

Rose Youth Foundation

TEN YEARS OF IMPACT

Jewish Teens Engaged in Grantmaking and Leadership Evaluation Report 2001–2010



2001



2003



2006

2008

2010



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An initiative of
ROSE
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Rose Youth Foundation has been one of my most meaningful experiences. It has taught me about giving, my Judaism, and the role that youth can play in changing and enhancing a community. It has inspired me to continue to learn about problems in my community and how to help solve them. Rose Youth Foundation has solidified my love of Judaism for its focus on helping others and giving back. I am proud to be a part of such an active and aware group of Jewish teens who have made a difference.” (RYF alumnus)

This Executive Summary presents the key findings from a report that documents Rose Youth Foundation’s impact in its first 10 years. Rose Youth Foundation (RYF) is an initiative of Rose Community Foundation and is housed under the umbrella of the Foundation’s Jewish Life program area. Started in 2001, RYF is one of the oldest Jewish youth philanthropy programs in the country. Well respected nationally, in 2010 it was named one of North America’s 50 most innovative Jewish nonprofits by *Slingshot: A Resource Guide for Jewish Innovation*. RYF offers Jewish youth an opportunity to learn about strategic philanthropy and to use Jewish values to guide their grantmaking. RYF asks participants to develop a new or deeper understanding of the Jewish values of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and *zedakah* (righteous giving), and to build consensus as to the implications of these values for their grantmaking.

Research methods included: 1) online surveys with alumni (with a 45% response rate 55/122), grantees (a 32% response rate 26/79) and parents (32 respondents); 2) interviews with a range of stakeholders; and 3) site visits to four RYF grantees.

Impact on Alumni

Rose Youth Foundation helps prepare the next generation of community leaders by transmitting Jewish values and practices of strategic philanthropy.

Participants learned and continue to use knowledge of:

- Jewish values (90%)¹
- Strategic philanthropy (69%)

Rose Youth Foundation educates youth about the needs and challenges of their community and empowers them with the skills and resources to be able to address those needs. Participants continue to use skills learned such as how to:

- Work in a group (100%)
- Listen to others (95%)
- Build consensus among people with diverse perspectives (93%)

92%

of alumni view themselves as change makers because of RYF

¹ Percentage of respondents that indicated using items “very frequently”, “frequently” or “somewhat frequently” on a five-point scale.

Rose Youth Foundation prepares Jewish youth to serve as leaders in the Jewish, and broader communities. RYF supports leadership development through a Jewish lens. The grantmaking experience has influenced alumni to view themselves as “change makers” (92%). Alumni report that participating in RYF increased their commitment to community service (83%) and to involvement in social or political causes (76%), and that they have turned these commitments into action. They are engaged in their communities in multiple ways:

- 88% Volunteering
- 68% Fundraising
- 64% Campus or community activism
- 42% Leading an organization at their college
- 20% Serving on the board of a nonprofit organization
- 18% Grantmaking
- 14% Serving on a community task force
- 10% Starting a nonprofit

Rose Youth Foundation empowers participants to serve and interact with their community.

- Alumni volunteer their time and talent. Most alumni (89%) are still volunteering. From February 2010 to February 2011, they had volunteered a total of 5,154 hours (675 to Jewish nonprofits and 4,479 to non-Jewish nonprofits). Nearly four times more RYF alumni volunteer over a 12-month period than do their Millennial peers (88% versus 22%).²
- Alumni give their money to support nonprofits and other charitable causes. More than half (59%) of RYF alumni had given over the past 12 months, a slightly higher percentage than the national rate of 56% of their Millennial peers that gave.³ However, their median gifts – \$50 to Jewish organizations and \$100 to those not specifically Jewish over a 12-month period – were much lower than those of their peers nationally.
- Alumni serve in leadership roles. The great majority of alumni (88%) continue to serve as leaders. 73% of alumni have played a leadership role at non-Jewish organizations and 41% have served as leaders in Jewish organizations.

88%

of RYF alumni continue to volunteer

Rose Youth Foundation creates deep Jewish connections. Alumni’s experience with RYF deepened their connections to Jewish giving (90%), to other young Jewish people (87%), to Jewish values (87%), and to the Jewish community (82%). Seventy percent of participants, regardless of affiliation, indicated that RYF was one of their three most meaningful Jewish experiences in high school. In their current lives:

- 92% of alumni have Jewish friends.
- 83% of alumni attend Jewish cultural events.
- 81% of alumni report being Jewish is “very important” or “important” to them.
- 76% of college-aged alumni are active in Hillel on their campus and 68% of them say Rose Youth Foundation encouraged that involvement.

This level of ongoing involvement in Jewish life is significant, especially since RYF does not actively promote individual participation in institutional or home-based Jewish life.

² *Volunteering in America 2010*, www.volunteeringinamerica.gov.

³ Vinay Bhagat, Pam Loeb and Mark Rovner, *The Next Generation of American Giving* (Convio, Edge Research and Sea Change Strategies, March 2010).

Impact on Grantees

From 2001-2010, Rose Youth Foundation awarded 79 grants to nonprofits totaling \$400,600.

- Grant priorities reflect issues that Jewish youth identify as important. Over the years, these priorities have included supporting refugee self-sufficiency , encouraging inter- and intra-religious tolerance and understanding, supporting programs to engage youth in Jewish life , supporting services for homeless people and to end chronic homelessness , increasing Israel education and awareness , combating anti-Semitism , and promoting Hebrew language education .
- Grants have a long-term impact; 75% of grantees report outcomes and impact lasting more than two years after the life of the grant.
- By modeling youth leadership, RYF has had an effect on the ways grantees think about and engage youth: 57% increased their awareness of the potential of youth leadership; 42% said their attitudes were positively influenced about young people serving in leadership roles; 29% were encouraged to think about how to increase youth engagement in their organization; and 13% actually changed the way they engage youth in the work they do.

Impact on Rose Community Foundation

Rose Youth Foundation has become a signature program of Rose Community Foundation.

- 10 RYF alumni have served as interns for Rose Community Foundation.
- 92% of RYF alumni express a desire to stay connected to Rose Community Foundation.
- RYF led to the creation of Roots & Branches Foundation, a collaborative giving initiative for Jewish young adults ages 25 to 40, at Rose Community Foundation.

Conclusions

Rose Youth Foundation has clearly met its goals. Rose Youth Foundation effectively engages a diverse group of Jewish youth in philanthropy. Grantmaking provides a venue for them to make a difference on issues about which they are passionate. Philanthropy within a framework of Jewish values has had a powerful effect of connecting Jewish youth from across the denominational spectrum with their own Jewish identities. This extends to relationships with each other, and with the larger Jewish community. Youth learn life-long leadership skills and demonstrate that young people can be positive forces in support of community change. Rose Youth Foundation: 1) empowers Jewish youth to serve and interact with their community; 2) educates and informs youth about the needs and challenges of their community; 3) effectively engages unaffiliated Jewish youth and increases understanding across denominations of Judaism; and 4) perhaps most important of all, helps prepare the next generation of community leaders by transmitting Jewish values and practices of strategic philanthropy.

2001 Each year, the first meeting of Rose Youth Foundation includes members and their parents. This photo was taken at RYF's inaugural meeting.



INTRODUCTION

“It was great to learn about the focus that Jews put on community service and helping others. It makes being Jewish so much more powerful, since I know that we are a caring religion. Working with Jewish teens on the board showed me that we aren’t just told to do good things, we actually do them.” (RYF alumnus)

Consider a group of 23 young people ages 15 to 18 sitting in the board room of one of the largest foundations in the Denver area. Their task is to come to consensus on how to give away \$60,000 through the lens of the Jewish values of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and *tzedakah* (righteous giving). Youth co-chairs facilitate the meeting. The group decides to designate some of their grant funds to support Denver’s Road Home – a ten-year plan to end homelessness in Denver supported by 33 other area funders. Some of the youth grantmakers will conduct a site visit to this organization and will meet with the Mayor to discuss the issue of homelessness from a young person’s perspective. Several alumni will eventually go on to serve as interns with Denver’s Road Home. This is only one story of what Rose Youth Foundation has accomplished over the last decade as the group granted \$400,600 to 79 Denver-area nonprofits.

Rose Youth Foundation (RYF) is an initiative of Rose Community Foundation and is housed under the umbrella of the Foundation’s Jewish Life program area. Jewish Life is one of five funding areas; the other program areas are not specifically Jewish – Aging, Child and Family Development, Education and Health. Rose Community Foundation was created in 1995 with proceeds from the sale of Rose Medical Center, an independent, nonprofit hospital in Denver founded by the Jewish community. With assets of \$260 million as of August 2011, Rose Community Foundation is one of the larger foundations funding in Greater Denver and Boulder. The Foundation is known for its innovative and strategic grantmaking.

Rose Youth Foundation is celebrating 10 years of Jewish youth engagement in grantmaking and has decided to step back and reflect on its work. What happens when you bring together a room full of Jewish youth, spanning the full spectrum of Jewish affiliation and practice, and ask them what it means to give in a primarily Jewish way? What might be the impact on their Jewish identities and on their commitment to serve in a leadership capacity in the Jewish community, and the community in general, if you empower them to make \$60,000 in grants annually to nonprofits? This report documents a decade of Jewish youth grantmaking in Greater Denver and Boulder and explores the impact RYF has had on alumni, on grantees and on Rose Community Foundation. Formative Evaluation Research Associates (FERA), an independent evaluation group with 20 years of experience with evaluation of youth grantmaking initiatives, was selected to conduct this evaluation.

2003 RYF’s 2003-2004 chair (right) runs a meeting. Other leadership positions have included vice-chair, secretary, historian, communications director and Jewish learning director.



“Rose Youth Foundation has made a very large impact on me. I am so thankful for the opportunity and hope other cities can follow Denver’s lead with similar programs. I think the impact extends beyond the monetary grants and makes a statement to the community about problems teens feel are important and helps teens find leadership opportunities where we are not normally given any.” (RYF alumnus)

National Context

“Community development and youth development not only complement one another but are critical to each other’s success.”⁴ Rose Youth Foundation is part of a national and international movement to engage young people in community development and community philanthropy. Youth make grants, partner with adults and serve in leadership capacities through their local community foundations. The Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project implemented this concept statewide in the 1990’s and currently has 86 permanently endowed youth funds (www.youthgrantmakers.org). Community foundation youth grantmaking initiatives exist in more than 40 U.S. states and countries including Northern Ireland, Australia, Canada, Great Britain and the Czech Republic, among others.

