

2001-2010

Rose Youth Foundation Ten Years of Impact KEY FINDINGS



TEN YEARS OF JEWISH YOUTH PHILANTHROPY

“Rose Youth Foundation 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* [repairing the world].”

– RYF alumnus

Rose Youth Foundation (RYF) marked its first 10 years of Jewish youth engagement in 2010. To understand the impact of RYF, Rose Community Foundation commissioned an external evaluation from Formative Evaluation Research Associates (FERA). The key findings of the resulting report, “Rose Youth Foundation Ten Years of Impact: Jewish Teens Engaged in Grantmaking and Leadership,” presented in summary here, show that RYF has had a significant positive effect on its teen participants both during and after their RYF experience.

RYF is among the oldest Jewish youth philanthropy programs in the country. In 2010 and again in 2011, it was named one of North America’s 50 most innovative Jewish nonprofits by *Slingshot: A Resource Guide for Jewish Innovation*. RYF offers Denver-area Jewish youth in grades 10-12 the opportunity to learn about strategic philanthropy by becoming grantmakers. Each year, RYF brings together a diverse group of 23 Jewish youth from more than a dozen high schools and every denomination of Judaism to form a grantmaking team at Rose Community Foundation. The youth work together for seven months to explore issues facing Greater Denver and Boulder’s Jewish and broader communities; set grant priorities and create a request for proposals; and make grants totaling \$60,000 to address the community issues they identify as important. The only requirements placed on the group are that their grants must be local — in keeping with Rose Community Foundation’s grantmaking mission — and they must make grants that are “primarily Jewish” in nature. It is up to each group to determine what giving in a “primarily Jewish” way means to them. Over the last decade, 157 young people have participated in RYF, awarding up to \$60,000 in grants annually to nonprofit organizations.

Best-practice research in Jewish teen engagement shows that successful programs: provide meaningful opportunities for youth leadership; have skilled adult facilitators who create authentic relationships with youth; and provide a doorway to connect to Judaism and other Jewish people by focusing on cultural rather than spiritual content. These practices are at the core of the RYF experience.

The evaluation findings demonstrate that RYF provides participants with knowledge and skills that they continue to use frequently today. They have gained an understanding of how grantmaking can be used as a strategic tool to help solve problems in the community. They have developed leadership skills and understand how to work collaboratively. They have experienced how volunteerism and social action can be forces for change in their communities.

The effect of Jewish youth philanthropy is powerful and far-reaching well after a participant’s time with RYF. Alumni credit RYF with enhancing their Jewish identity. In interviews and surveys, alumni said that RYF was one of the most meaningful Jewish experiences they have had and that it strengthened both their Jewish connections and their understanding of the importance Judaism places on helping others and improving the world. Through RYF, alumni have learned how Jewish values and teachings can reach across the ages to guide and inform the positive difference they wish to make in the world today.

KEY FINDINGS

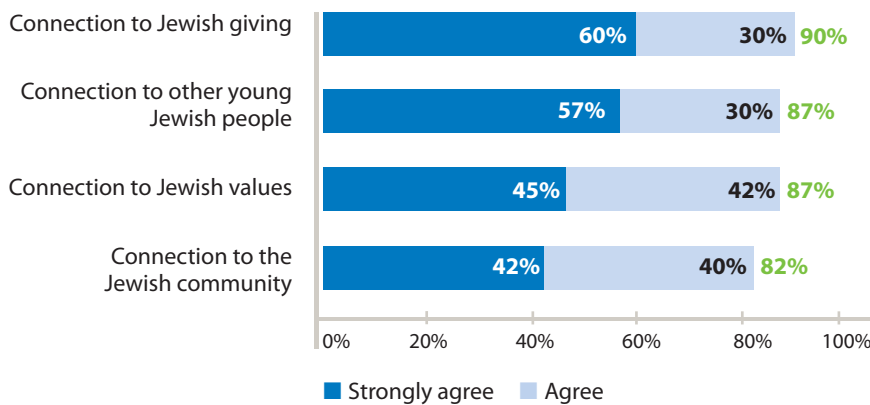
1 | Rose Youth Foundation strengthens Jewish identity.

