

2010 ANNUAL REPORT

ALEPH

Alliance for Jewish Renewal

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2010 Highlights

- The **Bet Midrash** continues to develop two streams of study: Preparatory courses (Mechinah) are designed both for applicants to our ordination programs and advanced lay students, and Continuing Education courses serve OHALAH members.
- **C-DEEP** launched its fourth cohort of Kol Zimra and sponsored an alumni retreat for graduates of its first three programs.
- ALEPH provided **on-site community consultation** to P'nai Or Philadelphia, Chadeish Yameinu in Santa Cruz, and new affiliate Chochmat HaLev in the San Francisco Bay Area. **Community Affiliates** joined from California and North Carolina, and conversations began with five potential affiliates in Australia, California, and Montana.
- ALEPH led its third **birth-right israel/Taglit tour** in August, where 40 inspired young adults visited with ALEPH affiliate Nava Tehila and with Rabbis for Human Rights, in addition to exploring all the holy and historical sites you'd expect. Trip leaders rabbinic student Ilan Glazer and Sarah Beck-Berman enchanted the tour with daily drumming, chanting, and song.
- **Kallah** found a spectacular site near Los Angeles, at the University of Redlands campus, with beautiful grounds, fabulous food, and apartment style



housing – and is planning for another great event June 27- July 3, 2011.

- **OHALAH** now has close to 190 rabbis and cantors and the Rabbinic Pastors Association is growing under its umbrella.
- Eighty-two rabbinic, cantorial, and rabbinic pastor students are now enrolled in the **ALEPH Ordination Programs**. In January 2010, nine rabbis and two cantors were ordained at OHALAH 12.
- ALEPH's **HASHPA'AH spiritual direction program** now has an accredited D.Min. option.
- **Ruach Ha'Aretz** went bi-coastal this year, offering its bi-annual "Signature Retreat" in the East and West, while continuing to provide administrative support for Kol Zimra of C-DEEP, the ALEPH Sage-ing" Project, Smicha Week, HASHPA'AH of the ALEPH Ordinations Programs, and its own Wisdom School.
- The **ALEPH Sage-ing® Mentorship Program** held two weeklong trainings: one in May in Colorado and the other in October at the Pearlstone Retreat and Conference Center in Maryland. The latter was a gathering of the first cohort seeking certification in the **ALEPH Sage-ing® Mentorship Program**. In addition, Sage-ing® was taught for three weeks as a regular part of the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center's senior program.



Pursuing Tikkun Olam

In pursuing tikkun olam, ALEPH and its leaders:

- participated in the **National Religious Coalition on Creation Care's** Washington Week on February 22, with faith leaders from around the country. ALEPH and other faith based activists urged immediate and effective action to stop global climate change and protect our nation's forests and creatures.
- joined forty faith-based and ecologically focused groups in urging Congress to pass the **Clean Limits and Energy for America's Renewal (CLEAR) Act**, S.2877 in April.
- endorsed the **Fellowship in Prayer 60th Anniversary Conference** in June.
- signed onto the Interfaith letter to Congress in support of the **Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)**.
- signed onto a letter supporting the 2011 appropriations request for the **President's teen pregnancy prevention initiative**, along with over 100 other progressive and faith based organizations.
- joined over 250 rabbis, cantors, educators, and other community leaders from all over North America in expressing **concern over the Hyatt Corporation's treatment of its workers**.
- supported the **Uniting American Families Act (UAFA)** to give American citizens and permanent residents in bi-national same-sex relationships the right to sponsor their foreign spouse or partner for a green card.
- joined **The Shalom Center's** call for Jews to observe **Shabbat Noach**, October 8-9, 2010, as **Earth Healing Shabbat**.
- partnered with **Mayyim Hayyim** on its Mikveh Conference, October 10-12, 2010, in Boston.
- joined OHALAH in supporting **Women of the Wall** in October by signing onto a letter to Israeli officials supporting the right of all Jews to pray in accordance with their own customs at the Kotel.
- joined the **Gender, Poverty and Foreign Assistance Working Group** on October 29, requesting a meeting to discuss how investment in women and girls will be prioritized and implemented within the new Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development.
- signed onto a letter in November on behalf of low-income communities and communities of color,

urging the Senate to oppose legislation blocking President Obama and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from enforcing the **Clean Air Act** to fight global warming.

- participated in a coalition promoting passage of the **Paycheck Fairness Act** to help end gender-based pay discrimination in November.
- participated in CLAL's "**Rabbis Without Borders Fellowship Program**" through Rabbi Marcia Prager, Director and Dean of the ALEPH Ordination Programs, and ALEPH rabbinical student Elyse Seidner Joseph.