Rose Youth Foundation started in 2001 and is among the oldest Jewish youth philanthropy programs in the country. Well respected nationally, in 2010 it was named one of North America’s 50 most innovative Jewish nonprofits by *Slingshot: A Resource Guide for Jewish Innovation*. Nationally, Jewish youth philanthropy programs around the country are hosted in community centers, schools, summer camps, after-school youth groups, local Jewish federations and community foundations. Many Jewish youth philanthropy programs ask youth to fundraise or give their own money or establish small endowments with their *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* gifts. Most also involve a short-term time commitment such as a one-time retreat or a several-week program.

The Jewish Teen Funders Network (JTFN) was established in 2001 to explore how to best support the field. Rose Youth Foundation staff members have been active members of JTFN since its inception. In April 2006, together with other organizations and foundations, JTFN offered a national Jewish youth philanthropy conference for teens. JTFN has operated as a project of the Jewish Funders Network since August 2006. The current mission is to “provide Jewish teens with hands-on opportunities to engage in collective philanthropic giving with their peers, guided by Jewish values” (www.jtfn.org/about).

⁴ Merita Irby, Thaddeus Ferber and Karen Pittman, *Youth Action: Youth Contributing to Communities, Community Supporting Youth* (The Community and Youth Development Series, The Forum for Youth Investment, September 2001).

“The most valuable aspect of Rose Youth Foundation is the fact that the board is made up of Jewish teenagers and the teenagers do the research and decide how they want to assist our community.” (RYF alumnus)

Rose Youth Foundation Overview

Rose Youth Foundation, modeled in part after the Michigan Community Foundations Youth Project, offers Jewish youth (currently grades 10-12) an opportunity to learn about strategic philanthropy and to use Jewish values to guide their grantmaking. Rose Youth Foundation is unique among community foundation youth grantmaking initiatives because of its focus on grantmaking within a framework of Jewish values. Program goals are to:

- Empower Jewish youth to serve and interact with their community.
- Educate and inform youth about the needs and challenges of their community.
- Help prepare the next generation of community leaders by transmitting Jewish values and practices of strategic philanthropy.
- Effectively engage unaffiliated Jewish youth and increase understanding across denominations of Judaism.
- Broaden the Foundation’s grantmaking perspective to include the views of youth.

Selection Process

Participants are selected through an application process publicized through high schools and Jewish organizations throughout Greater Denver and Boulder. Rose Youth Foundation regularly receives three to four times more applications than it can accept. For this reason, the majority of participants serve for only one year. Current members can apply for a second or third year but only a few are selected and many are turned down. A committee made up of RYF staff, alumni and adult lay leaders are in charge of the selection process.

Rose Youth Foundation members come from families with diverse Jewish backgrounds.

Participants

Over 10 years, 157 young people have participated in Rose Youth Foundation including: 116 students from public schools, 23 students from private schools and 18 students from Jewish day schools – all from Greater Denver and Boulder.

Staffing

Three individuals serve as the adult advisors. Two are full-time Rose Community Foundation staff. One is a Jewish educator who works part-time for the Foundation. Their roles are to support and facilitate youth leadership and to share what they know about Judaism and strategic grantmaking.

Grantmaking Process

Over a seven-month period, participants, who range from Orthodox to secular: 1) explore strategic philanthropy; 2) discuss what it means to give in a primarily Jewish way; 3) explore Jewish values,



personal values and community needs; 4) determine funding priorities; 5) develop grant guidelines and a request for proposals; 6) establish grant review criteria; 7) review grants; 8) prepare for and conduct site visits; 9) select grantees; and 10) host a final celebration to present grant awards. During this process, the group comes to consensus about what it means to give through a lens of Jewish values.

Program Characteristics

Key program characteristics include the following:

- Rose Youth Foundation is youth-driven. A youth chair and vice-chair run the meetings and all decisions are made by the youth. They meet twice monthly on Sunday evenings from November through April.
- Youth decide what “primarily Jewish” giving means to them as a group. They draw upon Jewish texts, traditions and the Jewish values of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and *tzedakah* (righteous giving) to frame their decisions.
- Youth determine how they will make decisions and for the past 10 years, each group has chosen to use consensus, a process through which the entire group must come to agreement, ensuring that every voice around the table is heard.
- In addition to experiencing the entire grantmaking process, youth monitor grants made in the previous year.
- Currently, \$60,000 is granted each year.
- Before 2011, RYF was supported entirely by grants from Rose Community Foundation. Young people were not involved in fund development. A seed grant was recently made to establish an endowment for RYF and Rose Community Foundation is raising funds to permanently endow the program.

\$60,000
is granted by RYF members
each year

Evaluation Methods

FERA uses a participatory approach to evaluation that facilitates learning and action based on evaluation findings. This approach engages key stakeholders in the evaluation design and data interpretation, in this case representatives from Rose Youth Foundation alumni and staff, Rose Community Foundation staff and Jewish Life Committee members. FERA used the following research methods to find answers to stakeholders’ questions:

- An online survey of Rose Youth Foundation alumni with a high response rate of 45% (55 out of 122 alumni responded).⁵
- An online survey of all Rose Youth Foundation grantees with a response rate of 32% (26 out of 79 grantees responded).
- An online survey of Rose Youth Foundation parents. A total of 32 parents responded to the survey. We did not have complete parent contact information and relied on alumni to forward the survey invitation to their parents, so a response rate is not available.
- Interviews with: Rose Community Foundation staff not directly involved with RYF (n=3); Rose Community Foundation staff working with RYF (n=3); and an alumni intern to the Foundation (n=1); two group interviews with 2009 Rose Youth Foundation youth grantmakers (n=13 total); a group interview with parents of members and alumni (n= 6), individual interviews with alumni (n=5) and national Jewish teen philanthropy leaders in other parts of the country (n=2).

⁵ This report focuses primarily on alumni data.

- Case studies of four grantees involving a site visit, interviews with the executive directors of the organizations and a review of background materials.
- A meeting with the Jewish Life Committee to discuss their hopes and concerns for the evaluation.
- A review and analysis of Rose Youth Foundation grant history data and other relevant background materials.

About Alumni Survey Respondents

Alumni survey respondents represent a good cross-section of levels of involvement, as well as of number of years of participation and grade level when they began. They served for anywhere from one to five years as part of Rose Youth Foundation:

- 49% (n=27) one year
- 29% (n=16) two years
- 13% (n=7) three years
- 6% (n=3) four years
- 4% (n=2) five years⁶

Survey respondents had also served as chair or vice-chair of Rose Youth Foundation (18%), in another officer capacity 33% (n=18), or as an intern for Rose Community Foundation (13%). Youth started serving as members of Rose Youth Foundation in different grades, with the majority beginning as either 9th or 10th graders. A total of two or more individuals responded from each of Rose Youth Foundation's 10 years. The youth survey respondents are 55% female and 45% male.⁷ Though the oldest RYF alumni are 27 years old, survey respondents ranged in age from 15 to 25 years old:

- 15-17 years old (n=13)
- 18-21 years old (n=23)
- 22-25 years old (n=15)

Most respondents still live in Greater Denver or Boulder (73%). None of the survey respondents live elsewhere in Colorado. About a quarter of the alumni (26%) live outside of Colorado but still within the U.S. Most Rose Youth Foundation alumni respondents are still in school (80%). Of those, many are still in high school (41%) while most of the others (46%) are attending college. Two alumni are attending Master's level programs and two are full-time interns. The rest are combining work, school and volunteer activities.

"RYF taught me what it means to give Jewishly, and that's something that has stuck with me ever since. I feel that I developed such a great understanding of why *tzedakah* is such a huge part of being Jewish and why it's so important to us – much more insight than I ever received in Hebrew school. Participating in RYF definitely gave me a much better sense of my Jewish identity. Because of this, I now think of my Judaism as a means to better the world."

(RYF alumnus)

⁶ Rose Youth Foundation was initially open to students in grades 8 through 12.

⁷ There were 55 alumni who responded to the survey, however percentages and numbers presented throughout the report are based on the number of individuals responding to each specific question.

IMPACT ON YOUTH

Rose Youth Foundation has affected participants both during and after their grantmaking experience. It has had an impact on their: 1) understanding and current use of strategic philanthropy and Jewish values; 2) knowledge and skills related to the nonprofit sector and to philanthropy; 3) perceptions of themselves as change makers; 4) current leadership, volunteerism and giving; 5) ongoing connection to Jewish life; and 6) understanding of Judaism across denominations. Each of these impact areas are further explored in this section.

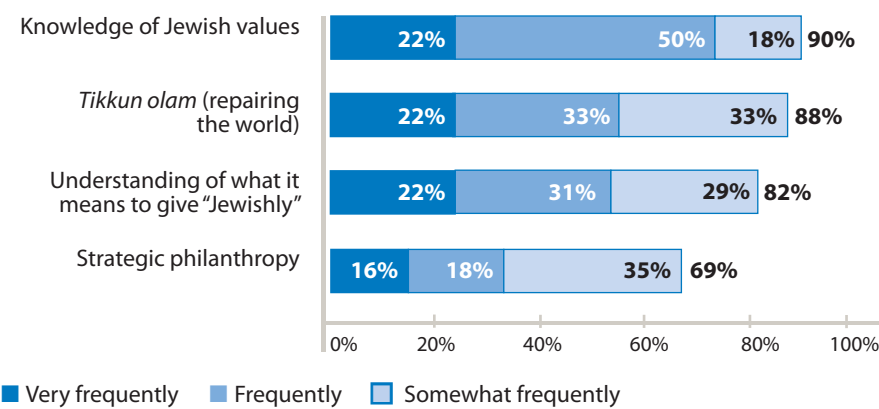
Strategic Philanthropy and Jewish Values

Rose Youth Foundation helps prepare the next generation of community leaders by transmitting Jewish values and practices of strategic philanthropy. Alumni report that RYF taught them about *tzedakah* (77%) and *tikkun olam* (73%) and deepened their connection to Jewish values (87%). Today, alumni are still using the knowledge they gained about Jewish values frequently (see **FIGURE 1**).