Rose Youth Foundation (RYF) actively engages Jewish youth in defining what being Jewish means to them. Grantmaking through the lens of Jewish values provides participants with a relevant way to connect to being Jewish. Alumni overwhelmingly credit RYF with enhancing their Jewish identities. Eighty-one percent of alumni say being Jewish is either very important or important to them, and a great majority say RYF deepened their connections to Jewish giving, Jewish values and the Jewish community. The majority of alumni say that RYF was one of their three most meaningful Jewish experiences in high school (70 percent), and that participating in RYF enhanced their Jewish identity (71 percent).

“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

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



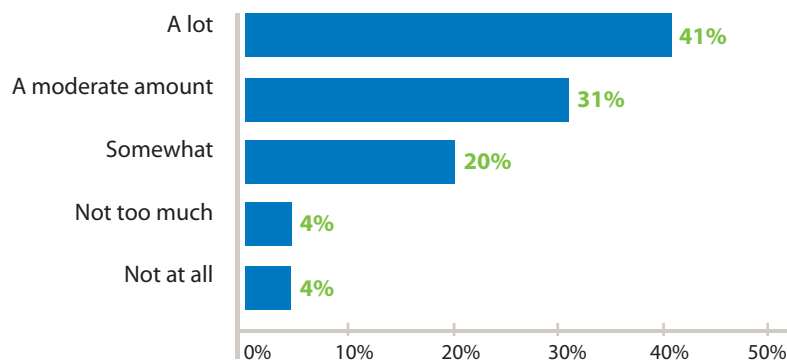
2 | Rose Youth Foundation creates changemakers.

Nearly all alumni (92 percent) say RYF has instilled in them the belief that they can be agents of positive change in their communities. Ninety-eight percent of alumni report they learned the skills of strategic philanthropy and are able to identify root causes of community problems and work with the nonprofit sector to solve them. Most alumni are still using the knowledge they gained in RYF about *tikkun olam*, the Jewish ideal of repairing the world (88 percent), and strategic philanthropy (69 percent) today.

“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.”

– RYF alumnus

To what extent did participating in Rose Youth Foundation lead participants to feel they can be changemakers in their community or the world?



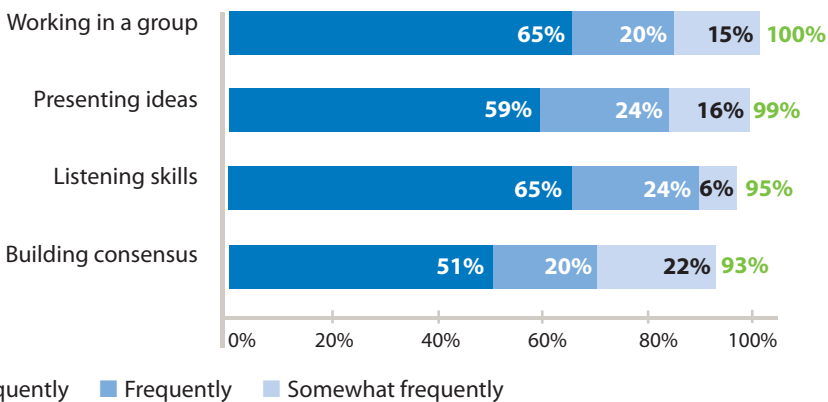
3 | Rose Youth Foundation teaches collaboration and leadership.

RYP prepares participants to serve in leadership roles and to work with others to address community needs. Alumni say they have learned to listen, present their own point of view and work in groups. They say they learned a particularly important lesson about how to work with others who have opinions different from their own and to use consensus in making decisions. These are valuable skills that nearly all alumni (93 to 100 percent) say they continue to use while serving on nonprofit boards or task forces or working in their communities in other ways. RYP alumni serve as leaders in college organizations and in Jewish and secular nonprofits. Eighty-eight percent of RYP alumni report serving in nonprofit leadership roles since graduating from high school.

