## Schedule

<table>
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| 9:00 am–10:30 am | **Opening Session**  
*Featured speakers—*Marlee Matlin, Michael Stein* |
| 10:30 am–11:00 am| Break                                                               |
| 11:00 am–12:15 pm| **Knowledge Sessions: Becoming Better Funders**  
*Conversations about issues in the field*
  • Disability Issues in Law and Practice
  • Keeping the "J": Offering Jewish Content in Direct Services
  • Changing Attitudes
  • The Next Generation of Family Support Services
  • Look Before You Leap |
| 12:15 pm–1:15 pm | Lunch                                                               |
| 1:15 pm–2:15 pm  | **Lunch Program: Leading for Change: A Philanthropist’s Toolbox**  
*Featured speakers—*Tim Shriver, Phyllis Glink* |
| 2:15 pm–2:30 pm  | Break                                                               |
| 2:30 pm–4:00 pm  | **Tactical Sessions: Shifting the Sector**  
*Conversations on widening and furthering the efficacy of the field as a whole*
  • Working with Self Advocates
  • Tactics for Transforming Large Institutions
  • Erasing the Line Between Services and Advocacy
  • Including People With Disabilities in All Your Funding
  • Developing Professionals for Special-Education and Disability Services |
| 4:00 pm–4:15 pm  | Break                                                               |
| 4:15 pm–5:30 pm  | **Closing Session**  
*Featured speakers—*MK Isaac Herzog, Tom Fields-Meyer*  
*Panel—*Moving Disabilities Up the Jewish Agenda* |
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From the Disabilities Peer Network director...

JFN and its peer network on disabilities is proud to share this summary report of the 2011 ADVANCE Conference. We hope it enables all funders, whether they participated in ADVANCE or not, to deepen their understanding of the issues and expand their knowledge of what is needed to create an inclusive and supportive Jewish community.

We thank the Ruderman Family Foundation for being the catalyst and sponsor of ADVANCE and for partnering with JFN and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Combined Jewish Philanthropies, and Jewish Federations of North America, to make the conference a reality.

It’s only by spreading awareness and knowledge and providing support that we can create the community that we envision and that is truly open and accessible to all.

We hope this report serves as a springboard to continue and grow these conversations. Let us each play our part to build a community that is welcoming and supportive of all its members.

—Ruthie Rotenberg
Introduction

On December 6, 2011, Advance: The Ruderman Jewish Special Needs Funding Conference was held at Baruch College, not coincidentally the first school in the city university system to provide assistive technology to its disabled students.

The 175-person conference, the second-ever gathering of disability philanthropists, brought together funders, scholars and experts from the frontlines of the disability rights movement, along with lay leaders and Jewish communal professionals and planners, and individuals with disabilities, each guided by a common dedication to prioritizing disability and special-needs funding on the communal agenda.

Joined by a commitment to enhance the lives of adults and children with disabilities and to achieve a more inclusive community, the peer network brought together by the conference set out to raise awareness, to move the issue to the top of the Jewish agenda, to develop a deeper understanding of the challenges involved, to create a shared set of goals, and above all to learn from one another how to create real impact.

At a time when disability services are facing unprecedented cuts in public funding and when charitable giving is under increasing pressure, the Ruderman Family Foundation in conjunction with the Jewish Funders Network and leading international Jewish organizations brought leaders from philanthropy together to discuss new approaches to fostering inclusion in the Jewish community and improving the lives of those with disabilities. In a spirit of collaboration and creativity, participants in the conference worked together to catalyze a community of funders, to look at best practices in this emerging field, and to discuss how special-needs Jews could become full participants in Jewish life. In short, the conference offered a unique opportunity for funders both to discuss the pressing challenges they face and to hear about innovative programs that are rising to meet those challenges.

Due to persistent discrimination and stigma, people with disabilities routinely face enormous hurdles to inclusion in mainstream society. In furthering a communitywide conversation, the Advance conference—the only one of its kind—aimed to achieve a fundamental shift towards inclusion, and to accelerate the often plodding pace of institutional change. As Andrés Spokoiny of the Jewish Funders Network (JFN) said, “Inclusivity is not something we do for others. Inclusivity makes us all stronger and we are committing to pursue this... Always remember that what we can conceive, we can achieve.”
In its collaborative approach, the conference offered a new model for moving beyond go-it-alone entrepreneurial philanthropy. In the words of Spokoiny and Jay Ruderman, president of the Ruderman Family Foundation: “Leveraging both the leadership of a deeply committed and highly engaged single funder, the Ruderman Foundation, and the connecting and convening power of JFN, ADVANCE is a showcase for how to do 21st century, cutting-edge philanthropy.”
Opening Session

At the opening plenary, Jay Ruderman announced the Ruderman Prize in Disability and an allocation of $200,000 to award up to ten innovative projects in the field. “It’s our hope that this award program will help shine a light on the inclusion of people with disabilities in our Jewish community around the world,” he said. Setting the tone for the conference, Ruderman also spoke to the virtues and necessities of collaborative partnerships. “This issue is so large and so complex that none of us can seriously alone hope to create real change,” he remarked. “That is why this peer network incubated at JFN was begun.”

He was followed by Ronit Fishman-Ofir, a partner in the Fishman Group, who described her organization’s corporate social responsibility program, which she directs, and its active promotion of the integration of people with disabilities into Israeli society.

Alexis Kashar, president of the Jewish Deaf Resource Center and chair of the public policy committee for the National Association for the Deaf, reflected both on how the deaf were for millennia not considered equals in the eyes of Jewish law and on her own experience growing up in a family of deaf Jews who “had no access to Jewish communal life.” Only by changing our cultural thinking about disability, she said, can the Jewish community “truly be a role model for others and a light unto the nations.”

Deaf Academy Award–winning actress and activist Marlee Matlin recounted staining the parchment with tears of joy as she read the haftarah at her bat mitzvah, newly aware that nothing could stand in the way of achieving her dreams.