Rose Youth Foundation defines strategic or proactive philanthropy as “...a style of grantmaking that focuses on taking action, making connections and creating change. Strategic philanthropy asks the question: what problem can we as a group of funders make the greatest difference towards solving through our grantmaking?” (RYF staff member).

The program encourages youth to think about strategic philanthropy as a way to create change. Grants are used as a tool to help solve problems.

FIGURE 1
How frequently do alumni use the concepts they learned in Rose Youth Foundation?



2006 RYF members met with Denver’s former Mayor John Hickenlooper to learn about the city’s efforts to end homelessness.



Ninety-six percent of parents and grantees either strongly agreed (59%) or agreed (37%) that Rose Youth Foundation helps prepare the community's future leaders while inculcating Jewish values and practices of philanthropy. One parent commented, "As the future leaders of the community, it is critical to engage young people in philanthropy, to empower them and to give them a voice and the power to make decisions with their minds and hearts, even before they have the power to make them with their wallets."

**"RYF gave me the confidence to be a leader. I had always been involved in leadership activities, but RYF really gave me the knowledge and the strength to actually lead."
(RYF alumnus)**

Knowledge and Skills

Rose Youth Foundation educates youth about the needs and challenges of their community and empowers them with skills and resources to address those needs. Rose Youth Foundation alumni indicated that they had learned either a lot or a moderate amount about:

- Community foundations (100%)
- Jewish nonprofits in the Denver/Boulder area (99%)
- Strategic philanthropy (98%)
- Grantmaking skills (96%)
- The nonprofit community in the Denver/Boulder area (96%)
- Rose Community Foundation (94%)



A site visit to a grant applicant

Every year youth receive proposals from nonprofits that they review and discuss. Small groups then conduct site visits to organizations so that they can meet with organization and program leadership, learn more about each proposal and ask questions. Through this process they learn about nonprofits' missions, programs and clients. They then review applicants' financials that are included as part of the grant proposal. This process provides a window into nonprofit work that young people, and even most adults, rarely have. The report section on leadership and volunteerism details how alumni are using this knowledge to inform their community work today.

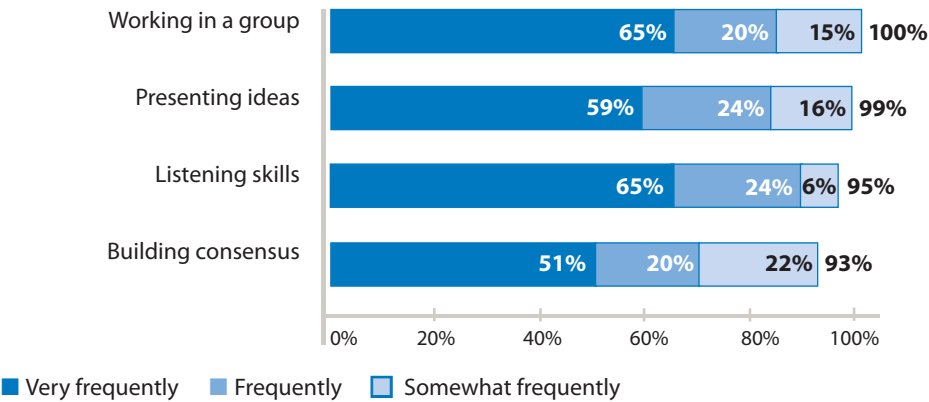
While not explicit objectives, participants have also learned about the Jewish community in general in Greater Denver and Boulder (63%) and about the Jewish Life Committee at Rose Community Foundation (38%). Providing opportunities to learn more about the Jewish community and about the Jewish Life Committee are areas where Rose Youth Foundation may want to be more intentional, just as it is with providing an overview about community foundations, nonprofits and grantmaking.

Rose Youth Foundation prepares alumni to serve in leadership roles and to work collaboratively with others. Alumni have learned to listen (85%), as well as to present their own point of view (75%). They have also learned to work in a group (98%) and to use a consensus model of decision making (97%). Alumni interviewed spoke about how valuable it is to know how to work in a group with others who

have very different opinions. One alumnus commented, “Every activity in which I lead I try to think about the consensus model, which is perhaps one of the most valuable aspects and learning experiences at Rose Youth Foundation. The fact that a consensus model can work is hugely influential in my current activities.” These are valuable skills for young people to have and can be applied to future community problem-solving whether they serve on a nonprofit board, participate in a task force or engage in their community in another way. Nearly all alumni (93-100%) continue to use the skills they gained through RYF with some frequency as they volunteer their time and serve in leadership capacities (see **FIGURE 2**).

FIGURE 2

How frequently do alumni use the skills they learned in Rose Youth Foundation?

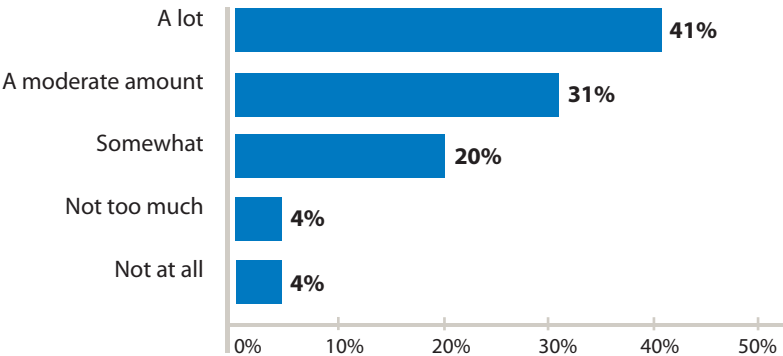


Empowering Change Makers

Engaging in grantmaking has had a powerful effect on Jewish youths’ views of themselves as change makers. Nearly all alumni (92%) indicated that Rose Youth Foundation has helped them view themselves as change makers to some degree (see **FIGURE 3**).

FIGURE 3

To what extent did participating in Rose Youth Foundation lead participants to believe they can be change makers in their community or the world? (N=51)



Rose Youth Foundation has a definite positive impact on participants’ commitment to community service and social action. Alumni not only view themselves as change makers, they are committed to taking action (see **TABLE 1**).

TABLE 1
Extent of Rose Youth Foundation’s Influence on Participants’ Commitment to Community Service and Social Action

	A lot	A moderate amount	Not too much	Not at all
Commitment to community service	46%	39%	13%	2%
Commitment to social action	44%	43%	11%	2%

A recent study of B’nai Brith Youth Organization (BBYO) members and alumni found similar levels of increased commitment to community service and social action as a result of their participation in BBYO activities. Commitment for BBYO alumni, however, did not translate into action to the same extent that it did for Rose Youth Foundation alumni. They found that “despite the substantial commitment to community service expressed, volunteering and charitable contributing behavior seems to fall somewhat short.” They also found that 74% of college-age alumni volunteer.⁸ This study of RYF found that 88% of alumni volunteer. Learning more about why the relatively small numbers of alumni from both programs do not volunteer could help to explain this difference and to obtain information that could be used to further strengthen the link between commitment and action.

“RYF really gave me an opportunity to become a leader in both the Jewish and secular communities. While I participated as well after my term ended, I have volunteered more in my community and become a leader in many school organizations as well as organizations that help give back to the community. Without RYF, I likely wouldn’t be the leader that I am today.”
(RYF alumnus)

⁸ Groeneman Research & Consulting, *BBYO Impact Study* (Groeneman Research & Consulting, 2011).

Leadership, Volunteerism and Giving

Rose Youth Foundation prepares Jewish youth to serve as leaders in the Jewish, as well as in the broader, communities. Rose Youth Foundation supports leadership development through a Jewish lens. Participants serve as leaders in community-based philanthropy by using their grantmaking as a tool for change. Most alumni (88%) continue to serve as leaders today. They are engaged in their communities in multiple ways:

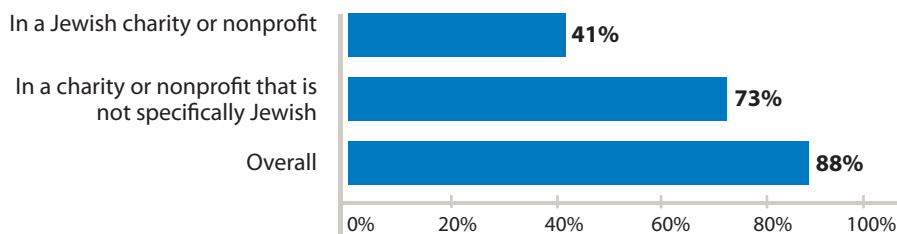
- 88% Volunteering
- 68% Fundraising
- 64% Campus or community activism
- 42% Leading an organization at their college
- 20% Serving on the board of a nonprofit
- 18% Grantmaking
- 14% Serving on a community task force
- 10% Starting a nonprofit

This is an impressive list given that survey respondents range in age from 15 to 25 years old. When asked an open-ended question about how their experience on Rose Youth Foundation had influenced their current volunteer, giving and leadership activities, 18 survey respondents said that RYF helped them develop the skills needed to be a leader in their community (**FIGURE 4**). One alumnus commented, "I definitely believe that my experience at RYF contributed to my desire to be a leader in the Jewish community. RYF taught me about the importance of a strong Jewish leadership, regardless of the sector – philanthropic, social, religious."

Given that most alumni still live in the Denver area, the majority of their involvement is still local. Most of the young people living outside of Denver are studying and still return home during the summer months. Some serve as interns at the nonprofits they had previously made grants to, while others volunteer in other ways. College students are active on their college campuses through Hillel and other student service organizations, as well as with community nonprofits.

