Greetings from JCLP!

We are very excited to share with you the premiere issue of The Legacy, the newsletter of the Jewish Community Legacy Project. Small congregations have unique experiences and issues, and as they age, often find themselves in unique situations with little assistance.

Hopefully, through this newsletter, you will realize that there are others around the country who have a shared experience and who can offer wisdom, advice and even solidarity.

We at JCLP work with small communities to plan for their futures while honoring their pasts. Leveraging our vast network of national partners (JFNA, USCJ, URJ, AJA) and local partners (Jewish federations, foundations, museums, stable synagogues), we advise in the areas of endowment planning, cemetery care, archives, distribution of artifacts and Judaica, real estate divestment, leadership transitions and more. Please take a moment to watch our informational video which will give you a good sense of how JCLP can provide assistance to communities in need.

If you feel you know of a congregation that could benefit from our no-cost professional guidance, please don’t hesitate to reach out. We are here to listen, to guide and to help small Jewish communities shape their own legacies.

Sincerely,

David Sarnat
Jewish Futures Secured with Temple's Legacy Gift

When the leaders of Temple Beth Israel in Steubenville, OH first met with David Sarnat of JCLP they knew only one thing: that they wanted to ensure the future of the Jewish people in their corner of the country, even if their synagogue would no longer exist. “Our community didn’t run out of money,” noted Myron Chijner, former Temple Beth Israel member, “we ran out of people.”

Changing demographics, including the decline of the once-booming steel mills in Southeastern Ohio, resulted in the Jewish community migrating out of Steubenville. Sarnat connected Chijner and the leaders of the Steubenville community with representatives from the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, the closest large-city Federation to Steubenville. As luck would have it, the Federation was kicking off the most significant planned giving undertaking in the history of their community.

The goals of the Centennial Fund for Jewish Future fit with the desire of Temple Beth Israel leadership to channel their endowment funds to Jewish education. A significant gift from Temple Beth Israel was matched with a

Torah Donation Links Generations and Communities

“The moment we opened the box, we felt the love and the history that came along with the Torah,” happily notes Matt Vogel, President of the University of Vermont (UVM) Hillel. The Torah he references was a gift from Beth Isaac Synagogue in Trenton, Michigan. Notes Nancy Banker, former Chair of the synagogue’s Transition Committee, “Our congregation was closing, as our Jewish population had dwindled to unsustainable numbers. We were relieved that we had found such a good new home for our Torah.”

As part of a legacy plan developed in conjunction with JCLP, the leaders of Beth Isaac identified their strong desire to have their Torah go to an organization that didn’t already have one. JCLP provided a list of organizations across the country that fit the bill and the UVM Hillel ‘Statement of Need’ resonated with the leaders of Beth Isaac, who subsequently decided to send not only their Torah, but their precious crowns, breast plate, yad and Torah covers to the college community of over 1100 Jewish students and faculty.
50% increase at the Federation, ensuring that Jewish day schools, summer camps, youth groups, Hillels and other programs could thrive well into the future.

“Temple Beth Israel of Steubenville’s Founding donation to the Centennial Fund has had an enormous impact on Jewish continuity in our area,” states Sharon Perelman, Director of Planned Giving at the Pittsburgh Federation. “While the congregation no longer exists, they have left a beautiful legacy of one community helping to enhance the Jewish life of another.”

For more information on legacy asset planning for small congregations, please go to www.jclproject.org.

Today, the students at UVM use the Beth Israel Torah frequently for services, Torah study and more. Notes Banker, “Our communities are now linked forever through this Torah. This is truly ‘from generation to generation.’ How could we be anything but happy?”

For more information regarding the development of a legacy plan that includes the disposition of Torahs and other Judaica, please go to www.jclproject.org.

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