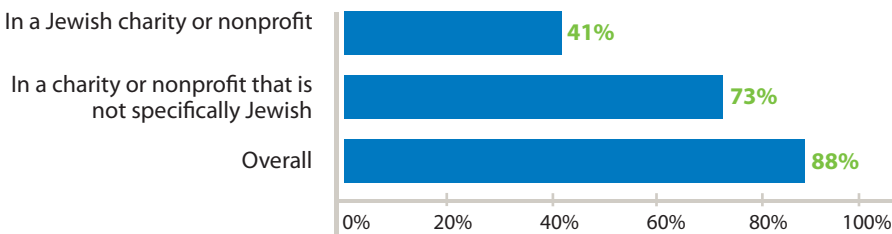
“Everything I know about how to give in the most efficient way goes back to Rose. Now, as I lead other community service organizations in my school, I have exponentially improved on how I organize and listen to my members. I find that Rose not only gave me the tools to know what to do, but how to do it.”

– RYP alumnus

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



Alumni Serving in Nonprofit Leadership Roles Since Participating in Rose Youth Foundation



4 | Rose Youth Foundation instills a strong commitment to volunteering.

Alumni apply the experience they gained at RYF as they continue to volunteer in nonprofit organizations, and they volunteer in far greater numbers than their Millennial peers. In contrast to 22 percent of Millennials who volunteered over a 12-month period (according to the Corporation for National and Community Service report *Volunteering in America 2010*), 88 percent of RYF alumni had volunteered over the past year. Some alumni have volunteered or served as interns at the nonprofits they funded during their RYF tenure.

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%

“RYF really gave me an opportunity to become a leader in both the Jewish and secular communities. While I participated as well as after my term ended, I have volunteered more in my community and become a leader in many school organizations as well as community organizations that help give back to the community.”

– RYF alumnus

5 | Rose Youth Foundation alumni stay involved in Jewish life.

RYF encourages alumni to deepen and broaden their involvement in a range of Jewish activities after their experience at RYF. High percentages of alumni seek out continued opportunities in Jewish educational and cultural activities, and attribute their involvement to RYF. Three quarters of alumni (76 percent) go on to be active at Hillel on their college campus. In addition, nearly all alumni (92 percent) say they have Jewish friends.

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

	I have done/do this	RYF encouraged my involvement ¹
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%

“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.”

– RYF alumnus

¹ Percentages were calculated based on the number of individuals that had participated in a given activity.

“For a decade, Rose Youth Foundation has been at the forefront of involving teens in collaborative philanthropy. As participants explore their Jewish values and learn about grantmaking, Rose Youth Foundation is also identifying and cultivating future community leaders.”

– Will Schneider

Director, *Slingshot: A Resource Guide for Jewish Innovation*

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

In 2010 Rose Community Foundation commissioned Formative Evaluation Research Associates (FERA), an independent evaluation group in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to conduct a longitudinal impact evaluation of Rose Youth Foundation’s first 10 years. The key findings of that evaluation are presented here. FERA’s research methods included: an online survey of RYF alumni with a response rate of 45 percent (55 out of 122 alumni responded); an online survey of RYF grantees with a response rate of 32 percent (26 out of 79 grantees responded); an online survey of parents of alumni with a total of 32 parents responding (a response rate could not be calculated because alumni were asked to forward the survey invitation to their parents); interviews with 32 stakeholders including alumni, parents of alumni and Rose Community Foundation staff; and site visits to four RYF grantees. The full report is available at rcfdenver.org/reports/RyFimpact.pdf.

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Rose Youth Foundation is an initiative of Rose Community Foundation. Rose Community Foundation supports efforts to improve the quality of life throughout the Greater Denver community through its endowed grantmaking programs, and by advising and assisting donors who wish to make thoughtful charitable investments to better the community.

Rose Community Foundation’s Jewish Life program area supports efforts to create and sustain a vibrant Jewish community. The Foundation funds new ideas that connect Jews to Jewish life and to each other, promoting partnerships and addressing emerging needs, while also strengthening institutions so that they can respond to change.

Learn more about Rose Community Foundation at rcfdenver.org. Rose Youth Foundation’s website is rcfdenver.org/RyF.

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