FIGURE 4

Alumni Serving in Nonprofit Leadership Roles Since Participating in Rose Youth Foundation (N=50)



2007 Over the years, RYF has supported several organizations that help refugees and asylees.



“I think RYF was very influential in my current job/volunteership/internship at my Hillel where my work is based pretty much exclusively on Jewish Identity/Involvement. This was a grant priority every year I was on the board and now I am on the other side of the coin attempting to create programming and opportunities for Jews at my college. Without RYF, I do not know if I would be involved in the same sort of project, or at least have been offered the position.” (RYF alumnus)

Rose Youth Foundation alumni have taken what they learned about serving in leadership capacities and have applied these skills and abilities to their current lives. One respondent explained, “It gave me the tools I needed to become a great asset to the team.” Alumni are serving in leadership roles in charities and nonprofits that are not specifically Jewish, as well as those that are Jewish organizations (see **FIGURE 4** on page15). One alumnus describes in detail the impact of Rose Youth Foundation: “My experiences at RYF instilled in me the importance of giving back to community. In fact, I was so impressed with the work one of our grantees was doing Denver’s Road Home that I interned with them the summer after my sophomore year of college. I have always had a strong sense of social justice, but I think that RYF gave me the background and tools to be able to put direction to those feelings to have a larger impact on the community. I credit RYF with my ability as a 20-year old to help found a nonprofit at my university, meet and work with faculty and staff, find partners in the community (private sector, government, and university-affiliated), and successfully apply for grants to get the program up and running.”

Nearly four times more Rose Youth Foundation alumni volunteer than do their Millennial peers. The Corporation for National and Community Service report *Volunteering in America 2010* found that in 2009, only 22% of Millennials had volunteered.⁹ In contrast, 88% of Rose Youth Foundation alumni had volunteered over the past 12 months. Seventy five percent had volunteered for a non-Jewish charity or nonprofit and 50% had volunteered for a Jewish nonprofit. In 2010, alumni had volunteered a total of 5,154 hours (675 to Jewish organizations and 4,479 to charities or nonprofits that are not specifically Jewish). **TABLE 2** shows the breakdown of the number of hours volunteered for both types of organizations.

TABLE 2
Number of Hours Alumni Volunteered Over a 12-month Period

Hours volunteered	For a Jewish charity or nonprofit organization	For a charity or nonprofit that is not specifically Jewish
0-20	52%	33%
21-40	24%	21%
41+	24%	45%

⁹ *Volunteering in America 2010*.

Rose Youth Foundation alumni also give their financial resources even though, unlike most Jewish youth philanthropy programs, RYF does not ask young people to give away their own money or raise funds. RYF youth make grants with funds from the Rose Community Foundation. While this will continue, a recent seed grant to create an endowment to support RYF in perpetuity will offer alumni, their parents and others an opportunity to give their own resources to support the future of this program.

A total of 51% of Rose Youth Foundation alumni gave to non-Jewish organizations and 18% gave to Jewish organizations. While the percentage of alumni giving to organizations that are not specifically Jewish was higher, analysis of survey respondents’ verbatim comments and interviews indicate that alumni are giving “Jewishly” no matter where their gifts are given. The total amount reported by all survey respondents was \$14,816 (\$9,276 to Jewish charities or nonprofits and \$5,540 to those that are not specifically Jewish). The higher amount given to Jewish organizations can be explained by one large gift. **TABLE 3** shows the levels of alumni giving by type of organization.

TABLE 3
Alumni Giving by Type of Organization

Amount of money contributed	To a Jewish charity or nonprofit organization	To a charity or nonprofit that is not specifically Jewish
\$0 - \$100	73%	73%
\$100+	27%	37%

Fifty-nine percent of Rose Youth Foundation alumni gave over the past 12 months, a slightly higher percentage than the national rate of giving for their peers. However, their median gifts of \$50 to Jewish organizations and \$100 to those not specifically Jewish over a 12-month period were 30% lower than those of their peers nationally. A national study, *The Next Generation of American Giving*, found that an estimated 56% of Millennials gave an average of \$341 to a charity in the past 12 months.¹⁰ This finding should be interpreted with caution since RYF survey respondents are ages 15-25, while those in the national study are 18-30.¹¹ An alternate explanation for their relatively low levels of giving is that they have already learned the power of leveraging other people’s dollars, as evidenced by 68% of alumni being involved in fundraising activities. It will be interesting to follow this relatively young group of alumni over the next decade as they enter into their young adult and professional lives to see whether their levels of giving increase when they have access to additional resources.

Wherever alumni are volunteering or giving, most are using a framework of Jewish values to guide them. One individual explained their giving in this way, “Participating in Rose mainly helped me discover more about *tikkun olam* throughout the Denver/Boulder community. Now, when looking at nonprofits and community service in general, Rose Youth helped me put the different organizations into perspective. Now I know what to look for in a nonprofit and how I can more effectively help the community.” Another alumna commented, “It was fantastic to use these cultural tenets in making

¹⁰ Bhagat, Loeb and Rovner, *The Next Generation of American Giving*.
¹¹ An analysis of levels of giving was done with just the college-age Rose Youth Foundation alumni and showed no significant difference.

decisions that would have implications beyond the Jewish community.” The concepts of *tikkun olam* and *zedakah* are not abstract concepts to RYF alumni – they use them and act upon them frequently in their current lives (see **FIGURE 1** in the section on Strategic Philanthropy and Jewish Values on page 11). RYF has clearly accomplished its goal of encouraging Jewish youth to serve and interact with their community, as they are doing so well beyond their tenure with the program.

Jewish Identity and Connections

“It is great to learn from other Jewish teens and see the power that we all have as a group. Working on the board showed me the strength that the Jewish community can hold.”
(RYF alumnus)

Millennial Generation Jews are documented to have a decline in interest in Jewish youth organizations and activities.¹² David Bryfman, Ph.D., Director of the New Center for Collaborative Leadership at The Jewish Education Project, explains that Jewish Millennial youth are identifying and engaging with Judaism in new ways. “Whereas Jewish engagement may once have focused on making the Jews a stronger people, it now seems to need to be balanced with the desire to use one’s Jewish self to help make the world a better place in which to live. If it ever was, Judaism is quite clearly now described by Jewish teenagers today as more than just a religion. Teens identify with being Jewish as a religion, but also as a culture, an ethnicity, a heritage, and as a people.” By providing an opportunity for Jewish youth to use their “Jewish selves” to help make their community a better place, Rose Youth Foundation addresses an important and timely question Bryfman has for the Jewish community: “What are we as a Jewish community, whose primary identification for its adult population is still through congregational affiliation, doing to meet this changing nature of what being Jewish means to young people?”¹³

71%

of alumni say their Jewish identity was enhanced by participating in RYF

Grantmaking is an effective pathway for connecting youth with Jewish life. Rose Youth Foundation engages Jewish youth in a way that encompasses the broader definition of what being Jewish means to them. Survey respondents described their Jewish identities as Reform (n=24), culturally Jewish (n=14), Conservative (n=12) and secular-just Jewish, not religious (n=6). Three or fewer young people described themselves as Reconstructionist, Modern Orthodox (n=3 each), Traditional, not Jewish, and Jewish and another religion (n=2 each), “Zionist Conservadox,” and Renewal (n=1).¹⁴ While the way alumni describe their denominations did not change as a result of their experiences with RYF, the depth of their connections to Jewish life and their understanding of different denominations were positively affected.

¹² Michael Whitehead-Bust, *Current Trends in Jewish Teen Participation with Out-of-School Activities* (Foxhall Consulting Services, February 2010 for Rose Community Foundation).

¹³ David Bryfman, *Jewish Teens and Out-of-School Engagement with the Jewish Community, A Response*, 2010.

¹⁴ Alumni could select more than one category.

Rose Youth Foundation connects participants to Jewish life. Grantmaking has provided Jewish youth with a meaningful way to connect to being Jewish, as evidenced by the 81% of alumni indicating that being Jewish was “very important” (54%) or “important” (27%) (see **TABLE 4**). A recently released BBYO study found that only 42% of their comparison group of Jewish youth who did not participate in BBYO indicated that being Jewish was very important. A total of 67% of BBYO youth indicated that being Jewish was very important to them (26% said “somewhat important”).¹⁵ Similarly, a recent study of Jewish youth connected with Jewish Community Centers (JCC) found that 53% of youth using the JCC once a week or more said that being Jewish is very important to them. Only 43% of youth who rarely use the JCC indicated that being Jewish was very important.¹⁶

81%

of alumni say being Jewish is very important or important to them

TABLE 4
Current Level of Importance Alumni Gave to Being Jewish

Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important
54%	27%	12%	4%	4%

Interestingly, in comparison to their Millennial (ages 18 to 30) peers (Jewish and non-Jewish combined), religious beliefs are twice as important to RYF alumni (81% versus 40%).¹⁷ A Pew Research Center study reported on Millennial generations’ religious beliefs and behaviors based on a Gallup survey conducted in the late 2000s. Using a three-point scale (very important, fairly important and not very important), this survey found that 40% of Millennials said that religion is very important.¹⁸

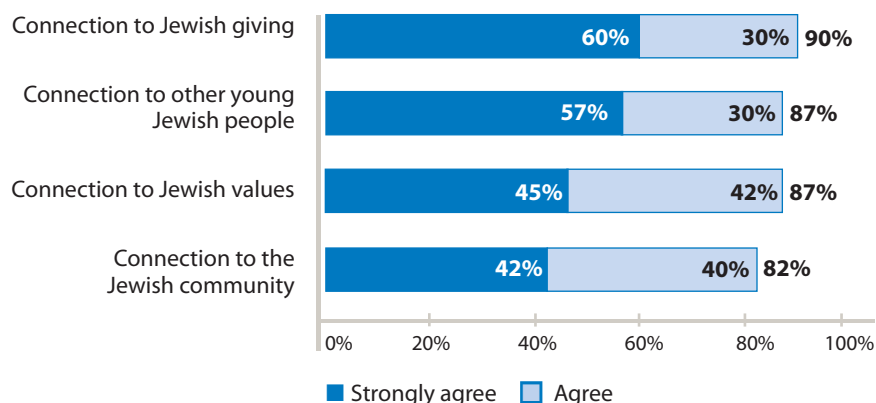
Alumni credited RYF with enhancing their Jewish identity. Nearly three-quarters of the respondents indicated that their Jewish identity had been “enhanced” (43%), “somewhat enhanced” (22%), or “completely enhanced” (6%) by participating in Rose Youth Foundation. The enhancement of Jewish identity was not affected by age differences. About half of the participants in the 15-18 and 19-27 age groups indicated that their Jewish identity was either “enhanced” or “completely enhanced.”

