

Annual Report

2008 - 2009



Dear friends,

This annual report is an opportunity to assess last year's progress and to outline a plan for the future. It is also our chance to thank you for helping us to achieve our mission through your thoughtful generosity. You have our deepest gratitude for your support.

Hillel at Stanford has faced major challenges in this economic downturn, as have many others. We are fortunate that careful financial management in the past and budget reductions planned for the year ahead have thus far allowed us to continue building thriving Jewish life on campus. That said, the past year required flexibility, creativity, and sensitivity, both organizationally and programmatically.



Students gather at Hillel's annual year-end L'Chaim Gala. The evening featured a ceremony to honor seniors and other community leaders, dinner, dancing, and live music from student bands the "Banana Blues" and the "Stanford Klezmer Band".

Our community and students stepped up to the challenges. For example, when our meal budget was reduced, students joined together in Hillel's new kitchen to plan and cook kosher Shabbat and Passover meals. The result: a new opportunity to build community, as well as delicious meals feeding hundreds of students. Hillel at Stanford continues to be a second home for students, providing them rich and deep connections to each other and to Jewish life.

We also continued to implement our strategic plan, seeking to build a more welcoming environment, create meaningful Jewish experiences, increase opportunities for our graduate student and young adult communities, promote student health and well-being, and deepen connections with the larger campus community. Through the work of staff and students, we have made substantial progress on 40 out of the 45 identified priority implementation items in the last year. In the coming year, we hope

to continue exploring options

for a kosher dining program, develop models for student engagement that harness the power of social networking and continue to develop collaborative efforts with University partners.

We hope this report gives you a sense of the depth and breadth of Hillel's programming vision, and how far your support goes in creating the warm, welcoming, and vibrant place that is Hillel at Stanford.

Thank you again for your continued partnership and support, and we hope we can continue to count on you in the year ahead.

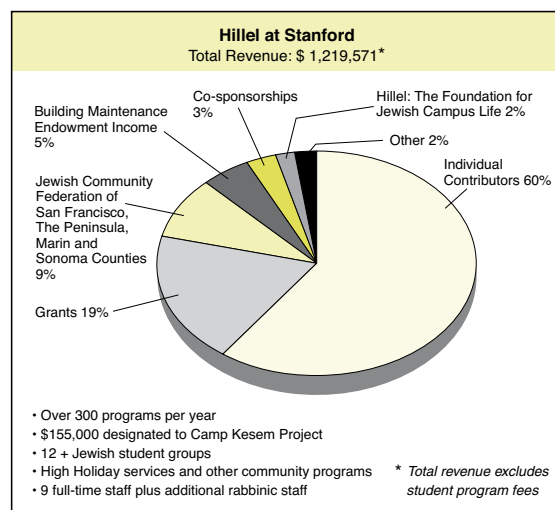
Warmly,

Adina Danzig Epelman

Adina Danzig Epelman
Executive Director

Joan Karlin

Joan Karlin
President



SUPPORTED BY



JEWISH COMMUNITY FEDERATION
of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties

The following highlights some of Hillel's many programs during the 2008-2009 academic year. Your support makes these programs possible, and we thank you again for helping ensure the vibrancy and diversity of Jewish life at Stanford.

Leadership Development

Leadership development continued to be a cornerstone of Hillel at Stanford's mission and vision.

This was the inaugural year for the Robert Levison, Jr. '48 Leadership Development Fellowship Program. The Fellows, all Stanford students, spanned different ages and Jewish backgrounds. They met



with Jewish leaders from various fields within and beyond the Jewish world, discussed models and examples of leadership, and explored the world of philanthropy.

Students also took on Jewish leadership roles on campus, which enabled them to experience the inner workings of a non-profit group and develop management and leadership skills. Thirteen students were elected to the Jewish Student Association, which creates and oversees Jewish student programming in partnership with Hillel staff; three students were hired as Hillel's Koret Interns; and three students became Hillel at Stanford's first Peer Network Engagement Interns.

◀ Daniel Sokatch, CEO of the Jewish Community Federation, met with students for Hillel's "My Search for Meaning" series, which provides opportunities for students to hear from inspiring leaders about their own personal journeys.

