



The 2013-14 Rose Youth Foundation members.

The Challenges in Choosing

Juliana Rodriguez – senior at Colorado Academy

Dash Sperling – freshman at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Being on a youth philanthropy board is full of decision making. The decisions Rose Youth Foundation (RYF) makes extend way beyond which organizations we will fund and in what amounts. RYF is special because literally every decision is up to us, from little things, like what snacks to provide at the next meeting, to big things like deciding what issues we want to address with our grantmaking. It's up to us to decide what it even means to give in a primarily Jewish way and how we might accomplish this.

In RYF, we learn the most from one another. In addition to learning how to make impactful grants, we learn how to listen and compromise and take risks. We learn how to engage in the collaborative grant making process. Some of these decisions

are hard. You learn the right time to object, when you may have to disagree with someone, when to fight for what you believe in and when to take a step back and listen to others.

We made all of our decisions in consensus. That means, even when the going got tough, we never took a majority vote in order to move on. Instead, 23 diverse, intelligent and thoughtful voices came together to create a community. These 23 individuals who started the year cautious and separate, grew together to produce our final product – \$60,000 in grants to the community. We are proud of this final product because our grantees are working to do real and permanent good in our community. Not many teenagers, or even adults, are given such a powerful chance to change the world.

For the 13th year, Rose Youth Foundation, a collaborative philanthropy group at Rose Community Foundation, provided Jewish teens from the Greater Denver community the opportunity to learn about grantmaking and philanthropy. In 2013-14, 23 Rose Youth Foundation members from 12 schools granted \$60,000. This report is about who they are, what they did and how they did it.

Inspiring Jewish Youth to Become and Stay Involved in Jewish Life

Molly Kalat – freshman at Tulane University

Eric Malamud – freshman at the University of Wisconsin, Madison

One of the greatest ways to encourage Jewish teens to become involved in Jewish life is through outreach from teen leaders who are already engaged. Our community has a great need for programs supporting and raising awareness of the benefits of Judaism and community engagement. We wanted to practice *tikkun olam*, striving to repair our world, by molding future leaders within our community. It was a way for the 23 members of Rose Youth Foundation to leave a legacy focused on the importance of not only Judaism, but also Jewish giving.

Jewish Teen Engagement was our first established grant priority. This priority focused on funding organizations that would actively work within our community to give Jewish teens the opportunity to become engaged. We sought programs that work with all denominations of Judaism. We felt our responsibility as Jewish teens was to continue the traditions of the Jewish people.

Unlike our other priority areas, we did not request any grant proposals. Instead we identified grantees working to stem the tide of Jewish teen disaffiliation by engaging teens in Jewish life in meaningful, relevant and compelling ways. As the Denver Jewish community has had a tremendous impact on all of us in one way or another, we would like other teens to have similar experiences. By giving teens a well-structured and creative approach to engaging in Judaism, we believe that we can have a long-lasting impact. We are proud to say that we found two programs to fund under this priority.

Jewish Student Connection (Denver) \$6,000 to support youth-led high school clubs that help teens explore what being Jewish means to them.

Jewish Teens Make It Happen Fellows (Denver) \$6,000 to fund a pilot program offering micro grants and a fellowship for teen-initiated projects to make a meaningful difference in their community. Rose Community Foundation serves as the fiscal sponsor.

Supporting Families that Have Experienced Domestic Abuse

Shai Karp – freshman at Vassar College

Blake Sidon – freshman at Santa Clara University

Our second grant priority, supporting families that have experienced domestic abuse, was inspired by two Jewish values our group shared as core to our beliefs. *Lo ta'amod al dam re'echa*, do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor. RYF felt that intervention to stop abuse in relationships aligns with this Jewish value. We wanted our grant dollars to take an active role in halting the suffering of our neighbors. And, *pidyon shvuyim*, redemption of captives: victims of intimate partner violence are often held captive to their abusers. We felt that supporting their "redemption" would fulfill this Jewish value.

Our goal was to fund evidence-based, direct-service programs and services for families with minor children, including efforts to raise awareness of domestic abuse and its signs and symptoms. We wanted to fund efforts to promote early intervention and support for families experiencing domestic abuse that would help victims exit the abusive relationship. We gave higher priority to programs providing long-term support and assistance and

proven programs with demonstrated results. Rose Youth Foundation made six grants to organizations working to address this priority.

Aurora Mental Health Center (Denver): \$7,000 to support The Fortaleza Familiar program for Latino families at risk of or recovering from abuse.

Denver Children's Advocacy Center (Denver): \$7,500 to support mental health services for children and teens that have experienced or witnessed domestic abuse.