Finally, Matan Koch, recently nominated by President Obama to serve on the National Council on Disability and a member of the Union for Reform Judaism Department of Jewish Family Concerns Disability Task Force, addressed issues in hiring people with disabilities, which, he said, is a good business practice in itself, and less expensive than many employers imagine. Citing a broad-ranging national survey, Koch noted that the vast majority of requested accommodations for disability hires are costless, and among those with costs, up to 70 percent entail a one-time cost of $500 or less.
Knowledge Sessions

Apart from the plenary panels (webcast to a broader audience), much of the conference’s most important work was threshed out in smaller breakout sessions.

At a roundtable called “Changing Attitudes,” for instance, participants discussed how funders can work effectively to break through the marginalization of people with disabilities. Shelly Christensen, CEO of Inclusion Innovations, spoke on the perils of allowing the disabled to languish in invisibility, and the pressing need to help them move “from invisibility to visibly in.” Jason Lieberman, disability program manager of Chartis Insurance, shared an example of how he single-handedly changed the attitude of his congregation’s rabbi merely by walking him to the stairs of the synagogue. Lieberman, diagnosed with cerebral palsy spastic diplegia at the age of 11 months, asked the rabbi to imagine the obstacle the stairs posed to a worshipper with disabilities such as himself. “It’s about pointing out the obvious that’s not so obvious,” Lieberman remarked.

Meanwhile, two legal experts—Steve Eidelman, H. Rodney Sharp Professor of Human Services Policy and Leadership at the University of Delaware, and Arlene Kanter, director of the disability law and policy program at Syracuse University College of Law—addressed “Issues in Disability Law and Practice” and led a fruitful conversation about ensuring compliance in disability integration, accommodation, and more. Kanter talked about her experience drafting the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted in 2006, which recognizes the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and advocates a transformation from regarding persons with disabilities as “objects” of charity and treatment towards viewing them as “subjects” with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions based on free and informed consent. Issues raised in discussion included:

- What is the legality of segregated, group homes, and how can we use the law both to limit the size of group homes and to move past them toward new models of flexibility and innovation? Should we even want to?

- How do we delimit the rights to free, appropriate public education for children with disabilities?

- Legal dimensions to decision-making: who has the right to make decisions for whom?

Even as demands for services for people with people with developmental disabilities are increasing, state budgets are being drastically cut. At a session devoted to “The Next Generation of Family
Support Services,” John Agosta, vice president of the Human Services Research Institute and a nationally recognized expert in family support, self-advocacy, and community systems regarding policies affecting individuals with developmental disabilities, explained how funders in the current environment can help families face the manifold financial and social challenges that come with having a disabled family member. Discussion centered on several questions:

- What knowledge do we hold as service providers and funders that need sharing?
- What type of professional—and with what skill set—ought to organize family support networks? Which practitioners are best suited to the task?

In a sense, disability is the forgotten Jewish demographic. To this day, Jewish census reports have not included disability as a demographic, with the result that we have had no way of accurately tracking the numbers and needs of Jews with disabilities. At a roundtable conversation called “Keeping the ‘J’ in Direct Services,” Sharon Shapiro-Lacks, executive director of Yad HaChazakah–The Jewish Disability Empowerment Center, detailed the ways in which Jews with disabilities too often remain unaffiliated, uninformed, and uninvolved. To reverse the trend, she suggested, Jewish organizations and foundations must begin to consider Jews with disabilities in outreach efforts and program designs. At a minimum, she said, this entails providing wheelchair access, sign language, large print, and electronic media access. It also means that support organizations should incorporate Jewish content into the work they do with Jewish disability populations.
Lunch Program

At the lunch session, the conference heard about how two inspiring organizations, the Special Olympics and the Irving Harris Foundation, implemented the visions of their respective founders and advanced their missions, impact, and global reach.

Jonathan Derr, the only Special Olympic athlete ever inducted into the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame, introduced keynote speaker Timothy P. Shriver. As chairman of the board of directors and CEO of the Special Olympics, Shriver serves 3.1 million athletes and their families in 175 countries. He has helped transform Special Olympics into a movement that focuses on respect, acceptance, and inclusion for individuals with intellectual disabilities in all corners of the globe.

Shriver offered his perspective on how a philanthropy finds its core competency and core leveragable asset. In other words, he encouraged conference participants to ask themselves: What are the most powerful vehicles for change where funders should make their philanthropic investments?

In the case of Special Olympics, Shriver said, “Our core belief is that society needs a moment of reversal, a moment of transformative challenge to all the fears we carry about disability and about difference.” By leveraging such moments, his organization’s core competence, therefore, lies in engaging committed citizens who work day by day to reverse preconceptions and fears, to support equality and dignity for people with intellectual disabilities, and to remind themselves and others of the giftedness of every human being. “If we don’t change the underlying stigma and fear and misunderstanding, if we don’t convert and open people’s eyes, if we don’t channel the energy of movements like ours to create committed engaged citizens, small groups of committed people, all over the world, if we don’t do that, then all the rest will be under-maximized, under-utilized.”

To illustrate the extraordinary examples of change and pictures of dignity he has witnessed, Shriver recounted a trip to Israel. “Ten years ago, I had the honor of attending a dinner with Palestinian, Jordanian, and Israeli athletes in Tel Aviv. It was at the conclusion of a training camp we did as a joint venture just outside of Tel Aviv and Shimon Peres came.... It was a room about this size, and most of the tables were special-needs athletes, and at one point, the athletes all got up to dance; one table was Israeli and one table was Palestinian, one table was Jordanian and of course they went separately, and people didn’t know each other and didn’t speak the same language. There was still a lot of uneasiness in the room. They got up and the next thing you know everybody was dancing. Peres got up at the end of the event and spoke these words: ‘Let the politicians worry about borders
and treaties, tonight we’re here to build peace on a human level and in Special Olympics, there’s a belief that everyone is a winner.”

The lunch program’s second speaker, Phyllis Glink, executive director of the Irving Harris Foundation in Chicago, shared the lessons of her work in developing, implementing, and managing the foundation’s efforts in the area of early childhood development and child and family welfare. She explained how she works closely with the foundation’s partners in the nonprofit advocacy and government communities to ensure that foundation grants have an optimal impact on the field of early childhood and public policy.