Alumni’s experience with Rose Youth Foundation deepened their connections to Jewish giving, to other young Jewish people and to Jewish values. Between 82% and 90% of alumni reported that their experience with RYF deepened their connections to Jewish giving, other young Jewish people, Jewish values and the Jewish community (see **FIGURE 5** on page 20). Furthermore, about half of alumni survey respondents “strongly agreed” that this had occurred. In sharp contrast with the national decline in engagement in Jewish youth organizations and activities, RYF effectively engages high school youth and deepens their involvement with and connection to Jewish life.

¹⁵ Groeneman Research & Consulting, *BBYO Impact Study*.
¹⁶ Lauren Blitzer and Steven M. Cohen, *Jewish Teenagers and their Engagement with JCCs* (Florence G. Heller JCC Association Research Center, October 2007).
¹⁷ This comparison is drawn using the top two items (“Very Important” and “Important”) on the Rose Youth Foundation Alumni Survey’s five-point scale for this question and the top item only (“Very Important”) on the Pew Research Center’s Millennials Survey’s three-point scale.
¹⁸ Pew Research Center, *Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next* (Pew Research Center, 2010).

FIGURE 5

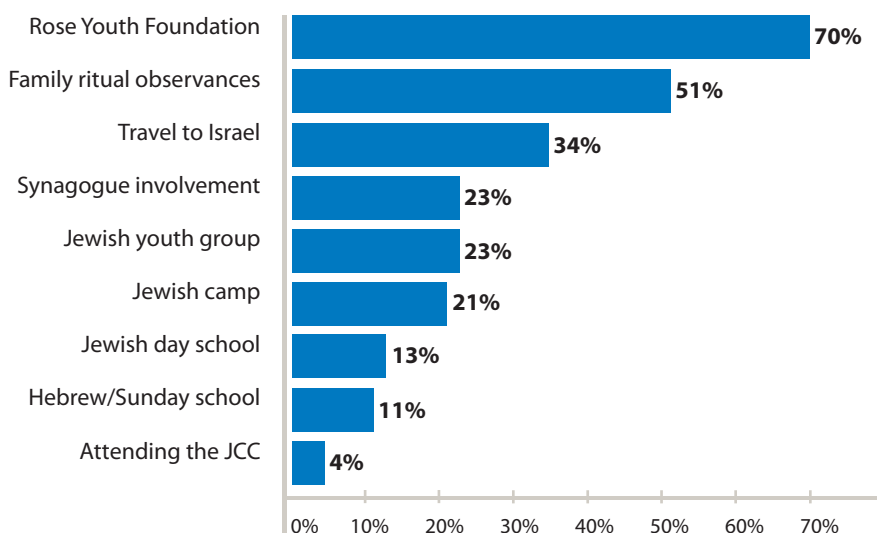
To what extent do alumni feel that participating in Rose Youth Foundation deepened their Jewish connections?



Rose Youth Foundation has clearly shaped these young people's Jewish journey and experiences; 70% of respondents indicated that RYF was one of the three most meaningful Jewish experiences they had in high school (see **FIGURE 6**).

FIGURE 6

What do alumni report as their three most meaningful Jewish experiences in high school? (N=53)



2007 Members of Rose Youth Foundation report that they value the opportunity to get to know students from other schools and backgrounds.



Rose Youth Foundation has encouraged alumni to deepen and broaden their involvement in a range of Jewish activities and community service activities after their RYF experience (see **TABLE 5**). Although RYF programming does not include a focus on Israel or participation in Jewish educational and cultural activities, high percentages of survey respondents sought out these opportunities after their RYF experience. It is particularly interesting to note that many RYF alumni are active in the Hillel on their college campus (76%) and the great majority (68%) of them say that RYF encouraged their involvement. Similarly, high percentages of RYF alumni attend Jewish cultural events (83%) and have taken an organized trip to Israel (80%).

TABLE 5

How Rose Youth Foundation Has Helped to Shape Respondents' Jewish Journeys and Experiences

	I have done/do this	RYF encouraged my involvement ¹⁹
Commitment to community service	88%	84%
Involvement in social or political causes	88%	76%
Participating in the Hillel on my college campus	76%	68%
Attending Jewish cultural events	83%	64%
Having Jewish friends	92%	45%
Taking an organized trip to Israel	80%	42%
Learning about Jewish history, people, culture or sacred texts	93%	32%
Celebrating Shabbat with friends and family	87%	27%
Celebrating other Jewish holidays with friends and family	98%	26%

There were other unanticipated outcomes. Participation in Rose Youth Foundation deepened alumni's connection to: Jewish culture (76%), the Boulder/Denver Jewish community in specific (61%), their spiritual beliefs (46%), Jewish traditions like Shabbat and holidays (36%), and even to organized faith (i.e., a synagogue) 45% (see **TABLE 6** on page 22). These results are impressive given that Rose Youth Foundation's goals and activities are not focused on connecting participants to these areas of Jewish life.

¹⁹ Percentages were calculated based on the number of individuals that had participated in a given activity.

TABLE 6**Unanticipated Ways Alumni Are Connected to Jewish Life Because of Their Rose Youth Foundation Experience**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Jewish culture	21%	55%	21%	4%
Jewish spiritual beliefs	6%	40%	43%	11%
Jewish traditions like Shabbat and holidays	0%	36%	49%	15%
Organized faith (i.e., a synagogue)	0%	45%	36%	19%
Involvement with the Denver/Boulder Jewish communities	26%	35%	26%	13%
Involvement in the Denver/Boulder community	26%	32%	35%	7%

Interestingly, a total of 29 alumni (53%) reported that they are still in touch with one or more of the other Jewish young people they met through their RYF group. Ten more have connected with alumni from other years of the program. This suggests that some individuals consider the RYF alumni a network they can access whether or not they know an individual. Further development of an alumni network is an area where RYF can be more intentional and can support the informal networking that is already occurring. This could be an increasingly valuable source of support for alumni as they become young professionals and continue to serve in leadership roles in their communities.

Claiming or Reclaiming Their Jewish Identity and Connections

It is not unusual for affiliated Jewish youth to lose their ties with Jewish life after their *Bar/Bat Mitzvahs*. One respondent describes this exact situation, “I was somewhat disconnected from Judaism before Rose, even with being confirmed and *Bar Mitzvahed*, but RYF allowed me to reconnect with my Jewish roots.” When asked, “How has serving as a Jewish youth grantmaker affected your Jewish identity?” 10 respondents described how RYF instilled in them a greater awareness of, and/or connection and commitment to, the Jewish community. One individual commented, “I feel that through my participation in RYF, I was really able to connect with the Jewish community in ways that I had previously been unable to do so. Before participating, I was not very involved in Judaism and had little connection to the community.” Eleven respondents explained how Rose Youth Foundation developed and redefined what being Jewish meant to them.

Rose Youth Foundation also includes youth who are not affiliated with a particular denomination of Judaism – seven responded to the survey. This “Unaffiliated” group was categorized to include all the participants who indicated they were “Culturally Jewish,” and/or “Secular – just Jewish, not religious.”

“Before Rose, I had lost my Jewish identity. I was involved at one point in the community, but had lost all ties because there was nothing that really kept me connected. I had stopped going to synagogue and didn’t participate in much religiously. RYF gave me a chance to reconnect with Judaism and find an outlet for myself in the community. It allowed me to make connections in the community that I would have never made before and encouraged me to take part in the community.” (RYF alumnus)

Survey respondents included 45 alumni who identified with a particular denomination of Judaism, seven “Unaffiliated” respondents (12.7%) and 3 respondents did not specify (5.5%). While this sample was too small to assess statistically significant differences between the two groups, analysis of key variables did not reveal any major differences in terms of the effects of RYF on their connections to Jewish life. Numbers, however, do not tell the entire story. Interviews and verbatim comments from the survey show that for “Unaffiliated” youth, being with other Jewish youth was a very important part of their RYF experience. It gave them a sense of belonging to the Jewish community. This was especially true for those that lived in neighborhoods and went to schools where they were one of very few Jewish people.

One young person described how her entire family now places a higher priority on being Jewish. They do this, in part, by being more consistent about observing Jewish holidays.

No Change in Their Identity

Different reasons were given by youth who said their Jewish identity had not been affected, such as already having a strong Jewish identity or at the opposite extreme, one respondent who is no longer part of the Jewish faith. Even the four youth who do not currently consider being Jewish as important to them talked about feeling connected to the Jewish community through Rose Youth Foundation.

Overall, engaging Jewish youth in grantmaking provides them with a meaningful way to connect with issues they care about and with Jewish values. This experience has allowed youth who had felt disconnected to reconnect with their Jewish identity, become friends with other Jewish youth and/or deepen their connection to Jewish life. For youth who already had a strong Jewish identity, it deepened their connections with the Jewish community.

Impact on Understanding Across Denominations

Increased understanding across denominations of Judaism was another of the Foundation’s stated goals. Rose Youth Foundation intentionally selects students with a range of Jewish beliefs and practices in order to expose participants to the diversity of the Jewish experience. This diverse group is asked each year to come to consensus about what it means to give in a primarily Jewish way. Then they

2008 Since its inception, all of Rose Youth Foundation’s grants have been decided by its youth members.



“I am proud to be a part of such an active and aware group of Jewish teens who have made a difference. Rose Youth Foundation has exposed me to a diverse group of beliefs and practices and I highly value my connection to everyone.” (RYF alumnus)

experience moving from an abstract discussion about Jewish values to making decisions about which programs should receive funding. As one person commented, “My experiences at RYF meetings every week forced me to address my personal beliefs about what it means to be Jewish in an environment where ‘being Jewish’ probably meant something different to everyone sitting around the board room table.” Consensus-based grantmaking is a process that requires its participants to listen and try to understand others’ points of view. In the process, young people learn a lot about each other’s beliefs, values and practices. Seven respondents commented on how valuable it was to be exposed to and learn about different perspectives, practices and denominations of Judaism from their Rose Youth Foundation peers.