Domestic Violence Initiative for Women with Disabilities (Denver): \$5,000 to support direct services and outreach for persons with disabilities who have experienced domestic abuse.

Florence Crittenton Services (Denver): \$2,500 to provide domestic abuse education, prevention and intervention for teen moms.

Gateway Battered Women's Services (Denver) \$8,000 to provide safe, confidential housing to those affected by domestic abuse.

Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains (Denver) \$2,500 to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services to refugee survivors of domestic abuse.

Teen Depression and Suicide

Liv Dansky – freshman at Washington University in St. Louis
Sam Reiff – senior at Cherry Creek High School

As teens, we have observed the challenges and consequences of depression and suicide firsthand. As Jewish funders, we were compelled to help address this issue because *pikuach nefesh*, saving life, is an important principle in Judaism. We are taught that if we save one soul, it is as if we have saved an entire world. When a life is saved, there is a ripple effect. We believe that more resources, services and knowledge will increase the number of people receiving the help they need and decrease the number of people experiencing depression or considering suicide.

Depression is a serious condition that can affect a person's thoughts, feelings, behavior and overall health. While as many as 1 in every 33 children may experience depression, when young people reach adolescence, the ratio can be as high as 1 in 8.¹ During the 2011–12 school year, 26% of students surveyed in Denver Public Schools' high schools reported feelings of depression;

14% seriously considered suicide; and 8% had attempted suicide in the past year.²

We invested in the following three grantees because of their innovative and effective programs.

Carson J. Spencer Foundation (Denver): \$5,000 to fund the expansion of The Fire Within program, combining suicide prevention education and entrepreneurship education, to one new high school.

Jewish Family Service of Colorado (Denver): \$5,500 to provide school-based mental health services for refugee adolescents experiencing depression.

Second Wind Fund (Denver): \$5,000 to fund one-on-one counseling for teens at risk of suicide.

¹ Children's Mental Health Disorder Fact Sheet on Depression, Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health
² Healthy Kids Colorado Survey Key Findings, 2012

2013-14 Rose Youth Foundation Members

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Jack Glaser
Tess Hankin
Molly Kalat
Jacob Kark
Shai Karp
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Team building at the Rose Youth Foundation opening retreat.

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Get Involved

Rose Youth Foundation is accepting applications from Jewish and interfaith-Jewish teens that will be in grades 10 – 12 in 2014-15. We seek members from diverse backgrounds. Members work together for eight months to identify issues facing our communities, set grant priorities, evaluate prospective grantees and make grants that reflect what it means to give in a primarily Jewish way. The online application and more information is available at rcfdenver.org/RYPF, or contact Sarah Indyk at 303.398.7416 or sindyk@rcfdenver.org.

Our Rose Youth Foundation Experience

Paris Franklin – senior at Pomona High School
Jack Glaser – senior at George Washington High School

I can speak for us both when I say we were giddy,
When we heard we would share this affair
in committee.

For our tales of Rose Youth can't be properly told,
If the perks of teamwork are not fully extolled!

Introductory games let us acquaint with
our peers,
And our newfound trust helped us conquer
our fears.

For repairing the world is easier to do,
With 22 others standing by you.

Through the years we have learned how to
work in consensus,
Though after hours of bickering it may have
seemed senseless.

It ensured that we heard from all in the end,
Upon sharing ideas our whole cause depends.

In binding our ample assortment of Jews,
The board always oozed a sundry of views.

Be they orthodox, cultural, reform or Kabbalist,
One common purpose made us all seem
homologous.

We were asked to shed light on the "Rose Youth
Experience,"
But expressing our love without forgoing
coherence,
We found is much harder than would seem
by appearance.

For the three simple words: "Rose Youth
Foundation,"
Engulf the whole mind in a glowing elation.

Although some of us are at the end of the road,
We need not worry about what the future
will hold.

For as long as *tzedakah*¹ perseveres,
Our *K'hillah Kedosha*² will not disappear.

¹ Giving in pursuit of justice

² Holy community

Ensure our youngest leaders will continue to shape our community.

In 2011, Rose Community Foundation began a campaign to endow Rose Youth Foundation. Thanks to many generous donors, more than \$1 million has been raised toward our ultimate goal of \$2 million. An endowment for Rose Youth Foundation will mean that future generations of young Jewish people will have the chance to experience this program and that our community will continue to benefit from the leadership and perspective of youth grantmakers.

If you would like to make a gift to support the Rose Youth Foundation endowment, contact Sarah Indyk, philanthropic engagement officer, at 303.398.7416 or sindyk@rcfdenver.org.