After introducing Irving Harris’s mission and values, Glink gave an overview of the way the foundation, by drawing on public-private partnerships and venture philanthropy strategies, promotes leadership development and training for frontline providers, volunteers, professionals, and para-professionals, especially in the area of early childhood. By cultivating collaborative networks and building relationships with grantees, Glink said, as well as by investing in advocacy, the Harris Foundation exerts a considerable influence on the way federal policy and state policy direct resources.
Tactical Sessions

An afternoon session on “Developing Jewish Professionals for Jewish Education/Disability Services,” heard from Scott J. Goldberg, inaugural director of the Institute for University-School Partnership, associate professor at Yeshiva University’s Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration, and an expert who began his career as a teacher of children with learning disabilities. Addressing ways to improve “targeted intervention,” Goldberg remarked on the virtues of employing a vocabulary of “systems of support” over “special education” as a frame of reference for assessment of an entire population. In fostering new thinking about a whole spectrum of academic, behavioral, social, emotional, and religious support systems, he said, such a paradigm shift would carry implications for professional training. To attract the community’s best and brightest, Goldberg added, we must offer early career professionals the sense that they’re joining a field founded upon a research base, replicated studies, and rigorous standards of practice.

Other conference participants were interested in tactics for marrying disabilities advocacy to service delivery. In a roundtable conversation called “Erasing the Line Between Advocacy and Service,” Esther Sivan, executive director of Bizchut—The Israel Human Rights Center for People with Disabilities, explained how her non-profit organization advances the rights of people with physical, mental and sensory disabilities in Israel, which has some 700,000 adults with disabilities (aged 20–64). Sivan distinguished three levels of intervention: case advocacy, undertaken on behalf of the rights of individuals or families; class advocacy on behalf of a group with a common claim; and policy advocacy, which aims to promote or change a particular policy. She discussed how advocacy organizations like her own can encourage development of a civil society, change the public discourse around welfare issues, and thereby influence the public agenda.

By way of illustration, Sivan brought an example of how advocacy has helped to ensure equality for children with disabilities who require home tutoring. In 2010, Bizchut petitioned an Israeli district court on behalf of Rinat, a child with special needs who was unable to leave her house and participate in kindergarten because of problems with her immune system. The petition challenged the Education Ministry’s allocation of just six hours of home tutoring a week. The result set a far-reaching precedent that underscored the power of well-aimed advocacy: a final judgment approving the agreement between Bizchut and the Ministry of Education that granted Rinat 30 hours of teaching a week and additional hours of therapeutic treatments.

Under the title “Including People with Disabilities in All Your Funding,” another afternoon roundtable addressed tactics to support people with disabilities in other areas of funding, from education to poverty to arts, in particular with funders who don’t typically see themselves in the disability space.
Jo Ann Simons, president and CEO of Cardinal Cushing Centers and former director of policy initiatives and acting director of Family Support Services for the Massachusetts Department of Mental Retardation, spoke about how raising her Down-syndrome son Jonathan forced her to acknowledge the degree to which the Jewish community has remained institutionally resistant to people with disabilities. Experience has taught her, she said, that support for families is critical in facilitating the achievement of self-determination, productivity, integration, and inclusion in all facets of community life for their family members.

According to Stan Goldman, the longest-serving program director at the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, the intellectual disabilities world is “the last bastion of segregation.” To advance the cause of integration, he explained, the Weinberg Foundation supports programs that respect the independence, individual choice, and civil rights of children and adults with intellectual, physical, and sensory disabilities as necessary preconditions for a good life. The foundation lends its support to innovative services and support systems designed to enable people with multiple disabilities to live a life of their own choosing in the community—not in segregated or institutional settings with low expectations. For similar reasons, it also offers capital grants for renovation and new construction of affordable, accessible housing integrated into the community—both independent and supported housing. At the same time, Goldman cautioned that there is no necessary correlation between quality of “real estate” and quality of care.

Often the most effective advocates are self-advocates. But how can funders actively involve people with disabilities, grant them maximal control of their own lives, and allow them to make informed decisions about their own care? A conversation on “Working with Self Advocates,” led by Jason Lieberman (a member of the UJA-Federation’s disability task force) and Shelly Christensen (program manager of the Minneapolis Jewish Community Inclusion Program for People with Disabilities and author of The Jewish Community Guide to Inclusion of People with Disabilities), looked at funders’ role in the self-advocacy movement to create resources and programs with people with disabilities—rather than for them. Issues raised by the conversation included: How can funders create an environment in which the self-advocate can be heard?

Finally, a session on “Tactics for Transforming Large Institutions” heard from Patricia Goldman, vice president of the J.E. & Z.B. Butler Foundation, which has partnered with UJA-Federation agencies to support youth development programs and services for people with disabilities. Working together with Anita Altman, who spearheaded the UJA’s Task Force on People with Disabilities, the foundation has spent $54,000,000, Goldman said, of which over $40,000,000 has been devoted to build the Network of Services for People with Disabilities and fund programs for people with developmental, learning, and physical disabilities. By making a long-term commitment, emphasizing site visits, and developing staff training for the next generation of workers in the field of disabilities (like CLASSP—The Consortia for Learning and Special Services Program), the Butler Foundation has built a robust network of services for people with special needs in New York, Long Island, and Westchester.
Closing Session

Isaac Herzog, a member of Knesset since 2003, and a former minister of welfare and social services, opened the conference’s closing plenary by underscoring the importance of dignity. To achieve it, he shepherded a revolutionary bill through the Knesset that allows people with disabilities to work without losing their disability allowances. “The real role of government now,” Herzog said, “should be to continue pushing for further employment of people with disabilities, and I may add that I think this calls for a private-public partnership with foundations, with NGOs, to find various venues of inclusion of people with disabilities in the workforce.”

Andres Spokoiny, president of the Jewish Funders Network, proposed some examples of concrete, practical ideas: “Could we have for example a silver ribbon that we give to synagogues and summer camps that achieve excellence in their integration of people with disabilities in their facilities and programs, like the blue ribbon for school excellence? I think we could. Could we have forums like Breakthrough Philanthropy that Peter Thiel runs? Can our community hold a similar series of events in which we discover, recognize, and support the big ideas that can change the Jewish role for people with disabilities? I think we can. Can our community of funders create centralized list of resources—from medical help to home care, from Jewish education to job search for people with disability—something like an Angie’s List or a TripAdvisor? I think we can and I think we should.”