Youth who identified with a particular denomination gained an appreciation for the multiple ways that people can live their life in a Jewish way. Less-connected youth gained a rich understanding of the many different ways that their peers were connected to and lived a Jewish life. Youth came away with an understanding of their differences but more importantly, the realization that they all share a common set of values around giving back to the world in spite of the diversity of practices. As one alumnus explained, “[RYF has] given me a feeling of connection with other Jews my age regardless of denomination. I am now confident in my identity as a Jewish person and feel I share with all Jews the value of *tikkun olam*.” Another person commented, “What I appreciate about Rose Youth Foundation is that it’s about doing good and doing it together. We were charged with incorporating universal Jewish themes about repairing the world through service.”

Increased understanding of different perspectives sometimes happened cross-generationally within family settings. In the words of one participant: “My parents are ‘old school’ and are from New York City. When I went home to New York to visit, my grandparents found out that I was giving to non-Jewish organizations through Rose Youth Foundation, and became very upset, and started yelling at me in Yiddish. I argued that ‘we have to move on from hatred...we can’t be stigmatic to others like they were to us.’ My aunts, uncles and cousins all came over to join in the very heated discussion. We had a six-hour, very powerful and moving discussion.”

Rose Youth Foundation also supported increased understanding across denominations of Judaism and across different faiths through their grantmaking. For example, in 2009 RYF funded a Student Interfaith Peace Project that trains high school students to become peacemakers and leaders through classes, discussions and a trip to Israel and the West Bank. This project was implemented through the University of Denver Institute for the Study of Israel in the Middle East.

Alumnus Profile



Danny Jackson

"The lesson I learned is if you have an idea, pursue it and you can see tangible results. Rose Youth Foundation made me grow up a little bit and want to be active in the Jewish community."

In high school, Danny was called an anti-Semitic derogatory name, leading to a fight and a trip to the principal's office. Subsequently, the principal suggested that Danny apply to RYF, which he did. He was only one of a small number of Jewish students at his high school. Growing up, Danny says he did not really have a Jewish upbringing and did not know much at all about Judaism. He did not know anything about nonprofits. As part of Rose Youth Foundation, he got to see different perspectives on Jewish life. He made friends and felt a cultural solidarity with the group. "I met a lot of unique people and it was a very cool feeling as a 15- and 16- year-old going into a multi-million dollar Foundation's board room," he said. Danny didn't fully appreciate what nonprofits do, and how few resources they have, until he started reviewing their budgets and other financial information as part of the grant review process.

Participating in RYF, Danny developed a passion for Israel and for working against the anti-Semitism that he had personally experienced. His RYF experience reinforced the idea that it is important to be proud and to stand up for what he believes in and who he is. In college he served as the vice president for a pro-Israel group, went to Israel with his Hillel, and participated in the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. His work with the Committee took him to Washington D.C., where he learned how to effectively argue his point of view. He was also a regular volunteer for Holocaust Awareness Week and at the Israel booth for multi-cultural fairs at his college. Currently Danny is in his second year of law school. Next semester, he plans to serve in a free legal clinic. After graduation, he is thinking about learning Arabic and pursuing a different career – something related to the Middle East.

TEN YEARS OF GRANTMAKING

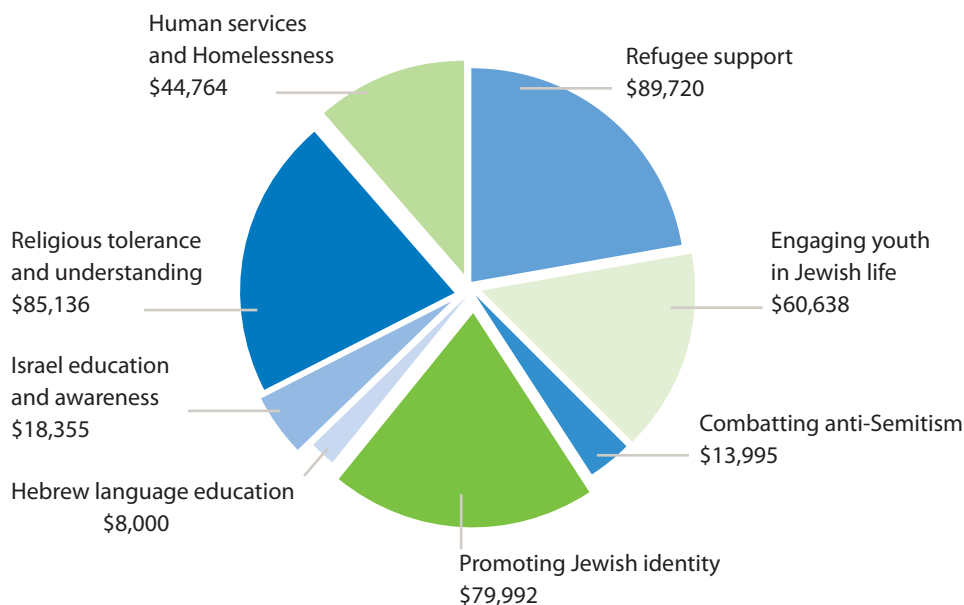
“Rose Youth Foundation is an innovative idea... a way to involve youth in the nuts and bolts of philanthropy. Not just giving money but really understanding how grantmaking works.”
(RYF grantee)

Over the past decade, Rose Youth Foundation has awarded grants to a wide range of organizations and programs. The program has awarded 79 grants totaling \$400,600. Grants have ranged in size from \$1,000 to \$12,000, and RYF's total annual grantmaking has grown from \$15,000 in 2002 to \$60,000 in 2010. Resources are focused on issues that Jewish youth feel are important. Over the years, these priorities have included supporting refugee self-sufficiency, encouraging inter- and intra- religious tolerance and understanding, supporting programs to engage youth in Jewish life, supporting services for homeless people and an end to chronic homelessness, increasing Israel education and awareness , combatting anti-Semitism and promoting Hebrew language education.

From 2002 to 2005, grants supported only Jewish organizations or interfaith efforts. Starting in 2006, RYF members broadened their grant priorities to include other focus areas. **FIGURE 7** shows the breakdown of grant amounts by focus area over the past 10 years. Almost half of the grant funds (\$180,980) have gone to support explicitly Jewish issues and organizations focused on serving Jewish people. Nearly one quarter of the grants have focused on promoting understanding between people of different denominations of Judaism and between Jewish people and people from other religions.

FIGURE 7

Rose Youth Foundation Grantmaking 2001-10 by Focus Area



For the 2009-10 school year, youth selected three focus areas for their grantmaking: 1) engaging Jewish teens in their Jewish communities through programs that are meaningful and relevant to them; 2) empowering high school students to advocate for educational change in public schools; and 3) promoting the integration and self-sufficiency of refugees and survivors of genocide currently residing in Greater Denver and Boulder. Engaging other Jewish teens in Jewish life has been a constant grantmaking focus over the entire 10 years and is a way that RYF youth have extended opportunities for engagement to other Jewish youth.

Stories of four grantees are presented here to provide the reader with a sense of the impact of Rose Youth Foundation grants. These stories were selected to represent grantmaking in different focus areas.

In their 2009 Request for Proposals, RYF members stated that they would fund organizations and programs that “promote involvement in Jewish life for high school and college-age Jews.” They explained:

“We believe that the Jewish community does not adequately involve young Jewish people. We believe the existing Jewish programs do not hold the interest of all high school and college-age Jews. Often programming for this age group does not effectively integrate them into the core work of an organization, but instead sidelines them into “teen only” programs.

We believe that it is important for high school and college-age Jews to have a strong understanding and connection with other young Jewish people in their daily lives and activities.

We believe that young Jews need more Jewish cultural programs such as Jewish culinary arts, visual arts and performing arts (music, dance, film, etc).”

In response to this request, Judaism Your Way submitted a proposal and received a Rose Youth Foundation grant for \$3,400 to purchase the curriculum for *Rosh Hodesh: It's a Girl Thing!* in order to create a *Rosh Hodesh* group for unaffiliated middle- and high-school-age girls. *Rosh Hodesh* is a national program that provides a safe place for girls to explore self-esteem and independent thinking within a Jewish context. While some synagogues and other organizations in the Denver area offered *Rosh Hodesh*, girls who were not connected to these organizations did not have access to this opportunity. In the first year, nine girls participated. They all returned the next year and three of the girls also signed up for a *Bat Mitzvah* class.

The grant: 1) provided the grantee an opportunity to reach an age group not previously served; 2) improved relationships with other Jewish organizations in the community because, the executive director explained, “*Rosh Hodesh* gave them a common point of connection” as some synagogues in Denver also offer *Rosh Hodesh*; and 3) gave them a high quality curriculum that has no-cost training

75%

of grantee survey respondents report grant outcomes and impact lasting more than two years after the life of their grant

opportunities for staff that they can use for years to come. In its proposal to Rose Youth Foundation, Judaism Your Way explained that with “60-70% of Jewish households in our area reporting in the 2007 Denver Boulder Metro Jewish Community Study that they are not affiliated with any Jewish institution, the majority of teenage girls in our community did not have access to this outstanding national program.”

Mizel Arts & Cultural Center (MACC) also received a grant for its proposal in response to the above Request for Proposals. MACC holds an annual Jewish Film Festival. Until it received a \$5,100 grant from Rose Youth Foundation in 2009, youth had never been involved in a leadership role in this Jewish organization. The RYF grant created a Jewish youth leadership team and subsequently a Teen Film Board to give youth an authentic leadership voice. Youth reviewed films and selected one that would appeal to youth to show at the Festival. Through a careful review process, this committee selected *The Wave* to be shown at the 2010 Jewish Film Festival. *The Wave* is the true story of a teacher, Ron Jones, who developed a simulation experience designed to help his students better understand Nazism and the “evil seed that lies in all of us.” Ron Jones led a post-film discussion and attended the youth party. About 100 youth attended the Film Festival. In its 2010 grant report to the Foundation, MACC wrote, “The screening was completely sold out with teen participants equaling about a third of the audience. There was great ‘buzz’ in the community, and the event was a tremendous success.” MACC also conducted a filmmaking workshop for youth in conjunction with the festival.

