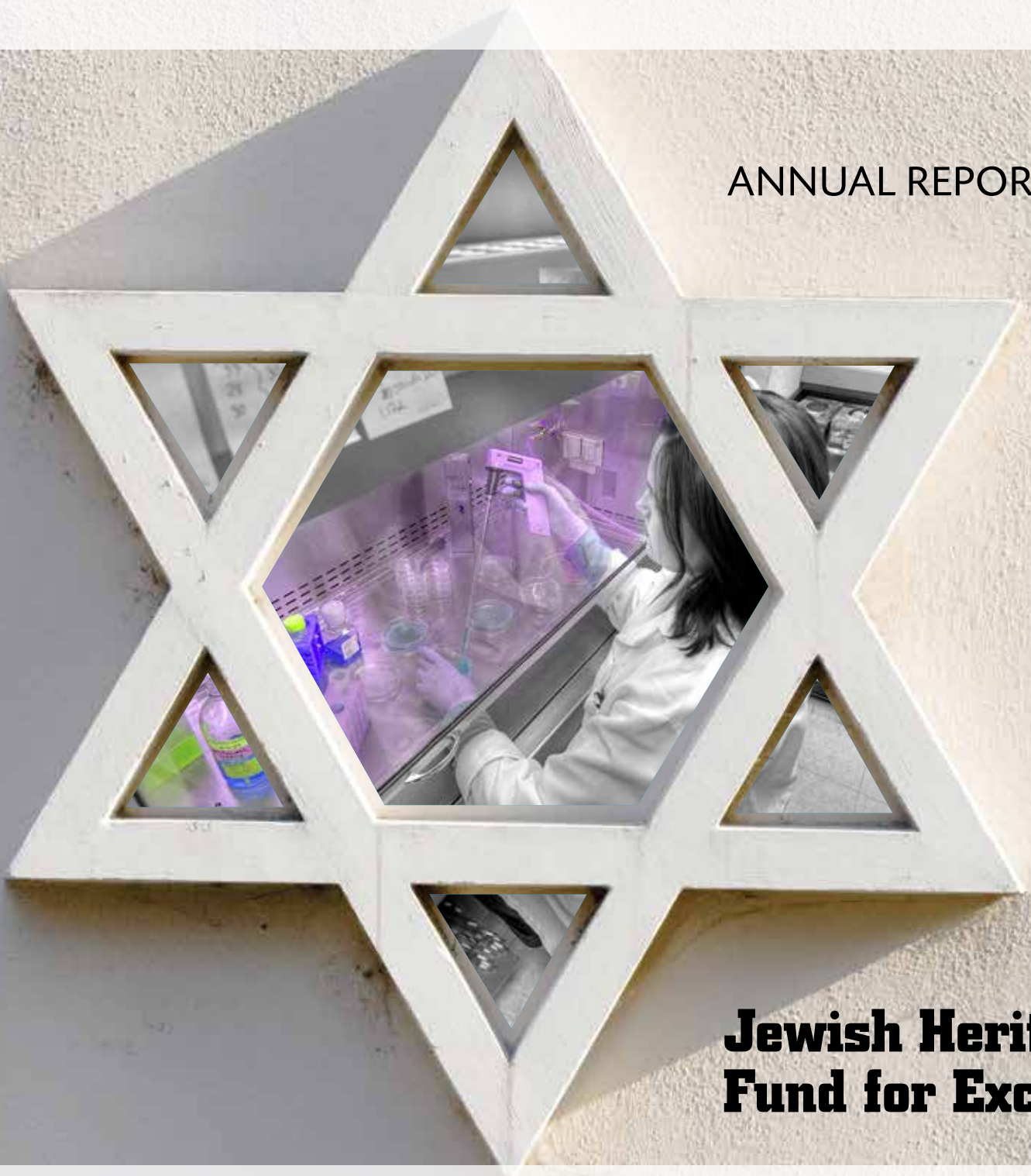


ANNUAL REPORT 2013



**Jewish Heritage
Fund for Excellence**



Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence Board of Trustees 2013-2014