At a final panel discussion, Barry Shrage, president of CJP with the Boston Jewish Federation, suggested that the future of Federations involved new forms of cooperation with philanthropic initiatives and “partnering with foundations that share a common vision that will move the Jewish community into the future.” Felicia Herman, executive director of the Natan Fund—a collaborative of young philanthropists that has awarded $7.7 million in grants to 128 startups and emerging organizations around the world—offered a model for disability funding from another social issue entirely. The Jewish communal conversation about inclusion of gays and lesbians, she remarked, is “due in no small part to the power that the Schusterman Family Foundation has wielded so strategically.” Following that pioneering work, Natan began to fund Keshet, now one of the leading GLBT organizations in Boston. In disability funding as elsewhere, added Steve Schwager, executive vice president of the JDC, the key to moving forward is to realize that no single organization can go it alone. “The trick is to be able to give up some ownership of the project, to accept the funders as your partners, and to do challenge grants,” he said.

The extraordinary day drew to its conclusion with the writer Tom Fields-Meyer. The author of Following Ezra, a book about raising an autistic son, Fields-Meyer spoke about what he called “the impossibly
thin line between what we call ability and disability.” At his bar mitzvah, Tom’s son Ezra addressed his congregation with words that could stand as a fitting coda for the remarkable conference itself: “Sometimes I think all Jewish people have autism; we repeat things all the time and we have a very good memory. All Jewish people have autism, and all Jewish people have special needs, and all Jewish people have reason to celebrate everyday what makes us unique and special and valuable to this community.”
Resources

Materials from the ADVANCE conference—including handouts, slide presentations—are provided in the following appendices. Archived video of the plenary sessions is also available on the conference website, advanceconference.org.

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Appendix 1

Opening Plenary

JFN - Israel: Peer Network on People with Disabilities

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JFN - Israel: Peer Network on People with Disabilities

New York, December 6, 2011

Who we R?!

Ted Arison Family Foundation - an American/Israeli Foundation, with a wide portfolio of funding in the area of people with disabilities.

Ruderman Family Foundation - an American/Israeli Foundation, with a wide portfolio of funding in the area of people with disabilities.

Fishman Group - a large Israeli holding company with a long history of community involvement exclusively in the area of advancing services for people with disabilities, and their employment.
There were challenges along the way

> Forming the core group
> Finding the common denominator
> Agreeing to work together on the first initiative
> Working together while maintaining the independence of each funder
> Overcoming our differences and building on our strengths

Our Journey

Donor A | Donor B | Holding company | Donor C | Donor D | Donor E

Convened by JFN
It took 7 months and 4 learning sessions to get on the same page
Finding the shared values and common denominator easier said than done 4 more months have gone by
Then we had to identify the need and agree on it… you guessed right 2 more months passed
We had some disagreements but we didn’t give up
We divided the labor and reconvened (3 months later)

YES WE CAN!
So we did it “by the book” we agreed on the goal

> Raising public awareness of the level of acceptability that people with disabilities experience between different communities.

> Undertaking a joint project between diverse funders and leveraging the public response vis a vis decision makers, government agencies, and NGO’s.

And our common objectives

> To develop a tool with which an overall assessment of a community can be made with respect to the state of acceptability of people with disabilities.

> To actively involve people with disabilities in this process, and help them gain influence in the communities surveyed.

> To publicize the data obtained, in order to present a rating of the communities, and give the process and results considerable media coverage.

> To create public interest and sensitivity about existing policies and services for people with disabilities.
The Index for acceptance of people with disabilities

> Surveying 50 locations throughout Israel.

> Utilizing participatory action research methods which include people with disabilities.

> Convening focus groups and holding in-depth interviews.

> Selecting a group of 3-5 locations for a pilot study to actively change attitudes and develop leadership amongst people with disabilities.

> Implementing the survey in consultation with public relations and media experts, and partnering with NGO’s in the field.

And we have just started…

Thank you!
Appendix 2

Knowledge Sessions

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Changing Attitudes

People with disabilities should have opportunities to work, live, love, play, learn and worship according to their own choices.

Prevailing attitudes serve as barriers to meaningful participation and community living.

Can change really occur?

What does change look like?

“To be known you have to be shown.” Max Horn, Zadie, father, husband, immigrant, bartender, taxi driver and someone who never met a barrier he couldn’t overcome.

“All I’ve ever wanted was to belong.” Sharon Palay, tried to join a synagogue for over 14 years, persistent and is now a Jewish community leader.

“Don’t label us.” Jacob Christensen, Self-advocate, college student, graduate of Bet Shalom religious school.

“My Bar Mitzvah was the best day of my life.” Christopher Savitt, plays piano by ear with support of his cantor and synagogue pianist, performer at Jewish and secular events.

We are contemplating what support looks like for people with disabilities so they can achieve their hopes and dreams. Assumptions based on appearances and labels often are not accurate. If we take the opportunity and the time to get to know each other, we will find that we are more alike than different.

“Perhaps the worst thing that can occur is a short term investment... this initiative cannot go halfway or be the flavor of the month. If the community is going to invest in supporting individuals with disabilities, it must do so in perpetuity”

(Quote from a study participant) Calgary Jewish Community Study, May 2011
“I love my new life.” Sharon Palay speaks again several years after working with staff at Jewish Family and Children’s Service of Minneapolis to help smooth the way into Jewish community life. It was not always easy for Sharon, nor did it always come naturally to the community. Traveling the journey of inclusion with reliable allies made it all possible. The more Sharon was visible to the community the more she was welcomed.

Good intentions alone not followed by action are without value for it is the action which makes the intentions so profound.

Chassidic Master Yehudi HaKadosh
Keeping the "J"
Offering Jewish Content in Direct Services

ADVANCE – Jewish Disability Funding Conference
Baruch College Conference Center
Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Presented by: Sharon Shapiro-Lacks
Executive Director

Why Do Jewish Organizations Exist?

Jewish organizations are here to:

• Provide resources and services for those who need support in Jewish communities.