10%
of alumni have started
their own nonprofits

Outcomes included: 1) integration of youth into the 2010 Denver Jewish Film Festival; and 2) a reciprocal relationship between the Youth Film Board and MACC’s internship opportunity, with each drawing upon the others’ participants. MACC received a second Rose Youth Foundation grant in 2010 for \$6,737 to support their newly established Youth Film Board in developing youth-centered activities for the 2011 Denver Jewish Film Festival. “The young people are inspiring and invigorating to be around. This helps us when we feel cynical and wonder why we are doing this [work].” (Jewish Film Festival Executive Director). MACC will continue to engage youth in the Film Festival through the Youth Film Board.

In their 2010 Request for Proposals, RYF members stated that they would fund programs and services to “promote integration and self-sufficiency of refugees and survivors of genocide currently residing in Greater Denver and Boulder.” In explaining their theory of change, they wrote:

“Rose Youth Foundation believes there is a lack of support and services that help refugees and survivors of genocide integrate into the community and attain economic self-sufficiency. We hope to promote self-sufficiency and integration of refugees and survivors of genocide who have fled their country of origin because of conflict or persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or membership of a particular social group.

We believe that cultural and academic education, job training, language acquisition and integration into society are pathways to economic self-sufficiency and acceptance.

We believe it is our responsibility as Jews to support those fleeing persecution or genocide because throughout history our people fled persecution and benefited from the kindness and hospitality of others."

The Colorado African Organization responded to this request and received a grant for \$8,500 to support the BeFriender program for refugees, which includes English as a Second Language classes, case management, computer literacy and job-search training. When the young people came for the site visit, "I was impressed with their level of professionalism and interest. It was interesting that the youth see the connection between African immigrants and Jews." (Colorado African Organization Executive Director).

Two Rose Youth Foundation participants have since served as interns at this organization and others volunteer on the weekends tutoring people who are learning English. Nonprofits serving refugees find it difficult to obtain funding from foundations. This organization hopes that receiving a grant from Rose Youth Foundation will set a new precedent and open the door to obtain funding from other local foundations.

Four times in the past 10 years, Rose Youth Foundation members have joined adult funders in their support of Denver's Road Home – a 10-year plan to end chronic homelessness in Denver. As part of this work, youth grantmakers met annually with Denver's Road Home Executive Director and with the creator of Denver's Road Home, then-Mayor John Hickenlooper, to discuss the work. "Rose Youth Foundation reached out to us. They were one of my favorite entities to work with. Having young, very smart kids to engage with in philanthropy was a joy. They asked tough questions – how would we evaluate our efforts? What were our intended outcomes? Rose Youth Foundation played a critical role in moving the work forward." (former Executive Director). Several RYF alumni have subsequently served as interns for Denver's Road Home. "We actually get the resources to make changes in our community. Two years ago we set aside \$12,000 to give to the Ten-Year plan to end homelessness," an alumnus commented. "Eight Rose Youth Foundation participants were invited to the Mayor's office to discuss the Plan. I was 14 and was sitting talking to the Mayor about how to end homelessness. This experience helped me to understand that even as a young person, I can still make a difference."

Seventy-five percent of grantee survey respondents report grant outcomes and impact lasting more than two years after the life of their grant. Aside from the obvious benefit of grant funding, in some cases, RYF has also provided a source of interns and volunteers for the nonprofits they fund. Nonprofits were impressed by these young grantmakers and the thoughtful questions they asked. Alumni commented on how unusual it was for a young person their age (14-17) to be in a "position of power" and to have adults in positions of authority listening to them and answering their questions.

2009 Two Rose Youth Foundation members learn about a homeless shelter on a site visit.



Rose Youth Foundation models youth leadership and has had an effect on the way grantees think about and engage youth. Fifty-seven percent reported an increase in their awareness of the potential of youth leadership; 42% said their attitudes were positively influenced about young people serving in leadership roles; 29% were encouraged to think about how to increase youth engagement in their organization; and 13% actually changed the way they engage youth. Encouraging grantees to engage youth in leadership capacities is an area where Rose Youth Foundation could be more intentional. For example, other youth grantmaking initiatives require youth to take significant leadership in the development and implementation of grant requests. This extends youth leadership opportunities to more young people and encourages nonprofits to engage youth in new ways. Some youth grantmakers also offer mini grants to 4th-6th grade students, facilitate a needs assessment process and teach students about grantmaking. Over time, these activities have created a pipeline of youth with proposal-writing skills and interest in nonprofits and grantmaking.

57%

of grantees survey respondents report an increase in their awareness of the potential of youth leadership

Alumnus Profile



Dayna Zolle

"It was overwhelming at first to give out a large sum of money. Having the responsibility and also the power to make a difference was amazing to me."

Dayna served for three years as a member of Rose Youth Foundation. It was her first experience with the nonprofit sector. She says that the experience had a "tremendous impact on my life." She was amazed at the number of nonprofit organizations in the Denver area, all working to benefit the community in different ways. She was also impressed by the trust and responsibility that Rose Community Foundation gave to teenagers. Dayna marvels that she was given far more latitude and trust as a member of RYF than as a grantmaker in a student organization she joined in college.

Since her family stopped attending a synagogue soon after her *Bat Mitzvah*, being with a group of other Jewish teens at RYF gave her a connection back to the Jewish community that she had not otherwise found. She went on to become an intern at Rose Community Foundation and served at three other Denver nonprofits during summers between her years in college. During college, Dayna was president of an organization that raised funds for the Make-A-Wish Foundation and also served as a grantmaker on a Community Partnership Board. RYF first sparked her interest in giving back to the community through nonprofit organizations, and this experience shaped her career aspirations. She begins law school in August, 2011 and hopes to pursue public interest law working for either government or a nonprofit.

"I can't express enough what a positive experience it was for me and how much it impacted me."

IMPACT ON ROSE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

“Rose Youth Foundation gives Rose Community Foundation an image of being innovative and focused on lasting structural change for the future. It demonstrates a willingness to open the door to new ideas.” (RYF alumnus)

Rose Youth Foundation has become a signature program of Rose Community Foundation. Rose Community Foundation has received national attention as a result of Rose Youth Foundation. In 2010, Rose Youth Foundation was recognized as one of the 50 most innovative Jewish nonprofit organizations in North America by *Slingshot: A Resource Guide to Jewish Innovation*.

Rose Youth Foundation is a pathway for connecting Jewish young people with community philanthropy. These young people are the next generation of interns, donors, board members and even staff. One alumnus commented, “I never recognized the impact that RCF has on the community until I got involved.”

- 10 RYF alumni have already served as interns for Rose Community Foundation.
- 92% of RYF alumni want to stay connected to Rose Community Foundation.
- RYF led to the creation of Roots & Branches Foundation, a collaborative giving initiative for Jewish young adults ages 25 to 40, at Rose Community Foundation.

Evaluations of other community foundation youth grantmaking initiatives have also identified the development of a pipeline of philanthropic leaders as an important outcome.²⁰ What we learn from Rose Youth Foundation has relevance for the field of youth philanthropy and other religious groups interested in extending the value of giving back as a strategy for connecting young people to their faith.

Rose Community Foundation staff have benefited from their interactions with Rose Youth Foundation participants. One staff member commented, “[Our interactions] benefit us as philanthropic professionals. [The youth] bring new energy and are refreshingly honest.” Staff has had to learn about new content areas, such as support for refugees in the Denver area, when Rose Youth Foundation selected this as a grant focus area. Staff reports that working with RYF teens helps them see the world through younger eyes and informs their grant decisions about programs seeking to engage and serve Jewish youth. At Rose Community Foundation overall, only a few staff have interacted with the youth grantmakers. This is a missed opportunity. One alumnus explained that she would be

92%

of RYF alumni want to stay connected to Rose Community Foundation

²⁰ Karin Tice, *Leadership, Volunteerism and Giving: A Longitudinal Study of Youth Grantmakers* (1993-2003) (Council of Michigan Foundations (2003).

“It is so important for youth to understand the value of philanthropy. Rose Youth Foundation is a hidden gem. Not too many people know about Rose Youth Foundation. Rose Community Foundation should do more to highlight their work.” (RYF grantee)

interested in understanding the thinking behind grants made by adult grantmakers at Rose Community Foundation. More intentional opportunities to share thoughts on strategic philanthropy and grantmaking could enrich both youth and adult grantmakers.

Engaging teens in philanthropy has had a positive effect on grantee and parents' perceptions of Rose Community Foundation. Seventy-six percent of parent and grantee survey respondents indicated that their connection to RYF had positively affected their perception of Rose Community Foundation. More than three-quarters (79%) had a greater understanding of Rose Community Foundation's mission and grantmaking, and more than half (57%) had a greater connection to the work and the people at Rose Community Foundation. One quarter of grantee survey respondents had never received a grant from Rose Community Foundation.

79%

had a greater understanding of Rose Community Foundation's mission and grantmaking

2009 In addition to learning about Jewish concepts around giving and philanthropy, Rose Youth learn about each other during icebreakers at the beginning of their year.



Alumnus Profile



Hannah Leventhal

Hannah lived in a suburb of Denver and went to a high school with 1,800 students, very few of whom were Jewish. She attended Hebrew school on the weekends while growing up but as she got older, there were few opportunities for her to connect with the Jewish community. In high school, Hannah's school counselor passed along a flyer about Rose Youth Foundation. She applied even though she doubted that she would be selected. Once selected, Hannah was very excited to meet other Jewish people her own age. At first she felt intimidated and it took most of the first year to really understand what Rose Youth Foundation was all about. The highlight of her experience was going on the site visits to grant applicants and learning about their work.

"I always wanted to get involved but I didn't think of myself as a leader. The first year I watched and then the second year, I was more confident and I stepped up." Hannah served as an officer in her second and third years.

Participating in RYF helped to shape both her personality and her leadership style. It helped her step out of her comfort zone. "I learned how to interact with people that don't share my same opinions," she says. This ability has helped her in college, where she served as the president of her Hillel, volunteered for multiple activities including mentoring students in music, volunteering at a therapeutic riding center, and participating in Mortar Board (a national honors society focused on service). Hannah also helped to raise \$5,000 to supply books for local reading events. There is not a big Jewish community at Hannah's college, "I don't meet a lot of people like myself," she says. Currently in a pre-veterinarian honors program, she plans to start a Masters program in equine nutrition starting this summer.

