the Swim Team reluctantly accepted the agency policy. They immediately arranged meetings with representatives of Christian groups sponsoring swim meets and reached agreements to arrange for citywide swimming programs to begin Saturdays at 1:00 p.m., and as reciprocation the Center agreed to avoid scheduling on Sunday mornings citywide swim programs under its own sponsorship.

The Scout leaders, however, felt that the Scout program would be destroyed if the policy were followed. One person, affiliated with an orthodox congregation,

nevertheless could not understand why religion was being brought into the Scouting program. Scouting leaders then wrote a letter to the Board of Directors, indicating they would disaffiliate with the Center if the policy were implemented. It then became necessary to bring the issue back to the Board of Directors.

At two further board meetings, consideration was given to the impact of the Scout group's threatened, disaffiliation and whether the Center should, in view of this, implement the policy as recommended by the ad hoc committee. After a process in which people once again did considerable soul-searching and verbalized their own feelings towards being Jews, the Board of Directors affirmed the position taken by the ad hoc committee.

The Scout Troop did disaffiliate. The Center then formed another group within the framework of its Sabbath policy and the group today is an ongoing actively flourishing group. Ironically, the group which disaffiliated from the Center moved to a reform temple.

The impact of this total policy on the staff of the Center was enormously significant. It seemed to give a new thrust and new meaning to the Jewish purpose and Jewish meaning of the Center. It was interesting to note that two months later, at a board meeting, the following report described some of the new Jewish program which evolved. This report was enthusiastically received by the Board of Directors.

1. The Men's Health Club, led by its officers, have initiated a unique program called "Torah by Toga." Each Saturday afternoon, in the Health Club lounge, as sixty to seventy sheet-clad men relax, a provocative short film or speaker on a theme of Jewish interest is presented followed by a discussion. Discussion leaders have included Rabbis and lay leaders of the Jewish community.

2. On Saturday afternoons many mothers "hang around" while their children are engaged in program. These mothers were brought together for a stimulating presentation concerning an upcoming holiday or an issue of Jewish interest. The program ends with the traditional Saturday afternoon tea and cookies.

3. Once a month the hundreds of youngsters meeting in Saturday afternoon clubs come together for an Oneg Shabbot. The groups themselves plan the skits, songs, dances, that make up the program.

4. The two hundred youngsters in Pee Wee basketball now have an opportunity before game time to hear a story about great Jewish personalities. Community leaders who can communicate with children are the story-tellers.

5. A leading local Rabbi initiated another unique concept—"Rabbi-In-Residence". For two weekends he visited a variety of programs, making his own contribution to each. The following is from the record of one of our group leaders . . .

"The Rabbi spoke on the meaning of 'creative celebration of the Sabbath'. After his brief comment on Jewish Arbor Day, the Rabbi played a record of warm, funny and moving stories by Peretz and the "World of Sholom Aleichem". Many of those present were actually moved to tears and laughter. I know of no other instance at this program when the group became so unaware of itself, me and the Rabbi and so very aware of the message of the storyteller. The stories and comments from the Rabbi filled the hour—after he left, people visited—with me and with each other until nearly 4:00 P.M."

6. One of our teenage groups conducted its own original Friday evening services in the building. Guest speaker for the evening was the Center president.

7. Twenty teenage groups prepared skits for a Chanukah skit contest—the theme being Chanukah and the Meaning of Freedom. Youth Committee members judged the contest as did some local teachers. As a result, one of the groups was invited to present its skit in a junior high school assembly. Generally, there was a very colorful and lively tone in the buildings throughout Chanukah, due in part to the artistic talents of a visiting staff member from Israel.

8. Center performing groups are beginning to reflect the fact that they exist in a Jewish Center. From the fabulously successful Israeli Art Show to the choral group's performance at the Israel Bond Chanukah Festival to our new performing dance group and to the renaissance of the Yiddish language, the Jewish arts have found a home at the Center.

A force has been set in motion which will continue to challenge our membership in greater depth than ever to help them to find their own answers to the questions "What does it mean to be a Jew?"

9. The Children's Department is preparing a "Domestic Judaism Course" on How to Celebrate Jewish Festivals in the Home.

10. The Adult Department is preparing a course on the theme of "What Kind of Jewish Education For My Child" so that parents can make a more intelligent decision for themselves.

The staff has approached the challenge of Jewish programming with a new vigor and sense of purpose. This has been made possible by the clearcut direction it has gotten from a Board of Directors.

The authors do not intend to suggest that this Jewish Center, through its two year review process, will create a "Jewish revival" in its home community. If anything, the authors are merely suggesting that members of the Board of Directors and professional staff have added some additional meaning to their Judaism and a feeling of pride in being associated with a Center which, despite inconsistencies around the Sabbath, is attempting to represent a Jewish value. This total process created considerable discussion among the Center's members. A variety of comments have been made throughout the community that the Center was too Jewish or that the Center was not Jewish enough. In any case, people have begun to talk about the proper position the Center should represent in the community. This, in itself, is healthy.