• Increase and sustain Jewish identity, cultures, and heritages.

• Further Torah education and discourse.

• Address social and political issues that affect Jewish communities.

sshapiro@yadempowers.org; www.yadempowers.org
Disability: The Forgotten Jewish Demographic

• Until now, Jewish census reports have not included disability as a demographic.

• We have had no way of accurately documenting and tracking the numbers, needs, and Jewish community involvement of Jews with various disabilities.

• Jewish organizations and foundations generally do not consider Jews with various disabilities in outreach efforts or program designs – i.e. wheelchair access, sign language, large print, and electronic media access.

• Jews with disabilities often remain unaffiliated, uninformed, and uninvolved; they often become prime targets for Christian missionary activities.

Jewish: The Overlooked Ethnic Demographic

• Government and nonsectarian foundations often support the cultures, interests, specific concerns, and leadership development of Asian, Black, Hispanic, and American Indian Americans.

• ‘Jewish’ is not listed as a minority demographic for government and nonsectarian funding for underserved populations.

• Nonsectarian organizations generally lack cultural competencies or climates to work with Jews who live in Torah communities and according to traditional Jewish standards.

• Traditional Jews, therefore, have lacked access to knowledge about and engagement in disability history and sociopolitical issues.
We’re Moving in A Positive Direction-- Sort Of.

- More Jewish service organizations have been established to serve people with disabilities. This deserves acknowledgement.

That said:
- Most of said programs rely upon government funding.
  - Government funding is diminishing.
  - Government won’t fund Jewish-only programs and stipulates abstention from religious activities. This limits opportunities to build Jewish identity, knowledge, and camaraderie
- Jews with disabilities want access to ALL Jewish organizations and programs – not just programs specifically for people with disabilities. The average Jewish establishment, organization, or program does not factor physical and communication access and program accommodations into its planning, nor does it insert budget lines to support these efforts. This limits the participation of Jews with disabilities.

How To Keep the “J”

- Support organizations, establishments, and programs that seek to incorporate Jewish content and cultural / religious accommodations into the work they do with Jewish disability populations.

- Assess how well and the methods by which any Jewish organization reaches out to, involves, accommodates, and employs Jews with disabilities.
  - Does the organization or establishment have board members, staff, and advisors with self-disclosed disabilities?
  - Are disability accommodations included in their program narratives and budgets?
For More Information About This Presentation

Please contact:

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Yad HaChazakah – The Jewish Disability Empowerment Center, Inc.
646-723-3956; sshapiro@yadempowers.org

Yad HaChazakah-JDEC provides guidance, resource information, advocacy, and community for people with obvious or hidden disabilities as we promote access to Jewish community life.

www.yadempowers.org
STATE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICES

State of the States, State of the Nation: 2011
Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities
University of Colorado
Oct. 13th, 2011
Nancy Thaler, Ex. Director NASDDDS

Three Big Problems That will be With Us for Decades

- #1 Economic Recession
- #2 Structural Deficits & Debt
- #3 Aging Baby Boomers

NASDDDS
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
Problem No. 1
The Economic Recession

Impact on State DD Systems and People

David Braddock
State of the States 2011
Problem No. 2
The National Structural Budget Deficit

Medicare and Medicaid Expected to Rise Rapidly, Other Programs (Except Social Security) to Shrink
Spending and Revenues as a Share of GDP

Source: CBO projections based on CBO data.

NASDDDS
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services

DD Service Systems are Reliant on Federal Funding

State & Federal Funds
- Federal
- State & Local

Medicaid is State & Federal Funds Combined
- Federal
- State


NASDDDS
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
Problem No. 3
Demographic Shift - Not Enough Workers to Take Care of the Baby Boomers

![Graph showing population projection from 2000 to 2030 for females aged 25-44 and individuals 65 and older.]

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Interim State Population Projections, 2005

Larson, Edelstein, 2006

NASDDDS
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services

Confronting Reality

Public funding growth will slow

![Graph showing federal revenues from 1960 to 2010.]

Source: CBO projections based on CBO data.

We have waiting lists

<table>
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<th>Persons Waiting-Under reported</th>
<th>Residential Services Recipients</th>
<th>Growth Needed</th>
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<tr>
<td>122,870 (Lakin)</td>
<td>439,515</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>240,000 (Kaiser)</td>
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NASDDDS
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
What States Are Doing?

Focusing on Sustainability
What Can We and Future Generations Afford?
Where is the Best Value?

Re-evaluating current services – How many could we serve?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Service</th>
<th>Cost per Person</th>
<th>Cost to Serve the Waiting List 122,870</th>
<th>People Served with $5 M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICF/MR</td>
<td>$128,275</td>
<td>$15,761,114,925</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-family HCBS</td>
<td>$70,133</td>
<td>$8,617,241,710</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host Family</td>
<td>$44,122</td>
<td>$5,421,270,140</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own Family</td>
<td>$25,072</td>
<td>$3,080,596,640</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Lakin, K.C. MSIS and NCI data from 4 states (1,240 Individuals)

NASDDDS
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
Thinking for the Long Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Service</th>
<th>Cost per Person</th>
<th>20 yrs. Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICF/MR Institution</td>
<td>$128,275</td>
<td>$2,565,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCBS 24hr staffed Residential</td>
<td>$70,133</td>
<td>$1,402,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Living (Adult Foster Care)</td>
<td>$44,122</td>
<td>$882,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports in Own or Family Home</td>
<td>$25,072</td>
<td>$502,440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Lakin, K.C. MSIS and NCI data from 4 states (1,240 Individuals)

Conclusion

Sustainability depends on well we support families and get people jobs.
The idea is to nudge a system to be person-centered, to support families, and involve people in their community.

