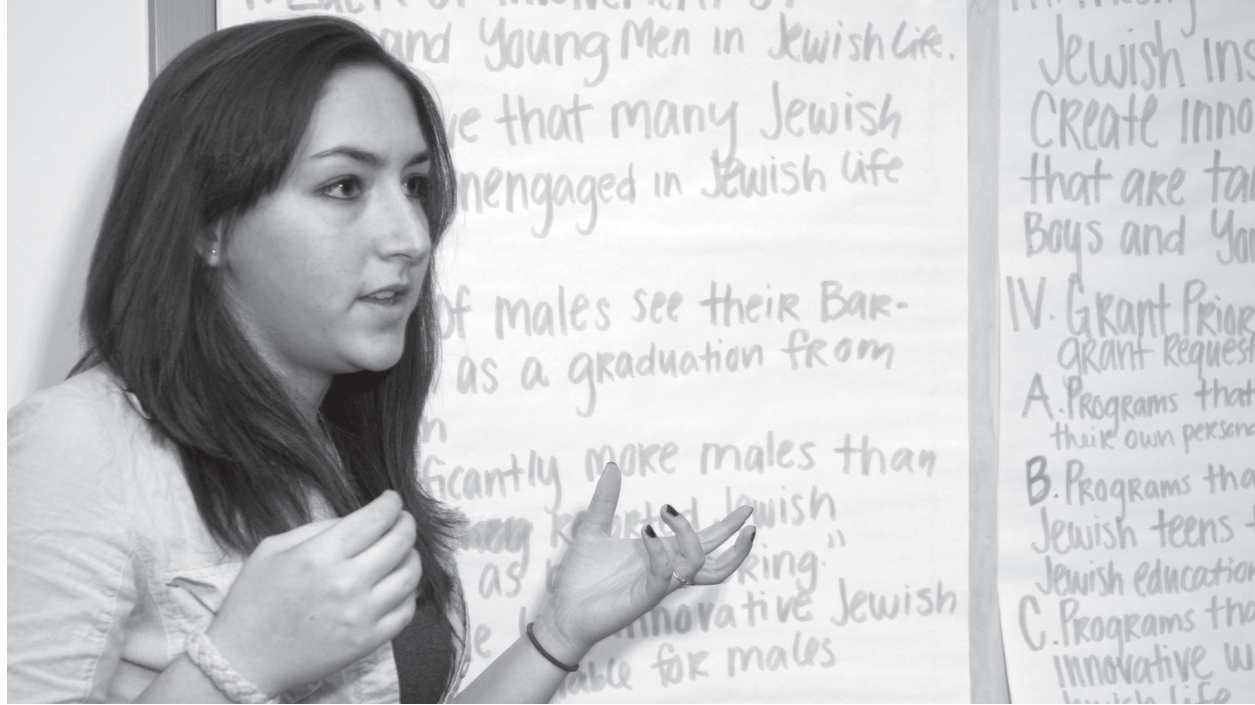




Julia Sigman addresses fellow members of Rose Youth Foundation as the group considers its funding priorities for the coming year.



## Every Voice is Heard

By Elliot Mamet – senior at East High School

**Unanimity fosters confidence. At Rose Youth Foundation (RYF), our philosophy for solving problems in the Greater Denver community represents the opinion of the entire group, not just a majority of members. We make decisions through the consensus model.**

For the ninth year, Rose Youth Foundation, a grantmaking initiative of Rose Community Foundation, provided Denver-area Jewish teens the opportunity to learn about grantmaking and philanthropy. In 2009-2010, 22 Rose Youth Foundation members from 12 schools gave away \$60,000. This report is about who they are, what they did and how they did it.

Consensus can be defined as a collective group belief, a discursive power structure, or as the antithesis to the partisan wrangling in Washington, D.C. Just like these many definitions, consensus is the fusion of differing ideas into a cohesive, cooperative position.

At Rose, the fundamental tenet of our consensus model is that everyone's voice is heard. The entire group must agree to come to consensus. If there are members with opposing viewpoints, they can choose whether to "stand aside" and allow the group to move forward, or "block" a decision they believe is fundamentally immoral.

Through consensus, 22 opinionated and outgoing people were able to once again accomplish the herculean task of giving away \$60,000, in a "primarily Jewish way," which we construed as funding nonprofits that represent Jewish ideas and/or Jewish programming. This year, we decided on three problems we wanted to help solve in the seven-county metro area.

First, we decided to address the lack of involvement of Jewish teens in the Jewish community. We were guided by two surveys commissioned by Rose Community Foundation, which identified best practices in funding

# Expanding Our Jewish Education

By Talia Halfon and Simon Kaufman – senior and junior, respectively, at Denver Jewish Day School (formerly Herzl/RMHA at the Denver Campus)

## 2009–2010 Rose Youth Foundation Members

Reid Spitz, Chair  
Jeffrey Aschkinasi, Vice Chair  
Grace Kohn, Secretary  
Elliot Mamet, Marketing Director  
Julia Sigman, Historian  
Jonathan Bentley  
Morgen Bernstein  
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Jordan Kastrinsky  
Simon Kaufman  
McKenna Klein  
Maddie Kornfeld  
Taylor Minckley  
William Payne  
Michelle Saipe  
Eliza Stein

## Staff

Scott Esserman, Educator  
Sarah Indyk, Jewish Life Initiatives Manager  
Lisa Farber Miller, Senior Program Officer

We never would have imagined that Rose Youth Foundation (RYF) would be as gratifying as it proved to be. Coming from a Jewish day school, we already had a strong background in the importance of *tikkun olam* and *zedakah*, the Jewish concepts of doing good works to help repair a broken world. Being part of RYF taught us skills necessary for working with others, as well as a stronger understanding of philanthropy. Most importantly, RYF gave us the financial means to make a difference in the greater community.

