
2011-12 Newsletter - Tishrei 5772

Dear Friends,

I'm here for you - hineini - simple, gentle, powerful words in English and Hebrew that enfold us when the fabric of life is torn, when instability shreds our very foundation. I'm here for you - figuratively uttered by a record number of 60 grantees this past year, young people who may not have been personally bruised, but who undertook an obligation to repair brokenness in a corner of Israel, Africa, Eastern Europe, India, Latin America, the Middle East, and the United States.

The Amy Adina Schulman Memorial Fund, started 24 years ago when our daughter and sister died suddenly at age 20, has now awarded almost half a million dollars (actually \$475,000) to young people who devote themselves, their energy and commitment to progressive social action projects helping others. Grantees develop their own nascent skills and learn tools to build grassroots community activism, grantees who announce to the world, I'm here for you - hineini.

The Fund remains an IRS designated 501(c)3. All contributions, including life cycle commemorations and estate gifts, remain fully tax deductible. And most unusual, 100% of all contributions go directly to grants. The Schulman Family covers all administrative costs.

Good news and thanks: We have a wonderful new part-time administrator, Nancy Lewis, who handles much of the day-to-day work of the Fund (allowing Ruth more time to work on her longitudinal research project on women rabbis). Watch for our new website with thanks to Bob Weber for his help. Thanks also to Josh Milstein who gives the Fund year-round computer assistance. Kudos to Jon Zoll of RBC Wealth Management for steering the Endowment base through precarious economic times.

We, along with our grantees, send special thanks to you for sharing their dreams and accomplishments, and for your contributions that tell them we're here for you. Please take a few minutes to read brief excerpts from six of this year's grantees plus updates from three former ones. We believe their words might give you renewed hope for the repair of our world.

Health and strength in this new year as we build community together.

Dan, Jennie, Molly & Jake

Ruth & Mel (z"l)

Joel, Nancy & Logan

P.S. Save Sunday, November 13, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. for the 24th Annual Amy Adina Fund Lecture at The Jewish Center of Princeton. Our speaker will be Daniel Sokatch of the New Israel Fund.

Brief notes from a few grantees:

Sara H. has a BA from UC San Diego, and is currently in an MSW program at Columbia specializing in International Social Welfare. This past summer, she was a Gender and Public Policy Fellow and an intern in the office of the first female president of Lithuania. The internship was under the aegis of the Council of Women World Leaders (CWWL), a network of all female presidents, prime ministers, and other major female leaders in the world. Sara has previously worked in Israel as a facilitator for Encounter, and in the U.S. as a program leader for Jewish Funds for Justice, and a communications associate for American Jewish World Service.

Sara writes that her CWWL projects included: helping to coordinate a conference on gender equality in the European Union; writing policy briefings on the status of women in countries where the president is making diplomatic visits; and researching a report on the status of women in Lithuania's ethnic communities: Jews, Poles, Roma, and Armenians.

Caitlin S. was an intern at CASA Latina Day Worker Center in Seattle, WA. As a Fund grantee, she worked for 10 months with Convivencia Educativa, an NGO providing onsite teacher training throughout Mexico.

Out of everything I gained, working with my compañeros (coworkers) – all Mexicans – was one of the greatest gifts. Among the activists and people working for social justice that I have met, I have never known people who lived what they believed as much as my coworkers. Some of my compañeros came from the low-income areas that we worked within and brought with them an integral understanding of community issues. Others brought a more theoretical vision – imagination.

Together the team was tight-knit and respectful of the contributions of each. And their passion was contagious. I cannot express to you how many times in the year I felt like I had fire in my chest because of the excitement of the work – often during late night talks with compañeros as we slept on the floor in a pueblo... Maybe I could have learned this type of commitment and sustained passion by working in the U.S. – I don't

know. Regardless, I have now rubbed shoulders with it for almost a year and will use my compañeros as role models for the rest of my professional and personal life.

Nicole S., a doctoral candidate at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, worked with Hoshen, an educational non-profit in Tel Aviv. Her responsibilities: creating professional development programming for early childhood teachers working with children of LGBT families, and developing a portfolio of curricular materials on the topics of diverse families and gender norms that teachers could use in their classrooms.

Since I returned to Boston, I have kept in touch with the Hoshen Early Childhood Team sharing free webinars for teachers and LGBT parents. I have also continued to collect materials for them and have continued networking with other groups doing similar work. In addition, I was recently invited to speak at a Harvard roundtable focused on LGBT education around the world.

A Canadian, **Jesse B.** received his MS degree from the London School of Economics in the field of Environment and Development. His dissertation topic: "Fairness and Equity in Transboundary Water Resources". This past year he was an intern with Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) working on regional issues concerning water and sanitation.