Nudging the System

Source: Human Services Research Institute

The Trend Has Begun

Charlie Lakin UMinn RTC on Community Living/ICI

NASDDDS
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
States are Focusing on Employment

Success in employment varies widely 2009

Washington State (88%)
Oklahoma (60%)
Connecticut (54%)
Louisiana (47%)
New Hampshire (46%)
A New Way to Think About Supporting People and the Families They Live With

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we’ve been doing</th>
<th>How we need to change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defining caregiver as the parent</td>
<td>Family is defined functionally; inclusive of siblings, parents, grandparents and other relatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on the Family</td>
<td>Supporting families helps them best facilitate the achievement of self-determination, productivity, integration and inclusion in all facets of community life for their family members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis intervention</td>
<td>Preventative, long-term planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting caregivers in order to decrease demand on long-term services</td>
<td>Create a quality of life for person with ID/DD and their family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from work by Michelle “Sheli” Reynolds, PhD
University of Missouri- Kansas City, Institute for Human Development

NASDDDS
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services

A New Way to Think About Supporting People and the Families They Live With

Instrumental Supports: 
Day-to-Day Needs

- Person/family-centered planning
- Service Coordination
- Habilitation/companion
- Personal assistance
- Employment services
- Respite
- Adaptive equipment
- Home modifications
- Assistive Technology
- Cash Subsidies
- Paying family caregivers
- Financial planning/trusts
- Health and wellness promotion

Emotional Supports:
Mental Health and Self-efficacy

Information and Training Supports:
Knowledge and Skills

Sheli Reynolds

NASDDDS
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
### A New Way to Think About Supporting People and the Families They Live With

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent-to-Parent Support</td>
<td></td>
<td>Information on disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-advocacy orgs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Information on benefits related to employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Support groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>Information @ generic supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge @ best practices and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Counseling</td>
<td></td>
<td>Skills to navigate &amp; access services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-disability community support</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to advocate for services &amp; policy change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>Technology trainer, guide and trouble shooter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NASDDDS
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services

Sheli Reynolds
Rethinking Supports to Individuals Families

- Supporting individuals and the families they live with is not a program, it’s our core mission

- Think about families broadly – grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, cousins and people who “are like family”

- The purpose of services is to benefit their family member

- More direct control by Individuals and families

- Pay family caregivers

- Services are important, information and training are critical, emotional supports holds things together

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NASDDDS
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services

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Does Everyone Have to Live with Their Family to Have a Sustainable System?

No. It means we have to maximize the extent to which as many people as possible can live great lives without 24 hours of paid supports. Options include…..

- Family
- Extended Family
- Friends
- Shared Living
- Independently or with a friend
- Technology
- Etc.

---

NASDDDS
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
Supporting Individuals and the People They Live With

It doesn’t matter with whom people live, the supports should match what they need.

Nuclear Family → Siblings → Aunts & Uncles → Shared Living → Own Home/Roommate

and a Job

The Question is…

Not whether people who are disabled (and older) will be living with and relying on their families for support but …………………………
whether people and their families will struggle alone or have a great life because the supports are there for them and they are part of their community.
Appendix 3

Lunch Program

Tim Shriver, Special Olympics

Inspired Commitment: Mobilizing Communities to Care, Act, and Change .......... 42

Phyllis Glink, Irving Harris Foundation

Irving Harris Foundation................................................................. 52
December 6, 2011

ADVANCE 2011: The Ruderman Jewish Special Needs Funding Conference
Mobilizing Core Competencies To Drive Change

Inspired Commitment: Mobilizing Communities to Care, Act and Change

Thank you Ruderman Family
An invitation to think differently...

“Core competencies”

What are the most powerful vehicles for change where funders should make their philanthropic investments?

- Public Awareness
- Economic Development
- Technology
- Education
- Policy Change
- Infrastructure
- Health
- Etc.
Maximizing Human Capital: “Inspired Commitment”

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.

Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Sports as the Catalyst to Inspired Commitment
The collective power of inspired commitment

• 220+ programs
• 170 countries
• 7 regional offices
• 3.75 million athletes
• 275,000 coaches
• 48,778 annual competitions worldwide...
• 136 competitions every day.

Inspired commitment of skilled professionals

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes

Free athlete health screenings, treatment and referrals in seven different disciplines at World, regional, national and local Special Olympics competitions, making SO the largest public health platform for people with ID globally.

• Over 1,000,000 health screenings to date
• Over 120,000 health practitioners trained and educated about unique health needs and disparities facing people with ID
• Hundreds of partnerships with health providers, systems, equipment manufacturers, service orgs and others
• World’s largest data set on health needs and conditions affecting people with ID informing research and policy change
Catalytic Effect: James Pierce

Inspired commitment of young people

Special Olympics Project UNIFY
Collaboration between Special Olympics and school communities that engage young people with and without ID to promote attitudes and behaviors of acceptance and inclusion among young people.

- 2,000 participating schools in 45 US states
- 1 million youth exposed
- 148,000 young leaders trained and engaged
- 2011 expansion in India, Austria, Italy, Serbia and Romania
Inspired Commitment: Mobilizing Communities to Care, Act, and Change

Catalytic Effect: Regan and Russell

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iSlok6muY0

Inspired commitment by organizations

**Young Athletes:**
Sports skills development program for kids with ID aged 2-7 delivering significant gains in their motor development, social skills, communication and cognitive ability.

**Mattel – SOI Collaboration:**
- Young Athletes program support in over 100 countries.
- 3,000 employees annually engaged in more than 20 countries
- Over 10% of Mattel workforce have volunteered for Special Olympics.
Catalytic Effect: Athens 2011

Inspired commitment by athletes themselves

Athlete Leadership Programs:
Formal training that provides athletes with self-advocacy and leadership skills.

Athlete – SO Collaboration
• 26,685 athletes worldwide trained and activated to date
• Athlete Board representation on all 220+ SO Programs
Catalytic Effect: David Egan

A movement for change now driven by millions of inspired, committed stakeholders:
Families, Coaches, Volunteers, Government, Corporations, Celebrities & Athletes
But **significant challenges remain**

“[200 million people worldwide] with intellectual disabilities experience widespread violations of their rights that dehumanize them, denying them respect for their dignity, their individuality, even their right to life itself.”

- UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

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**The New York Times**

**Abused and Used In State Care, 1,200 Deaths and Few Answers**

By DANNY HAKIM and RUSS BUETTNER

Published: November 5, 2011

For James Michael Taylor, an evening bath became a death sentence.