Israel on Campus

Hillel at Stanford continued to support a variety of Israel-related student groups and programs, with a myriad of aims, including deepening understanding of Israeli politics through education and discussion; celebrating Israeli culture; experiencing Israel first-hand through travel; and enabling students from across campus to learn more about Israel.



To maximize reach, many programs were co-sponsored by student groups such as the Stanford Israel Alliance and the AIPAC student liaisons, as well as groups on and off campus including the Taube Center for Jewish Studies, Chabad at Stanford, Stanford's Haas Center for Public Service, the Stanford chapter of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East, and the Jewish Community Relations Council. Our staff also partnered with the Israel Center of San Francisco to hold a fair that drew dozens of students to Hillel to learn about long-term travel, educational and professional program opportunities in Israel.

Some Israel education programs featured Stanford faculty members. Professor Jack Rakove, who teaches history, American studies and political science, led an "Israel 101" event. Professor Larry Diamond, Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, led an event for campus-wide student leaders, where he provided students with a deeper understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict – a topic that often is represented on campus in simplistic terms. These programs allowed students, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, to better understand the complex situation in the Middle East.

Jaclyn Tandler '11 and Justin Heft '11 commemorate Israel Independence Day at the culmination of Hillel's annual week-long celebration. This campus-wide event on White Plaza included music, dancing, student speakers, and free falafel.

Hillel also sponsored a lecture featuring Martin Indyk, former U.S. Ambassador to Israel. There was a program about gay rights in the Middle East, and a screening of the movie "Live and Become," followed by a discussion with filmmaker Sirak Sabahat, who immigrated from Ethiopia to Israel as a child. These last two programs were cosponsored by a number of campus groups from the gay and black communities, respectively, thereby reaching students from a variety of backgrounds.

Hillel also offered conversational Hebrew classes, led by Tal Kapulnik, Hillel's Israel Fellow. Tal also spent time meeting with students one-on-one, whether it was to bolster students' Hebrew skills, or talk in-depth about life in Israel from her first-hand experience. In addition to the graduate and young adult break trip to Israel, Hillel brought nearly 30 students to visit Israel for the first time, through Taglit Birthright-Israel trips in the winter and spring.

Shabbats and Holidays

Hillel offered a range of religious services this past year. Each week, one or two styles of Friday night services were followed by a free kosher dinner. In addition, the Orthodox Stanford Minyan gathered every Saturday morning for services and Shabbat lunch. The group, established two years ago, originally met once a month. With last year's opening of the Koret Pavilion at the Ziff Center, the

minyan began meeting weekly in Kehillah Hall, which features a beautiful permanent ark and inspiring stained glass windows. The group attracted 30 to 40 people each week.

Traditional holiday observances were accompanied by theme programming, and many holidays featured social action activities. For instance, Hillel hosted ten Passover events, including a Local Foods/Sustainability Seder on the last night, which featured an oversized map of California showing where the ingredients of the student-cooked seder meal were grown. During Sukkot, along with the typical paper chains, our students' sukkah was adorned with posters linking the holiday's focus on temporary shelter and local homelessness. This project was an outgrowth of Hillel's relationship with a student group, STOP: Students Taking On Poverty. On Purim, Hillel joined another campus group, Night Outreach to the Homeless, to tour the local area helping homeless people and remember the mandate on Purim to give to the needy.

This past year, Hillel remained an environmentally-friendly and socially-responsible organization. Hillel composted all food scraps, used compostable utensils, and recycled cans, plastics, and paper.

Hillel's Camp Kesem, a summer camp for children whose parents have or had cancer, welcomed 120 campers. The week-long program is for kids of all religious and ethnic backgrounds, and a record 148 Stanford students applied for the 68 volunteer counselor positions. The camp, which was founded in 2000 and has since been replicated nation-wide, began plans for its upcoming 10th anniversary celebrations.

Tikkun Olam (Repair of the World)



Students pose for a photo in front of the Kremlin during Hillel's Alternative Spring Break trip to Moscow.

Over the March break, Hillel sponsored three service-oriented Alternative Spring Break (ASB) trips. For the first time, Hillel sent eight undergraduate Jewish students to Moscow, where they spent a week with college students from that city's Hillel. Together, they learned about the history of Jews in Russia, met with high-level Russian officials, and volunteered in a Jewish orphanage.