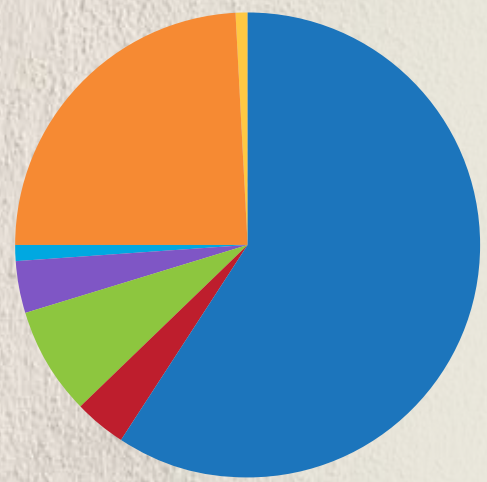
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Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence

2013 Approved Grants by Funding Priority

Medical/Health	\$2,833,000
Jewish Identity & Community	\$176,993
Creating Sustainabililty within the Jewish Community	\$359,705
Jewish Education	\$170,367
Senior Jewish Adult Services	\$56,460
University of Louisville Foundation-Judaic Studies Chair	\$1,150,000
Sponsorships	\$35,000



- Medical/Health
- Jewish Identity & Community
- Creating Sustainabililty within the Jewish Community
- Jewish Education
- Senior Jewish Adult Services
- University of Louisville Foundation-Judaic Studies Chair
- Sponsorships

**Jewish Heritage
Fund for Excellence**



In February 2010, the Jewish Hospital organization launched the Louisville Jewish Community Excellence Grants program as part of its historic support of the Jewish community. The program was created to provide financial assistance to not-for-profit organizations offering programs focused on Jewish culture/identity, health, human services and education. Three years later, close to \$350,000 in excellence grants funding had been provided to local Jewish communal agencies and religious institutions. As a result of the 2012 merger between Jewish Hospital & St. Mary's HealthCare and the Saint Joseph Health System, approximately \$70 million was set aside to form a new not-for-profit organization, the Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence (JHFE). Since that time, JHFE has continued to support the local Jewish community and vastly expanded its scope recently to include funding for medical research and education.



Jewish Cultural Activities

Jewish communities across the world have maintained a vibrant culture while making significant societal contributions to fields including science, medicine and the arts. Louisville's Jewish community has continued that time-honored tradition by providing meaningful programs and experiences for their own members as well as for the community at large.

KlezmerFest: Since 2010, Temple Shalom has brought deeply emotional Klezmer music to large audiences with annual KlezmerFest concerts featuring bands from around the country. In 2013, thanks to support from a JHFE grant, the temple was able to bring the toe-tapping hand-clapping music of Chicago's *Maxwell Street* and Michigan's *Red Sea Pedestrians* to an enthusiastic audience of over 200. Jewish culture, which always includes a food component, was fulfilled with the availability of corned beef sandwiches, knishes and other traditional fare.

Annual Jewish Film Festival: Over the past 15 years, the Louisville Jewish Film Festival has exposed the entire community to a rich array of foreign and domestic movies and documentaries that have increased a sense of Jewish identity, enhanced community unity and promoted greater cultural and religious understanding. A generous JHFE grant enabled the festival to hold a free screening and a reception at the Ali Center with 230 people in attendance. "Your funds," said Film Festival Director Marsha Bornstein, "allowed us to lower the barriers of participation."

CenterStage Acting Out: For 93 years, the Jewish Community Center's CenterStage Theatre has been a performance venue for works of broad cultural appeal. In 2011 JHFE funds helped to underwrite the establishment of Acting Out, a professional children's theatre troupe that goes to schools and presents educationally relevant musical theater to students in Kindergarten through Grade 5. In 2013, productions of *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* and *No Dogs Allowed* had more than 20 performances and reached in excess of 8,000 students. Additional JHFE funding provided scholarships for students from 22 schools to attend *And Then They Came for Me*, a Holocaust-themed play that featured survivors speaking at five performances.





Jewish Education

Since biblical times, education has been the central focus and primary way for the Jewish community to transmit its beliefs, principles and religious laws. With the emphasis on Torah study, Judaism is characterized by “lifelong learning” to be pursued by adults as well as children.

The University of Louisville Judaic Studies Chair: With the October 2013 announcement of the JHFE’s \$1.15 million gift to establish an endowed chair in Judaic studies in the University’s College of Arts and Sciences’ Division of Humanities, the local Jewish community’s long-time goal became a reality. The funding complemented a 2005 gift of \$500,000 from the Jewish Community Federation of Louisville (now known as the Jewish Community of Louisville) that was matched by Kentucky’s Research Challenge Trust Fund “Bucks for Brains” initiative. The University added another \$350,000 from a gift from the late Owsley Brown Frazier, and additional funding from local donors raised the total endowment to in excess of \$2.5 million.