We learned that even as youth we can still have an impact in the world around us. We were both able to openly express our opinions on things that we felt were important in the community, in an environment that encouraged what we each had to say. Through this experience, we were not only able to learn the importance of listening to what other people had to say, but we also gained confidence in speaking out.

We learned new things each meeting – about philanthropy, new organizations in the community, and what it takes to make an organization or foundation sustainable. We learned what questions to ask, as well as how to analyze a grant proposal. By the time we were on our own going on site visits, we had the necessary knowledge to be successful in making our grant decisions.

RYF was truly a unique experience. We know of no other avenue where a group of teens is able to freely decide where to donate \$60,000. Because all of us gained an understanding of how to work with foundations and the resources that were provided to us, all of us finished the year with more knowledge and a more well-rounded perspective on issues in the greater community.



The 2009–2010 Rose Youth Foundation group included eight returning members.

# A New Family

By Jordan Kastrinsky – junior at Cherry Creek High School

This past year, I have experienced kindness, frustration, trials, tribulations, and much more. I have eaten large turkey dinners, joked around, listened to some intense tunes, and seen the weird side of a few different personality types. Does this sound like your family? Well that's what one experiences as a member of Rose Youth Foundation.

I have truly grown to feel a great sense of family with my fellow Rose Youth members. We have the over-concerned mother figures, the passive fathers who then become quite vehement, the determined sons, and the kind and gentle daughters.

And I'm not saying I don't love my real family but come on – how much do teens really listen to their parents? When my mother asked me about how one of my relationships was going, we ended up arguing. But when I brought it up with several of the kids at Rose Youth, we talked and they helped me. We did not fight,

and I did not have to stay in my room for the entire night listening to Journey, Chicago, and other 80s bands.

The other kids at Rose Youth Foundation just understand. I guess you could say that we connect there. We “get” one another. I can't explain it, I just, well...I love every one of them.



(Left to right): Jordan Kastrinsky, Elliot Mamet and Reid Spitz

## Get Involved

Rose Youth Foundation is accepting applications from Jewish teens who will be in grades 9-12 in 2010-2011. Rose Youth Foundation encourages diversity of opinion and background and, as a youth-directed program, looks for members who will work together to award grants to causes in the Denver/Boulder community that they find important. The online application and more information about Rose Youth Foundation can be found at [rcfdenver.org/RYF](http://rcfdenver.org/RYF), or contact Sarah Indyk at 303.398.7416 or [sindyk@rcfdenver.org](mailto:sindyk@rcfdenver.org).

## Voice Continued from Page 1

Jewish teen programming. We believed that our funds could most effectively be implemented in programs with teen leadership opportunities, cultural programs, and programs catering to the differences between young men and young women. This priority was primarily Jewish because we were promoting Judaism.

Second, we addressed the lack of recognition of student input in public high school education, which dealt with the Jewish idea of empowerment. Our funding reflects a commitment to education reform that incorporates students into education system design and implementation.

Third, RYF decided to help refugees and survivors of genocide integrate into the community. We prioritized our funding toward sustainable organizations that encourage economic self-sufficiency. We also targeted programs with English as a Second Language classes and child care, to promote the Jewish idea of helping those who are oppressed.

Every member of RYF comes to the table with a responsibility to put their own self-interests aside. Over the course of the year, we gave away a large sum of money to exceptional nonprofit organizations for exciting programming. Our biggest success, though, was learning to think and act for the collective good.

## Issue 1

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Denver, CO 80246-1712  
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## 2009–2010 Rose Youth Foundation Grants

### **Boulder Jewish Community Center** \$2,650

To create It's About Respect, a peer education and advocacy program that trains teens to address anti-Semitism, hateful behaviors and bullying in schools and the community.

[boulderjcc.org](http://boulderjcc.org)

### **Catholic Charities** \$6,720

To support the Adult English as a Second Language for Refugees program at Place Bridge Academy.

[ccdenver.org](http://ccdenver.org)

### **Colorado African Organization** \$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.

[caoden.org](http://caoden.org)

### **Community Talmud Torah** \$2,900

To support a cross-denominational program that trains teenagers to educate younger students in supplemental religious schools.

### **Denver Public Schools (DPS)** \$10,493

To support the DPS Student Board of Education in the creation of a student-taught leadership and service course for implementation in all DPS high schools.

[www.dpsk12.org](http://www.dpsk12.org)

### **Hazon** \$8,000

To develop and implement the Do-It-Yourself series to engage Denver teens in local Jewish educational activities related to food and environmental sustainability.

[hazon.org](http://hazon.org)

### **Lutheran Family Services of Colorado** \$5,000

To support the Women's Workstyles program, which provides job training for refugee women.

[lfsco.org](http://lfsco.org)

### **Mercy Housing** \$5,000

To provide services to refugees, including English as a Second Language classes, financial literacy, cultural assimilation and life skills.

[mercyhousing.org](http://mercyhousing.org)

### **Mizel Arts & Culture Center** \$6,737

To support the youth film board in integrating youth-centered activities into the 2011 Denver Jewish Film Festival.

[maccjcc.org](http://maccjcc.org)

### **Ramah in the Rockies** \$4,000

To support the Ramah Teen Tzedek Project, a four-day leadership retreat providing Jewish teens with hands-on training in Jewish environmental social activism.

[ramahrockies.org](http://ramahrockies.org)