

# LETTER TO OUR READERS

Dear Readers,

This issue of the *Journal* originated as a gift from UJA-Federation of New York to John Ruskey to recognize his leadership of the organization for the last decade. Many gifts would have been appropriate, and the fact that the *Journal* was selected underscores the value John places on reflection and learning. From the onset, UJA-Federation and the *Journal's* publisher, the Jewish Communal Service Association, were both clear that this would not be a tribute issue, which is an exceptional honor bestowed upon retirees or individuals at the end of their careers. John is neither retiring nor stepping away from his leadership position.

What you will find in the pages to follow is, first and foremost, a chronicle of how leaders can affect the direction of an institution. In article after article, you will find how vision, collaboration, commitment, and—yes—hard work can begin to influence and reorient a field and a community.

The many professional and lay contributors to this issue span the globe, both in and outside the federated system. The diversity of writers is not only a reflection of UJA-Federation's broad services and interests but it is also an indication of just how much change has transpired. As such, the issue and its individual articles form a case study in transformation. As you read the articles, you may wish to consider the following questions:

- How do these articles influence your thinking about your own approach to challenges facing you, your institution, or community?
- When reviewing the scope and breadth of UJA-Federation of New York's influence of the past ten years, what questions do you have about the directions taken?
- What is your vision of what is needed for the Jewish community of the future, and how might you begin to align communal, institutional, and personal approaches with it?
- What other organizations and people are potential collaborators and partners?
- What are the next round of changes that you feel will need to be faced by the Jewish community and the institutions that serve it?
- What topics would you like to see in a journal in 2019 that looks back on the last ten years?

What began as a gift to John has evolved as a gift to our field.

Many people have been involved in the creation of this gift, but no one has more lovingly guided it than Alisa Rubin Kurshan. Alisa worked closely with her co-editor Steve Hoffman and was ably assisted by Noel Rubinton; my JCSA publications committee co-chair, Lyn Light Geller; Brenda Gevertz, executive director of JCSA; Gail Naron Chalew, the *Journal's* Managing Editor; and a creative editorial committee. We thank them all and we add our own *m'chayil l'chayil*—from strength to strength—to John and UJA-Federation of New York.

As always, we welcome your reactions, comments, and suggestions. Write us at [info@jcsana.org](mailto:info@jcsana.org).

*Susan L. Shevitz, EdD*

*Co-Chair, JCSA Publications Committee*