It is my hope that this report can do justice to the rich and transformative experience of my internship with FoEME. The Bethlehem office works in close contact with both the Jordanian and Israeli offices, creating a unique and important connection between Palestinian, Israeli, and Jordanian environmentalists, peace activists, and communities.

A situation need not be violent to be considered a conflict. What I experienced was a daily conflict. Not only between two peoples, who both want desperately to have a secure home, a good job, environmental security, and to live in peace, but also a conflict between nature's ability to sustain a growing population in the face of dwindling natural resources.

Ideally I would like to live and work in Canada... which seemingly has a plethora of fresh water. But due to population density in certain basins and with an expanding tar sands industry, much of the fresh water is heavily burdened and polluted... I want to say once again thank you for the monetary support the Fund provided to help finance my time in Israel. It has been an extremely rewarding, informative, and transformative experience.

Hannah D., a 2010 graduate of the University of Vermont, participated in LeadEarth, an eight-month leadership program operated in collaboration with Adam le'Adam, an Israeli NGO in Israel and India. After training in Israel, Hannah and her group departed for India.

Living and working at Sadhana Forest in India gave me the opportunity to learn about reforestation, water conservation, eco-building, the daily tasks that hold a community together, nonviolent communication, music, and dance. In addition to providing water for surrounding rural villages, our projects included greening schools, creating a children's playground from waste materials, helping the children create their own garden, and promoting healthy eating.

For the second project, I headed northeast to the state of Andhra Pradesh and the district of Guntur. I lived in a Madiga village made up of the Dalit class, which is the lowest class of India, the Untouchables. It was most certainly real India. With the Madiga community we were part of the Bene Ephraim Jewish community. There I worked on a community survey and the installation of solar panels.

Classes in environmental studies and economics at college were often filled with discussions of what we are doing wrong, how we are destroying our Earth and all its being. India helped show me what people are doing right and how I can do that too...

I am currently applying for a Fulbright Scholarship to return to India in 2012. I am developing a project that allows me to explore current small-scale organic agricultural practices, specifically bio-intensive methods. There is potential for providing rural communities with tools to become more self-sufficient and to improve their economic, social, health, and environmental circumstances.

Elana W-K. spent last year in Tel Aviv-Yaffo as the only American participating in Mechina, a pre-army year of community service for high school graduates. She is now studying at the University of Illinois majoring in Theatre Arts and Directing.

Living and volunteering with Jews, Arabs, and Christians all in one place allowed me to see both those unnoticed moments of peace between people as well as how one spark of violence can overturn an entire neighborhood... I helped create a Purim Carnival in Yaffo for 500 people... A challenge for me was seeing the conditions in which many people live. Every time I went to Yaffo Gimmel to see a student I saw the poverty and felt almost guilty for it. Knowing however that all I could do was be there for the kids, that's what I did.

Notes from former grantees:

Sarah G., a 2007 grant recipient, writes: I received your support to study at Hebrew U's Braun School of Public Health. The program brings students from developing countries together to study public health and then return to their countries as experts in the field.

It is a shining example of something unquestionably positive that Israel is doing for others. It meant a lot to me that as a Jewish organization, you cared about what I wanted to do and could see that it does have very strong ties to our Jewish values. I am currently working at a non-profit organization in Seattle that focuses on improving reproductive health and family planning services for low-income individuals across the country. I utilize the skills I learned in Israel on a daily basis.

A second **Sara G.** writes: In 2008, you gave me funding to support my year working for the Ministry of Justice in Jerusalem on human trafficking. I just wanted you to know that I am making aliyah!!! I will do ulpan (an intensive Hebrew course) in Haifa, and afterwards, depending on my Hebrew and their funding situation, work on a project for the Urban Planning Department of the Technion on Haifa as a model for coexistence, and other work around geographical understanding of poverty in Israeli cities.

I would never have done this if it hadn't been for my year in Jerusalem, and I would never have been able to do that if it weren't for the support I received and really appreciated. I hope I can pass on the gift I received from you, in the long term in actual donations, but in the short term in sharing what I learned and supporting however I can the efforts of those working for social justice in Israel and elsewhere. Thank you so much.

Orli C. spent a year on the Habonim Dror Israel Workshop. Her mother tells us that she is now the Deputy Communications Director of the Sierra Club where she spends her days trying to move the country beyond coal and towards clean energy. She is also the producer and host of Sierra Club Radio, syndicated to over 40 stations around the country.

***Again, much thanks to each of you for your ongoing support for the Fund and its grantees!**