The chair in Judaic Studies will raise awareness of Judaism’s religious and cultural heritage through the creation of an annual lecture series and other related programs. University of Louisville President James Ramsey believes this endowed chair will “fill an important need in the university’s religious studies program by offering students the opportunity to learn about Jewish culture, history and accomplishments – including those unique to Louisville – as they work toward a degree.”

“It is very appropriate that our first major grant announcement supports both the Jewish community and the University of Louisville,” said Louis Waterman, inaugural Board Chair of the Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence. “This new chair will ensure students a focused study of Jewish tradition and thought with scholarly expertise in Jewish religious traditions.”

Dr. Ranen Omer-Sherman accepted the Chair of Judaic Studies in August of 2014. Dr. Omer-Sherman came to the University of Louisville from the University of Miami, where he was Professor of English and Jewish Studies. In addition to living for thirteen years on a kibbutz in Israel, Dr. Omer-Sherman is the author of several books including *Israel in Exile: Jewish Writing and the Desert* and *The Jewish Graphic Novel: Critical Approaches*.



Adult Jewish Education: A generous grant from the JHFE enabled Congregation Adath Jeshurun to collaborate with the Jewish Community of Louisville to bring the Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning back to Louisville. This exceptional two-year course fosters and enriches Jewish cultural literacy through a core curriculum, *Foundations of Jewish Family Living*. Graduates may enroll in The Rachel Wasserman Scholars Curriculum, which explores classic and modern texts on Jewish perspectives and allows students to lend their voices to the ageless pursuit of Jewish wisdom.


Early Childhood Jewish Education: Preschool directors at Adath Jeshurun, Keneseth Israel and The Temple recently encountered a number of families unable to afford tuition for these well-established and highly regarded programs that serve children from the Jewish and broader community. They believe access to quality a preschool is necessary for all children and cite President Obama's national agenda calling for high quality preschool programs to be offered for every child. The three approached the JHFE for help with the goal of providing scholarship support to help young families send their children to one of these preschools. For Jewish families, this would also mean the beginning of a relationship with a Jewish congregation and exposure to Jewish curriculum and culture.



To date, the three preschools awarded a total of eighteen scholarships for the 2013/2014 school year. None of the children would have been able to attend one of these programs without the JHFE's financial assistance.

Jewish Community Senior Services

Jewish Family & Career Services' (JFCS) Executive Director Judy Freundlich Tiell is all too aware that as Louisville's Jewish elderly population continues to increase, so has the demand for services to handle their homecare, transportation, prescription medication, dietary and adaptive equipment needs. All too often, budgetary constraints leave seniors unable to cover their own care needs. A generous grant from the JHFE has provided these vulnerable individuals with many hours of non-medical homecare and case management in addition to transportation to medical appointments and same-day transportation assistance. "This funding will allow those of marginal means to remain independent and safe in their own home or community setting with the comfort, familiarity and dignity they cherish for their remaining years," says Tiell.



The Jewish Community of Louisville received a generous JHFE grant that helped the Jewish Community Center's (JCC) Senior Adult program purchase new equipment for its nutrition program and continue providing transportation to seniors. The cook said the ovens purchased with the grant were the best he has ever used. "Their efficiency," he noted, "will completely change our cooking process for the better." A portion of the grant also helped close the funding gap the JCC experienced from escalating food costs for its congregate and home delivered Meals on Wheels program. Approximately 20 percent of the funding was set aside for the purchase of a new handicapped accessible van.

Chavurat Shalom is a communitywide weekly program based at The Temple designed to meet the social, intellectual, spiritual and physical activity needs of members of the growing Jewish senior population. Programs include lunch, educational speakers, games and music. Approximately 200 seniors representing all congregations have attended programs and activities and interest remains consistently high. Ongoing financial support is essential to facilitating the program since several participants are unable to pay for lunch or need transportation on an ongoing basis. Begun in 2004, the program is done in collaboration with partner agencies, the Jewish Community of Louisville, Jewish Family and Career Services and the National Council of Jewish Women, Louisville Section.


Medical Research

As part of its mission, the Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence provides support for innovative medical research taking place in this area.

JHFE \$2 million grants to advance adult stem cell research

For more than a decade, Dr. Roberto Bolli, professor of medicine, director of the University of Louisville's Institute of Molecular Cardiology and internationally recognized leader in the treatment of heart disease and heart failure, has been working to revolutionize the treatment of heart failure by using patients' own purified cardiac stem cells to heal their damaged hearts. The JHFE, as part of its mission to support medical research that will significantly impact the lives of people in this community and beyond, has awarded the University of Louisville, just over \$2 million to move Dr. Bolli's work another step closer to potentially saving the lives of millions of people worldwide.





