



The Jewish Fund Teen Board just completed its first year of programming! The Teen Board is a collaborative philanthropy group providing Jewish teens from the Metro Detroit area the opportunity to learn about grantmaking and philanthropy. In 2014-2015, 29 Teen Board members representing 15 high schools and 11 congregations, granted \$50,000. This report is about who they are, what they did and how they did it.

---

## The Teen Board Experience

*By: Adam Cohn, Jack Israel, Michael Krivichkin and Lucie Rosenthal*

The Teen Board has been a very fun and educational experience. Before applying, none of us had much of a background in philanthropy or the philanthropic process. Being accepted to the program was super exciting. During the Fall Retreat, we played a lot of getting to know each other games, did team building activities and started to get a feel for the type of environment that we would be working in for the year. The first thing we had to do as a group was to choose what issues we wanted to focus on. Once we did that, we created our mission statement and sent out Request for Proposals. We all had to find at least one non-profit to send it to. We then reviewed grant proposals and narrowed down our selection by having an intense discussion. From there, we went on site visits to get a feel for the different organizations. The meeting where we had to make the final decisions on which grants to award was full of extremely passionate discussion. Everyone felt strongly about a different organization, so it was extremely difficult to make a decision. However, by working together, and using consensus decision making techniques, we were able to finalize our choices in a way everyone could support and feel good about. In the end, we decided on four amazing organizations. Overall, the Teen Board experience was one unlike any other. It was enjoyable, informative and exciting! All of the teens on the Board worked very well together and we learned so much about ourselves while being able to give back to the community.



## 2014-2015 Jewish Fund Teen Board Mission Statement

As the Jewish Fund Teen Board, we will assist community organizations that strive to support families in creating a healthy environment in which to raise their children. To accomplish this objective, we focus our grantmaking on projects in two areas: those promoting early childhood health and kindergarten readiness, and effective family communication in order to decrease substance abuse among youth.

---

### The Difficulty in Making our Choices

*By: Brian Colton, Sam Gendelman, Aviv Lis and Emily Stillman*

**B**eing on the first ever Jewish Fund Teen Board gave us an experience unlike any before. 29 teens from all over Metro Detroit were given the responsibility of granting \$50,000 to organizations across the region. The decisions we made here will be seen throughout the community. Obviously the stakes were high. Despite this, we were able to work together as a group to come to a consensus on all decisions. Yes, there were times when some of us disagreed with each other, but like a true group, we resolved these issues. Everyone's voice was heard and everyone's opinion was valued. In the end, we felt good and redeemed with our final decisions. We felt that we made a difference. Our experience has added to our character and maturity.



## Early Childhood Health & Kindergarten Readiness

By: Carolyn Cohn, Avi Greenbaum, Kyle Rechter and Brittany Tapper

Less than 50% of kids in our region are ready for kindergarten when they enter school. Many kids who live in this area are affected by poverty, which is one of the main reasons they are not prepared to enter school. By age three, a child living in poverty will hear 30 million fewer words than his/her peers. Because more than 90% of the brain's connections are made in the first three years of life, the Teen Board recognized just how important it was to focus on ways to support the young children of Metro Detroit. Caregiver engagement and quality education are key elements in preparing children for school.

The Teen Board made two grants to organizations working to address this issue:

**Starfish Family Services:** \$9,500 to support the Inkster Family Literacy Movement which seeks to bring about a social change movement designed to enhance the literacy skills of both children and their parent/caregiver in metro Detroit families.

**The Guidance Center:** \$12,500 to support Get Up and Go! A program which creates literacy and sensory bags for children to keep at home in order to support toddlers and preschoolers that are at-risk and/or disadvantaged so they can be successful in kindergarten.



## Family Communication and Youth Substance Abuse

*By: Cooper Bellinson, Oren Lerner, Emily Levin and Eden Lichterman*

**W**e chose our second grant making priority on substance abuse because this issue is very apparent among teenagers in our community. We had heard recent reports of widespread heroin use in our local area. This knowledge heightened our awareness of the issue and made us want to do something about it.

As highschoolers, we see this issue every day in school and the negative impact it has on our peers. By contributing to the fight against substance abuse, we hope to make a positive impact on society.

We believe that by strengthening family relationships, kids will be more inclined to talk to their family and friends about their issues, rather than turn to substances. We are proud to fund two amazing programs in this area:

**JARC:** \$10,500 to support the Link Up Empowerment Program in nurturing independence, healthy development and deterring substance abuse for young adults and teens with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities by providing personalized coaching and training. It also will educate the staff who work with them, their families and the community.

**Ruth Ellis Center:** \$17,500 to support the Family Preservation and Acceptance Project which will work to increase family acceptance of LGBTQ youth in order to prevent and/or address substance abuse issues.





## 2014-2015 Teen Board Members

Carly Abrahams	Samuel Gendelman	Emily Levin
Cooper Bellinson	Taylor Golden-Wise	Eden Lichterman
Nick Bellinson	Livvy Gordon	Kyle Rechter
Cooper Brovenick	Avi Greenbaum	Lucie Rosenthal
Adam Cohn	Jack Israel	Annie Schechter
Carolyn Cohn	Jane Jacobs	Dani Silverman
Brian Colton	Brandon Karr	Emily Stillman
Ben Epstein	Michael Krivichkin	Caroline Strauss
	Oren Lerner	

## Teen Board Leadership Council Members

Kendall Coden | Aviv Lis | Brittany Tapper | Connor Tukul

## Staff of The Jewish Fund

Martha Goldberg, Teen Board Coordinator | Margo Pernick, Executive Director

## Chair of The Jewish Fund

Karen Sosnick Schoenberg

## Vice-Chair of The Jewish Fund

Nancy Grosfeld

[thejewishfund.org/teenboard](http://thejewishfund.org/teenboard)



The Teen Board is a project of The Jewish Fund. The Jewish Fund was established in 1997 from the sale proceeds of Sinai Hospital to the Detroit Medical Center. Sinai Hospital was a Jewish community funded facility that grew into one of metropolitan Detroit's top health care institutions. As a legacy of Sinai Hospital, The Jewish Fund continues the tradition of assuring quality and compassionate care for those in need in Metropolitan Detroit.



The Jewish Fund Teen Board is proud to be a part of the Foundation Board Incubator, a project of the Jewish Teen Funders Network, which is generously funded by Laura Lauder and the Maimonides Fund.