For the third year in a row, a group of undergraduates flew to New Orleans to help with the Hurricane Katrina rebuilding efforts. And, Hillel's ASB for graduate students and young adults traveled to Israel, where they volunteered with the Ethiopian Jewish community, an immigration absorption center, and a center for the blind and disabled.

Social Action programs also took place on a weekly basis. In the "Challah for Hunger" program, students met every Thursday night to bake 100 loaves of challah. Funding for the ingredients came from the Jewish Students Association, and the loaves were

sold on White Plaza every Friday. This program raised approximately \$400 a week for the American Jewish World Service Darfur campaign, and will continue this upcoming school year.



Hillel at Stanford's 9th season of Camp Kesem was attended by 120 campers this year. The week-long program included sports, drama, and arts & crafts activities for everyone.

Graduate Student and Young Adult Programs

Now a two-year old program, Hillel's Graduate and Young Adult Program is organized by a task-force of graduate students and local young adults and staffed by a Hillel professional. The goal of this program is to create meaningful Jewish experiences and build community for Stanford students and local young adults between the ages of 22 - 35.

The group sponsored more than 40 programs this past year. Programs included the Maimonides Jewish Literacy Fellowships, which exposed students to traditional Jewish thought and philosophy, and how those ideas apply to everyday life, the ASB trip to Israel, as well as Shabbat and holiday celebrations. Other events included Israeli wine tasting and the Second Annual "Bar Mitzvah" theme party, which drew 300 people.

This program regularly partners with numerous local organizations, including synagogues, the JCC, and other Bay Area Hillels. Participation in this program has grown dramatically - from 70 unique participants annually three years ago to over 600 young adults today.

Jewish Learning and Culture

With two Rabbis on staff – Rabbi Mychal Copeland, Hillel’s senior Jewish educator, and Rabbi Ephraim Kamin, who works part-time through a partnership with the Jewish Study Network – Hillel continued educational programming with topics and approaches that reached students from an array of backgrounds.

Rabbi Copeland taught classes such as “Introduction or RE-introduction to Judaism,” “Cultural Judaism from an International Perspective,” and “Yoga with a Jewish Twist”. Meanwhile, Rabbi Kamin, who joined Hillel in September 2008, led the Maimonides program and met with students individually. Other educators included Stanford Professor Charlotte Fonrobert, who taught Beit Midrash Talmud Study, and Rabbi Yitzchok Feldman of Emek Beracha, a local Orthodox congregation, who led a Torah study group.

Sam Shonkoff, Hillel’s Jewish Student Life Coordinator, led a new weekly meditation group. They studied Jewish texts and practiced silent meditation in the CIRCLE, a new interfaith sanctuary in Stanford’s Old Union.

Students who are the grandchildren of Holocaust survivors also presented “Contemporary Effects of the Holocaust”. They showed pictures of their visits to concentration camps and talked about the effects of growing up with a survivor in the family.

Meanwhile, Hillel hosted four exhibits with various student and off-campus groups. Exhibits included: “Polish Heroes,” a collection of oversized photographs of non-Jewish Poles who saved Jews during the Holocaust; “Save a Child’s Heart,” which featured stories of children from poor countries who were brought to Israel for heart surgery; and “Jews of Color: In Color!,” which showed pictures of isolated Jewish communities in Africa, India, and Mexico. Inspired by that exhibit’s focus on Jewish diversity, eight students created “Jews Untitled.” They displayed photos and stories of Stanford students from various Jewish backgrounds, such as a student who has one Jewish parent and one Indian parent.

Students also initiated cultural activities at Hillel. Isaac Bleaman ‘11 taught a weekly Yiddish language class, while Noah Youngs, a doctoral student, formed a Klezmer band. The band was recently awarded a grant so it could train with Stuart Brotman, a professional Klezmer musician.



Rabbi Kamin gives an interactive kosher cooking lesson to Stanford students in Hillel’s new kitchen. The menu: chicken fajitas and homemade guacamole.

Interested in Hillel at Stanford's community programs?
If you would like to receive notification of lectures by prominent speakers (past speakers include Elie Wiesel, Thomas Friedman, Anita Diamant and Alan Dershowitz) please subscribe to our community events email list by visiting: <http://hillel.stanford.edu>, and click on “Community Links”.

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