The first patient to benefit from Bolli's life-saving adult stem cell research is 71-year-old Michael Jones. To see Jones today, you would never guess that five years ago, he was close to death from congestive heart failure. He suffered a heart attack in 2004 and two weeks later went into heart failure. A heart catheterization revealed three his arteries were 80-90 percent blocked. Doctors wanted to perform heart bypass surgery immediately, but Jones refused.

Although he did fairly well between 2004 and 2008, by 2009 he could barely walk up the stairs in his home. A quick stop at a convenience store actually changed his life. A headline in the Courier-Journal announced that Bolli was beginning an adult cardiac stem cell surgery program at the University of Louisville. Jones could barely get home quickly enough to call for more information. "I had pretty much gotten to the point where I could not have gone on much longer," he says. "It was either have the bypass surgery or die." He was excited to learn that since the surgery involves using a patient's own purified stem cells to cure the damaged heart, no rejection medications would be required.

Jones underwent intensive testing to establish a baseline for his physical health so his improvement could be noted along the way. He had coronary artery bypass surgery at Jewish Hospital in March 2009, during which Bolli and his team, which includes Dr. Piero Anversa at Brigham and Women's Hospital/Harvard Medical School in Boston, harvested Jones' cardiac stem cells. The stem cells were purified and allowed to grow in Anversa's laboratory. Once an adequate number of cells were produced (about one million), Bolli's Louisville team reintroduced them into the left ventricle region of Jones' heart that had been destroyed by the heart attack.

Today Jones says he lives a "blessed life with a pretty good heart." He remodeled his kitchen, mows nine acres of grass at his home, cuts firewood, and plans to build a gazebo in his garden. "I am enjoying life," he reports. "I have no health restrictions and just visit the cardiologist for testing once a year. I am also thrilled," he continued "that support from the Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence will allow us to do research here that has the potential to benefit millions of others and bring jobs to Louisville as well."

"The JHFE resources will enable our team to significantly enhance our efforts to bring a new way of treating heart failure patients who desperately need help," says Bolli. "In our initial trials, we have demonstrated that we are able to reverse damage caused by a heart attack. This funding will enable us to explore this further and in a much larger population."



Jewish Hospital's Trager Transplant Center Receives JHFE Grant for Pancreatitis Study

The Trager Transplant Center, a joint program with the University of Louisville School of Medicine, is working in partnership with the Cardiovascular Innovation Institute to provide new treatment options for individuals with chronic pancreatitis, a painful and debilitating disease. An \$800,000 grant from the Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence will fund 24 pancreas islet cell auto-transplants over the next two years, the first of such procedures in Kentucky, to help patients suffering from the disease.

According to Michael G. Hughes, Jr., M.D., director of pancreas and islet transplantation and surgical director of the living kidney donor transplant program at Jewish Hospital and assistant professor of surgery at the University of Louisville, the pancreas serves two primary functions: to secrete digestive enzymes that aid in digestion and to release insulin, a hormone involved in blood glucose metabolism.

Traditionally, when all other avenues of treatment have failed to improve life for those with pancreatitis, doctors have removed only part of the pancreas to decrease their pain. Removal of the entire pancreas always leaves the patient with severe diabetes. Islet cell auto-transplantation performed immediately after complete removal of the pancreas, however, allows doctors to both cure pancreatitis and prevent severe diabetes. Islet auto-transplants are only performed at a few select hospitals around the country and have the potential to eliminate much of the need for pancreas transplants in suffering patients.

During the procedure, the patient's pancreas is removed and transported to the nearby Cardiovascular Innovation Institute's clean cell room, where the islet cells within the pancreas are isolated and purified. Within hours, the retrieved islet cells are suspended in a solution that is infused through a catheter into the patient's liver. The goal is to give the body enough healthy islets cells to manufacture insulin and prevent diabetes. Since their own islet cells are being used, patients will not have to take lifelong immunosuppressive medication as pancreas transplant patients are required to do.

"In addition to relieving pain in patients with chronic pancreatitis, the auto-transplantation of islet cells has the potential to impact the future treatment of type 1 diabetes in some significant ways," says Dr. Hughes. "Without the generous funding from the Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence, we would not have been able to engage in this very important and potentially life-changing research."



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