FEEDBACK FOR ROSE YOUTH FOUNDATION

Rose Community Foundation is interested in learning how meaningful different aspects of the Rose Youth Foundation experience were to participants. The three most meaningful parts of the Rose Youth Foundation experience included: the opportunity to make a difference in the community; participating in the grants review process, including the site visits; and participating with a diverse group of youth (see **TABLE 7**).

TABLE 7

How Meaningful Different Aspects of the Rose Youth Foundation Experience Were to Participants

	Very meaningful	Meaningful	Somewhat meaningful	Not too meaningful	Not at all meaningful
Opportunity to make a significant difference in my community	71%	24%	6%	0%	0%
Participating in grant review including site visits	62%	28%	10%	0%	0%
Participating with a diverse group of Jewish teens	48%	33%	14%	2%	2%
Exploring the relationship of Jewish values to contemporary issues	36%	26%	30%	2%	6%
Exploring what it means to give Jewishly	33%	29%	22%	10%	6%
Exploring how Judaism relates to my life	33%	28%	24%	10%	6%

Through RYF youth learned about nonprofits they did not know even existed. They were interested in the work the nonprofits were doing. One alumnus commented, “Visiting organizations, learning about what they were doing with youth, and having the opportunity to tell our story about Rose Youth Foundation was my favorite part of the experience.”

We asked alumni for their suggestions for how to improve Rose Youth Foundation. The suggestions have been shared with Rose Youth Foundation staff for their use and are reported here.

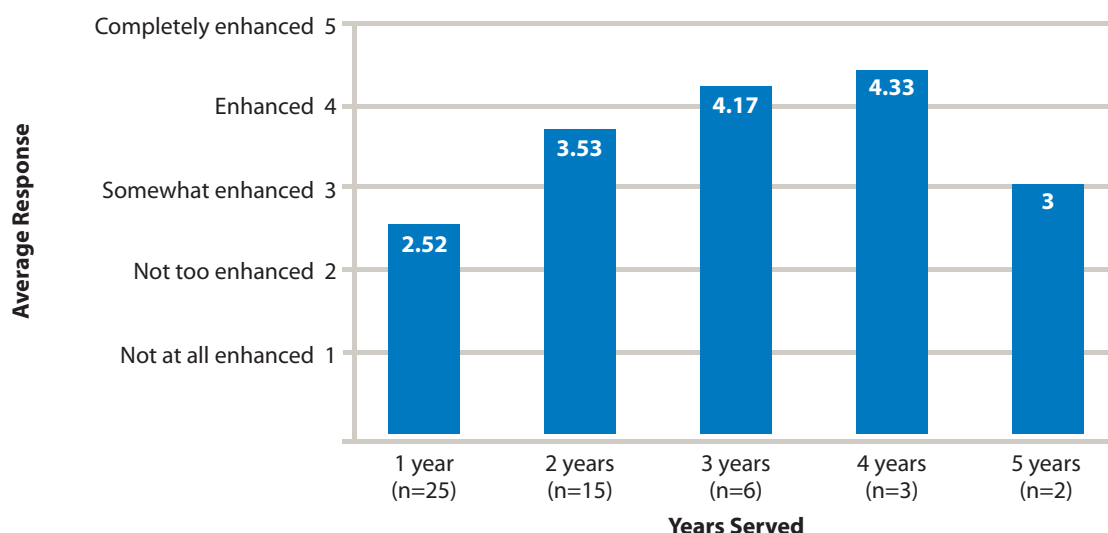
- Several people suggested expanding the program so that more Jewish youth can participate. Extending opportunities offered to alumni was also suggested.

- It is important that Rose Youth Foundation participants are selected both because of their passion for working on community change as well as to ensure a diverse participant group of Jewish youth.
- Part of the value of Rose Youth Foundation is getting to know other Jewish youth. In retrospect, alumni wished they had more informal opportunities to interact and to develop friendships. Alumni want more opportunities to stay connected now.
- Serving one year is not enough. It takes a year for youth to gain the knowledge, skills and confidence necessary to fully engage as grantmakers and leaders. The data also indicate that the value of the experience and its impact on Jewish identity increased significantly for youth serving two years instead of one.

Evaluation findings support alumni comments that serving one year is not sufficient. While limiting most participants to serving only one year allows more youth the opportunity to participate, it limits the length of the experience for many students. RYF had a greater impact on participants' Jewish identity when they served two years instead of one year. There is statistical significance between serving one year (mean=2.52, n=25) and two years (mean=3.53, n=15).²¹ There is no statistical significance between two and three, or three and four years (see **FIGURE 8**). The findings were very similar between the number of years served and the overall value of their experience. The implication of this finding is that Rose Youth Foundation may want to consider letting students serve for a minimum of two years instead of one year. Interviews with youth support this finding. It took a year of watching and experiencing the process before participants fully understood the grantmaking process. Individuals who served a second year were able to be more effective grantmakers and leaders. Additionally, dedicated, passionate youth were not invited back due to space constraints. In some cases this created bad feelings about RYF and about their experience for both youth and their parents.

FIGURE 8

Overall, to what extent was your Jewish identity enhanced by being a Jewish youth grantmaker at Rose Youth Foundation?



²¹ Three years (mean = 4.17, n = 6), and four years (mean = 4.33, n = 3) means were calculated on a five point scale where 5.0 equaled completely enhanced identity and 1.0 was not at all enhanced identity.

FERA analyzed the data to see what other factors influenced participants' experiences with Rose Youth Foundation. Aside from the number of years served, the only other significant factor was being a chair/co-chair. The value of the experience and impact on their Jewish connections was greater for past chairs. More young men have served as Rose Youth Foundation chairs than young women. Young women are missing out on a valuable opportunity to serve as leaders.

Rose Youth Foundation was developed based on national best practices for youth philanthropy initiatives. Still, there are a few areas where its work can be strengthened. Recommendations to be considered are based on the evaluation findings as well as on this evaluator's twenty years of experience documenting effective practices and outcomes with youth grantmaking initiatives.

- Establish an endowment to support Rose Youth Foundation in perpetuity (in process).
- Increase the standard numbers of years that individuals serve from 1 to 2 or more (to be implemented in 2011-12).
- Consider ways to engage Rose Youth Foundation participants in fund development and to encourage personal giving.
- Ensure that young Jewish women have opportunities to serve as the Rose Youth Foundation chair/co-chair.
- Create and implement tools and processes to support on going program evaluation. This could include: a) formative evaluation; b) documenting outcomes for current participants; and c) tracking alumni longitudinally.
- Provide additional opportunities for Rose Youth Foundation participants to interact with Rose Community Foundation's Jewish Life Committee and to share information about key issues and grantmaking strategies being used to address those issues. Offer similar types of opportunities for interaction with Rose Community Foundation staff and board members.
- Develop ways for alumni to stay connected to Rose Community Foundation, to Rose Youth Foundation and to each other.
- Leverage additional youth leadership opportunities for Rose Youth Foundation alumni and within grantee organizations.
- Develop a strategy for systematically assessing what Jewish youth from throughout Greater Denver and Boulder think are the highest priority community issues, and determine ways they would like to engage in addressing them. This information can be used to create additional youth leadership opportunities.
- Host a Jewish youth summit for the Denver/Boulder area to interpret the community issue/needs assessment data and to develop recommendations for next steps.
- Share the findings of this evaluation with the field of Jewish youth philanthropy and with Jewish leaders working on ways to connect the next generation to Jewish life.

90%

of alumni still use the knowledge of Jewish values they developed in RYF

2011 Two RYF members stand in front of an art piece that captured comments about the impact of Rose Youth Foundation from attendees at the group's 10th anniversary celebration in June.



CONCLUSIONS

“I am part of a movement that will change the world, and for that I am proud.”
(RYF alumnus)

Philanthropy within a framework of Jewish values has had a powerful effect. It has helped a diverse group of Jewish youth see the relevance of Jewish values to the good they wish to do in the world today, and connected them to each other and to the Jewish community. Through RYF, youth learn life-long leadership skills and demonstrate that young people can be positive forces in support of community change.

RYF has clearly met its goals. Rose Youth Foundation: 1) empowers Jewish youth to serve and interact with their community; 2) educates and informs youth about the needs and challenges of their community; 3) effectively engages unaffiliated Jewish youth and increases understanding across denominations of Judaism; and 4) perhaps most important of all, helps prepare the next generation of community leaders by transmitting Jewish values and practices of strategic philanthropy.



Rose Youth Foundation members come from families with diverse Jewish backgrounds.

What is the impact of Rose Youth Foundation?

92% OF ALUMNI REPORT...
 "I view myself as a real
change maker
 in my community and
 in the WORLD!"



RYF is a **Life Changing**
 program that has
 enabled me to form my
JEWISH IDENTITY
 and grow as a
Person!



"RYF HAS GIVEN
 MY DAUGHTER THE
 CONFIDENCE TO
 UNDERSTAND HOW
 SHE CAN BE THE
CHANGE!"
 SHE WISHES TO SEE!

73% OF ALUMNI
 HAVE SERVED
 IN LEADERSHIP
 ROLES IN JEWISH + OTHER NONPROFITS
 SINCE PARTICIPATING IN RYF.

"It deepened my connection
 to Judaism—
 Jewish life
 Jewish community"

Relationships +
 Knowledge +
 a sense of awareness
 that I will always hold
 close at heart."

"I have a better
 sense of my
 Jewish Identity."



RYF gives young people
 the **VOICE** to speak
 for their **COMMUNITY**

"RYF has given me **CONFIDENCE**
 to speak my opinion and try out
 for any activities I am interested in."

DISCOVERING
 THE EXTENT
 OF ONE'S
IMPACT &
 effectiveness

Empowering Youth!
 Learning how
 teens can make
 a **DIFFERENCE!**

Gave me the
 knowledge and
 the strength to
 actually **Lead!**



"...it **Guarantees**
FUTURE
JEWISH LEADERS."

"It helps me make
 a difference in
 the community—
 it is **FUN**
 and educational!"

At Rose Youth Foundation's
 10th anniversary celebration
 in June 2011, graphic recorder
 Julie Primozich created an art
 piece to capture comments from
 attendees about the impact of
 Rose Youth Foundation. Sections
 are reproduced here.