Mr. Taylor, who was 41 and a quadriplegic, had little more ability than a newborn baby to lift his head. Bathing him required the constant attention of a staff member at the group home for the developmentally disabled where he lived, near Schenectady, N.Y.

One summer night in 2005, a worker lowered Mr. Taylor into the tub, turned on the water and left the room. Over the next 15 minutes, the water slowly rose over his head. He drowned before anyone returned.

Joan Taylor, his mother, remembers the words her husband said as dirt was shoveled onto their son’s grave.

“This is the last time they’re going to dump on you,” he told his dead son.

James Taylor’s death was no aberration...
Let the politicians worry about borders and treaties. Tonight, we are here to build peace on a human level. In Special Olympics, there is a belief that everyone is a winner, a lesson we must learn in the Middle East. In our search for peace, we must follow Special Olympics athletes because in the search for peace, everyone must be a winner.

- Shimon Peres
Mission of the Irving Harris Foundation

“to support the creation and development of programs and preventive practices that benefit infants, young children and their families, promote social justice, address inequality, advocate for human rights, and strive to enhance quality of life principally through the arts and humanities”

Core Values

- Invest in leaders and innovators
- Leverage resources
- Take calculated risks
- Impact root causes
- Act early and proactively
- Be responsive to community and grantee needs
- Value relationships and work in partnership
Grantmaking Focus Areas

EARLY CHILDHOOD
The primary focus of the Foundation is to improve the likelihood that babies are born wanted into families and communities that are safe and ready to nurture the healthy development of children. Primary strategies include supporting public policy, advocacy and systems building efforts, developing and replicating innovative programs and investing in leadership development and training.

ARTS & CULTURE
The Foundation endeavors to enhance the quality of life by supporting cultural programming, including the arts and humanities.

JEWISH PHILANTHROPY
The Foundation supports targeted funding in Jewish Philanthropy and initiatives in Israel that pursue the overall goals of the Foundation with an additional emphasis on initiatives that fight anti-Semitism and promote tolerance among racial, ethnic and religious groups.

COMMUNITY
The Foundation makes proactive, targeted grants to programs in communities that seek to redress conditions of inequality, promote social justice and benefit society. The Foundation focuses on communities in which it has an interest.

Early Childhood Goals and Strategies

To narrow the gap between what we know works from public policy and research and what is funded through public policy

To narrow the mental health and achievement gap between young children from underrepresented and high risk communities and their more affluent peers
Strategies

• Leadership development and training with an emphasis on developing diverse leaders
• Development and replication of innovative, evidence-based programs
• Public policy, advocacy and systems building

Collaborative Grantmaking

The Foundation places a high value on leverage and has used a variety of types of strategic, collaborative grantmaking to increase our impact on the field

For Example: The Educare Learning Network, Birth to Five Policy Alliance, the First Five Years Fund and the Early Learning Challenge Collaborative are aligned collaborative efforts
Appendix 4

Tactical Sessions

Session: Erasing the Line Between Services and Advocacy

Bizchut
Yad HaChazakah
Services and Advocacy

Session: Working With Self-Advocates

Working With Self-Advocates
3 main kinds of advocacy:

* Collective self advocacy – People who lack social influence or accessibility to rights and entitlements who organize together, usually with the help of professional organizers
* Citizen case advocacy – a partnership between professionals and their 'voiceless' clients
* Legal advocacy – advocating for human and citizens’ rights.

A different classification, 3 levels of intervention:

* Case advocacy – advocating for the rights of individuals or families
* Class advocacy – advocacy for a united group with a common claim
* Policy advocacy – advocacy for the promotion of a certain policy, or policy changes

Advocacy organizations contribute to society by creating:

a. Civil engagement of excluded communities
b. Development of a civil society: 'different' communities organize as groups
c. Promoting equality through serving as a "watchdog"
d. Contribution to the development of knowledge and research (on which to base claims)
e. Changing the public discourse around welfare issues and creating a counter-discourse
f. Influencing the public agenda through social campaigns
g. Exposing social issues which haven’t yet received public recognition

Examples

Empowering Young People with Disabilities
During 2010-11 Bizchut held a series of workshops in the Ofakim School in Haifa for young people with physical disabilities. Meetings with these high school students focused on empowerment through familiarization with rights and entitlements. As part of the course the students undertook a project of their own. They decided to make a film promoting Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) as a legitimate language in Israel. The film which was written, filmed and edited by the students showed them buying clothes in a mall using AAC. They then uploaded the film to YouTube in order to spread their message. The film has been viewed by hundreds of people and was even presented at an Israeli conference on speech-therapy. Watch the movie at: http://www.youtube.com/user/hloofit.

Ensuring Equality for Children with Disabilities who Require Home Tutoring
In 2010 Bizchut submitted a petition to the District Court for Administrative Matters on behalf of "R", a young child with special needs who was unable to leave her house and participate in kindergarten because of problems with her immune system. The petition challenged the Education Ministry's allocation of just six hours of home tutoring a week. It resulted in a final judgment approving the original agreement between Bizchut and the Ministry of Education that granted "R" 30 hours teaching a week and additional hours of para-therapeutic treatments. This constituted a precedent setting decision that impacted on dozens of children in a similar situation.

Ensuring accessible public transportation
A petition submitted to the High Court of Justice by Bizchut resulted in a judgment in January 2001 against the Ministry of Transportation and Dan Bus Company ordering them to carry out adjustments to make newly ordered inaccessible buses wheelchair accessible as mandated by legislation passed in 1998. In May 2001 the Egged Bus Company began introducing dozens of accessible buses into service in Jerusalem and Haifa. Following negative feedback from the public on the operation of these buses, Bizchut initiated a program for Egged drivers to train them in technicalities of activating ramps and how to make their services accessible to people with disabilities.
Traditional Approach to Human Services

- Professionals provide services, resources, and treatment to help the downtrodden.
- Service ‘recipients’ are believed to be passive and grateful for whatever they receive.
- Funding is given to help service ‘recipients’ to survive, improve their living conditions, and achieve self sufficiency.
Consequences of the Traditional Approach

• The myth that qualified professionals and agencies can independently solve the most pressing problems is perpetuated.
• Service consumers eventually feel helpless if they cannot get what they need or achieve their goals.
• Service consumers aren’t given opportunities to learn about systemic barriers and financial constraints.
• We, as service providers and supporters miss opportunities to develop leadership capacities in our service consumers … and ourselves.
• We end up with fewer resources and limited capacities.

