

course, taken to an extreme, this good idea could lead to chaos. In Boston, we are trying to place the energy of those donors into the context of a broadly based community plan. Through a strategic planning process involving thousands of voices, we created an outline for systematic change, new programs, and new support for groups and institutions that provides a clear vision of where our community is going. Most of our largest donors make their gifts within the broad outline of the Strategic Plan, picking significant pieces of the agenda to make their own and to translate in their own way. Moreover, even when donors have chosen to bring their own new ideas to the table, we have generally been able to incorporate them into this overall vision. Rather than taking our focus away from the Strategic Plan, this has greatly enhanced our ability to implement and fund a new vision for Boston Jewry focused on building and supporting real grassroots communities of "Torah, tzedek and chesed."

A recent CJP assessment conducted by McKinsey and Company recommended that we focus fundraising energy on givers with the highest potential. It also suggested we adopt a new and far more serious community-building program separate from a campaign designed to link all donors and the community as a whole in a network of services, communication, and volunteerism. Gateway institutions — congregations, JCCs and day schools — working closely with the commission on Jewish continuity and its array of community-building programs, will serve to increase the number of new participants while significantly expanding communal engagement and

strengthening "real" community life.

By expanding options for donors as well as including synagogues and new grassroots organizations in our network, we can engage the passion of our givers while also *increasing* the size of our "network" and "reach" as a federation. Not only do we hope to engage and become philanthropic advisors to growing numbers of larger donors, but we are also able to remain a federation of small donors. We can achieve these goals in three ways:

1. Strengthen the ability of congregations, JCCs, and other grassroots organizations to attract, inspire, and engage Jews. Involvement and democracy at the federation level can have no meaning if the vast majority of Jews are completely uninvolved and turned off.

2. Understand that there is a vast difference between the attention paid to donors in a fundraising process and the attention to Jews of every kind in the delivery of service and the development of community.

3. Pay more attention to strategic direction and communal vision within which donor choice can find coherence and meaning.

Vision is at the heart of the matter. If communities fail to develop an inspiring vision, key donors will follow their own dreams. Eventually, communities that continue to depend on "business as usual" will find it increasingly difficult to fund even programs of the past, let alone the possibilities that beckon us all.

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Women and Philanthropy

Barbara B. Dobkin and Nancy Schwartz Sternoff

There is always an inherent danger in addressing the issue of gender. Clearly, the behavior of neither males nor females is monolithic, and the retorts are always quick, "not all (fill in the blank) are like that." Nevertheless, we live in a gendered society, and we are members of a highly gendered religious-cultural-political-service community. And the norm is definitively male. Leadership has been defined by the ways men lead. Philanthropic practice has been valued by the ways men give.

Despite the disparate and inequitable distribution of opportunity and leadership, during the past four decades women have made tremendous strides toward equality in this country. Feminism, the only American social movement that has brought women back to Judaism, is enriching our religious leadership and practice. The face of our communal and philanthropic world is also changing, albeit slowly. Following the lead of the women's funding movement, which has seen an explosion in individual and collective activist philanthropy over the past twenty



years, Jewish women's pooled funds have burst onto the fundraising and grant-making scene across North America. Women who have not been connected to the mainstream Jewish community, along with longtime donors to federation campaigns, are creating new donor-advised structures to address issues vitally important to them as women — through a Jewish and a feminist prism. More than a dozen federated communities, from Springfield, Massachusetts to Detroit, Michigan, have initiated or are about to initiate vehicles for proactive pooled women's philanthropy. In addition, Hadassah, the largest women's organization in America, has demonstrated its commitment to progressive funding through its new \$10 million foundation. The federations and Hadassah join longstanding and highly respected organizations such as The Jewish Fund for Justice, New Israel Fund, The Shefa Fund, and US/Israel Women to Women in articulating a commitment to directed funding for women and girls — funding for programs that bring us closer to a more egalitarian and inclusive Jewish community.

Lay and professional leaders of these new funds share two common goals: first, to increase the dollars flowing to programs for women and girls and, second, to empower Jewish women as advocates and activists for a more inclusive community that addresses the needs of this population. The first goal is easier to attain. New dollars are now available — primarily from women's foundations — to address issues like domestic violence, incest, eating disorders, lack of leadership opportunities for women and girls, and the ostracism of gay and lesbian Jews.

The second goal — women empowering themselves to become leaders and advocates for equality of opportunity and outcome — is more complicated and will require monumental work. This necessitates a sea change for a community that has traditionally been risk-averse. It requires us to shift the paradigm of leadership and to redefine, in Judith Plaskow's words, "normative Judaism." The facilitation and implementation of these fundamental, systemic changes are fraught with challenges for men and women alike.

As philanthropists, we must welcome the diversity and the holistic approach that women bring — our child bearing and rearing experiences, our roles as consumers of services and volunteers, even our longtime status as outsiders — to our community. Our leaders must also face the realities of

today's Jewish women: their need for quality day care and their need for legitimate compensation and work schedules within Jewish communal service.

Challenges for women, and for the women's foundations in which they participate, are equally enormous. We must address how to shape and drastically grow our *individual* as well as collective giving so that we maximize our potential for power through philanthropy. We must understand advocacy as a role a woman can play — whether she serves on her federation or local school board.

A third, far-reaching but not yet addressed goal of the pooled women's funds is the need to think and to act strategically together, across Jewish North America, and to leverage these new dollars by continent-wide collaborative funding. Only through such collaboration will we have the numbers and financial clout to create the change we believe is imperative. Only by doing so can we make a significant impact on our communal institutions and the culture they have promulgated.

Despite the challenges and the resistance to change, there is a renewed sense of anticipation among women across the spectrum of our institutions. If we believe that through philanthropy we can create a more equitable society, then pooled Jewish women's funds can be powerful agents for change. But if we are to actualize potent human and financial resources, it is incumbent upon both women and men to unlearn that which no longer serves us well. This is not for the sake of equality — this is for the sake of our future. If we do so, both collectively and individually, we will indeed build a vibrant, inclusive, committed Jewish community.

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A long time activist on behalf of women and girls, Nancy Schwartz Sternoff is Director of the Dobkin Family Foundation. She served as Executive Director of the National Republican Coalition for Choice and as a senior policy advisor to Congressman John Miller.