Advocacy Informs and Builds Leadership

Involving staff and service consumers in advocacy efforts helps everyone involved to:

• Understand and articulate the issues.
• Feel more in control.
• Develop leadership capacities.
• Make a difference, systemically.
• Achieve desired outcomes.
More Foundations Should Seriously Consider Fund Programs that Involve Advocacy

• Advocacy is part and parcel of leadership development.
• Leadership development can strengthen the way a person with a disability carries himself or herself.
• Advocacy can help improve outcomes and policies.

Foundations Need Not Fear the IRS

• Nonprofits are allowed to use up to 20% of their budgets on lobbying. Go to: http://www.njnonprofits.org/NPsCanLobby.html for further information. NYS organizations that lobby are required to register with and report to NYS and possibly to their localities.

• Foundations are more restricted in their abilities to lobby or to support organizations that engage in lobbying. However, the IRS definition of ‘lobbying’ is narrow and provides legal loopholes for foundations to support educating policy makers on important issues. Go to: www.bit.ly/FoundationsAndLobbying for more information.
For More Information About This Presentation

Please contact:

Sharon Shapiro-Lacks
Yad HaChazakah – The Jewish Disability Empowerment Center, Inc.
646-723-3956; sshapiro@yadempowers.org

Yad HaChazakah-JDEC provides guidance, resource information, advocacy, and community for people with obvious or hidden disabilities as we promote access to Jewish community life. www.yadempowers.org
Services and Advocacy

Presenters

- Esther Sivan, Director, Bizchut, Israel's Human Rights Center for People with Disabilities (Jerusalem).

- Sharon Shapiro Lacks, Director, Yad HaChazakah, The Jewish Disability Empowerment Center, Inc. (NYC)

- Professor Arlene S. Kanter, Director, Disability Law and Policy Program, Co-Director, SU Center on Human Policy, Law, and Disability Studies, Syracuse University College of Law (Syracuse, NY)
Appendix 4: Tactical Sessions

Purpose of Session

- To reflect on the historic distinction between services and advocacy.

- To present new ways of thinking about the connection between advocacy and services.

Let’s Consider New Connections

- Without advocacy, services are not available or not effective.

- Without quality, self-directed services, people can not become self-advocates and advocacy is limited.

- Advocacy may include litigation, legislative advocacy, community education, media contacts.

- Advocacy also includes peer, parent, and most importantly, self-advocacy.
Examples from Esther Sivan—Bizchut in Israel

Examples from Sharon Shapiro—Lacks—NYC
Examples from Arlene Kanter, Syracuse University

- **Olmstead** and legal advocacy to enforce the right to live at home.

- **SUPAC (Syracuse University Parent Advocacy Center)**— Designed to help parents become advocates for their children in education.

- **New National Self–Advocacy Network** for students in higher education (in the US and Israel).

Questions and Discussion
ASSURING ACCESS AND INCLUSIVENESS:
A BRIEF SELF ASSESSMENT

ACKNOWLEDGE YOURSELF!

You have taken a big step toward building a more inclusive organization just by reviewing and reflecting upon the statements and questions below. As you review them, take stock of how your organization has become inclusive and consider new ways to welcome and involve people with disabilities.

GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL ACCESS

► Is our leadership committed to creating a disability-friendly environment?

► Are policies and procedures in place regarding the recruitment and promotion of people with disabilities within our organization as board members, staff, and volunteers?

► Do people with disabilities now serve in governing, paid, and volunteer positions in our organization?

► Do we involve people with disabilities in our building design and program planning processes?

► What policies do we have regarding hiring, employing, and accommodating people with disabilities?

PHYSICAL ACCESS

► Can wheelchair users independently enter and travel throughout our main facility and satellites?

► Are floors safely used by those who use canes, crutches, or walkers?

► Can our bathrooms and program facilities be used by wheelchair users?
SOCIAL INCLUSIVENESS AND PROGRAM ACCESS

- Do we encourage everyone in our organization to expand their social comfort zones and reach out to and learn about people who live with different disabilities as well as those who are of different cultural or racial origins from themselves?

- How does our organization reach out to people with disabilities?

- What alternative formats of “print” communication do we use in order to reach and accommodate people who are blind? Those who have low vision?

- Are our websites and blogs fully usable by people who are blind? Those who have low vision?

- How does our organization reach out to and accommodate people from the deaf community? Those who are hard of hearing?

- Does our promotional material invite people with disabilities to request reasonable accommodations?
Working with Self-Advocates

How can funders best support people with disabilities to allow them control of their own lives and medical care? This discussion looks at the funders’ role in the self-advocacy movement, to create resources and programs with people with disabilities—rather than for them.

Self-advocacy Defined

An individual’s ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights. It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions. (VanReusen et al., 1994)

The Dignity of Risk

What if you never got to make a mistake?

What if your money way always kept in an envelope where you couldn’t get it?

What if you were never given a chance to do well at something?

What if you were always treated like a child?

What if your only chance to be with people different from you was with your own family?
What if the job you did was not useful?
What if you never got to make a decision?
What if the only risky thing you could do was to act out?
What if you couldn’t go outside because the last time you went it rained?
What if you took the wrong bus once and now you can’t take another one?
What if you got into trouble and were sent away and you couldn’t come back because they always remember you’re “trouble?”
What if you worked and got paid 46 cents an hour?
What if you had to wear your winter coat when it rained because it was all you had?
What if you had no privacy?
What if you could do part of the grocery shopping, but weren’t allowed to do any because you weren’t able to do all of the shopping?
What if you spent three hours every day just waiting?
What if you grew old and never knew adulthood?
What if you never got a chance?

Anonymous
The Jewish Funders Network (JFN) is an international organization dedicated to advancing the quality and growth of Jewish philanthropy. JFN’s members include independent philanthropists, foundation trustees and foundation professionals. The Special Needs & Disabilities Peer Network includes 15 funders and foundations from around the world.

For more information, visit jfunders.org.