The ALEPH Core in 2010

The Bet Midrash's Mechinah Program for advanced learners, applicants, and potential applicants to our ordination programs presented an overview of "Jewish Renewal & Reb Zalman's Thought," taught by Rabbi Leana Moritt. In "Wondering and Oneness: An Introduction to Reading the Rabbis," Rabbi Natan Margalit guided students in decoding *Mishnah Brakhot*. "Introduction to Biblical Hebrew" with Rabbi Bob Freedman was so successful that a second section will be offered in Winter 2011.

The Continuing Education Program for OHALAH members and other *klei kodesh* convened a discussion and working group on the nature of Jewish Renewal Conversions. Guided by Rabbi Daniel Siegel, the first session was addressed by Reb Zalman, with participants responding over the following three weeks.

The **Bet Midrash ReSources Catalog** added two new books on Hassidic masters, *A Heart Afire* and *A Merciful God*, co-authored by Reb Zalman and Netanel Miles-Yepetz, available to members at reduced prices at www.aleph.com. The electronic *Machzor Kol Koreh v.1.2* was used as a template for services in three communities. More files are being added to the electronic download store on at www.alephcanada.ca, where a new shopping cart makes the process simple.

R. Daniel Siegel's major editing projects include Reb Zalman's *Davvenology* for publication, a siddur and leaders manual for *shiva minyanim*, and selected student *t'shuvot* (legal opinions). In addition, we are exploring the possibility of including a certificate in lay leadership skills as part of the Mechinah Program.



ALEPH Core continued

Kallah 2011 promises to be even more special than usual. We are excited to be in Southern California, nestled in the majestic mountains on a beautiful campus with a vibrant local Jewish community. We are thrilled to be receiving dozens of high-quality class proposals on Jewish prayer and ritual, personal practice, psycho-spiritual development, text study, tikkun olam, the visual and performing arts, and more. We are putting together evening and Shabbat programming that you will not want to miss, including theater productions, interfaith mystical ritual, dance, song, and more. Kallah traditions such as the healing center,



Kallah 2011 site: University of Redlands

bookstore, shuk, and special programming for toddlers through the Keshet 30-somethings will return, along with our Teen Program, which premiered last Kallah to rave reviews. Hope to see you and your whole family there!



Professional Associations

OHALAH now has close to 190 rabbis and cantors, and the Rabbinic Pastors Association is growing under its umbrella. OHALAH hosted its 12th Annual Conference in January 2010, this time in St. Louis. In response to concerns voiced at the annual meeting, the Tikkun Olam committee revamped the Resolutions process and subsequently a resolution combating anti-gay rhetoric was approved. The Board issued statements opposing the Rotem Bill (regarding the lack of recognition of non-orthodox conversions in Israel),

in protest of the threatened day of Koran burning, and in support of the Global Day of Learning. The lively OHALAH discussions-on-line continue to provide a uniquely fertile ground for a wide variety of thought. In October, groundbreaking news was made with the formation of the Circle of Presidents, consisting of the OHALAH president and presidents of the Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform rabbinical associations all in support of the newly formed Rabbis for Women of the Wall. We look forward to welcoming rabbis, cantors, rabbinic pastors, and students to the 13th Conference, returning to the Boulder area in January of 2011, in honor of Reb Zalman and in celebration of the acquisition of the Renewal Archives by the University of Colorado.

The **Rabbinic Pastors Association** (RPA) is continuing its dialogue with the National Association of Jewish Chaplains regarding certification for ALEPH Rabbis and Rabbinic Pastors as it furthers the image of Rabbinic Pastors in the Jewish world.



Ordination Programs

Eighty-two rabbinic, cantorial, and rabbinic pastor students are now enrolled in the **ALEPH Ordination Programs**. Nine rabbis and two cantors were ordained in 2010, and, with great joy, we look forward to the ordination of seven new rabbis, two rabbinic pastors and one hazzan in 2011. The HASHPA'AH program will ordain seventeen students in 2012, and due to popular demand, the third cohort will begin in January 2011. Twenty students are joining the ordination programs this summer/fall season, our largest entering enrollment ever.

An Historic Moment!

New York Theological Seminary (NYTS) and ALEPH Ordination programs signed a memorandum of understanding inaugurating a unique partnership. The agreement initiates a shared and coordinated program of studies leading to the award of the NYTS Doctor of Ministry for Jewish clergy, accredited by the Association of Theological Schools.

Work completed in ALEPH Ordination Programs may be transferred to NYTS, allowing students to complete projects in spiritual direction or liturgical arts. Candidates participate in the NYTS Multi-faith track while NYTS and ALEPH faculty serve as project and thesis advisors. Students and ordained clergy from ALEPH and other seminaries may apply. Admissions are processed on a rolling basis. Information is available from Rabbi Steven Silvern, alephadmin@yahoo.com.



Affiliated Projects

In July **C-DEEP** initiated the fourth Kol Zimra training for rabbis, cantors and lay leaders as Chant Leaders. Twenty-four extraordinary souls from the US and Canada will spend 18 months exploring the role of spiritual practice as the foundation of their holy service. As they immerse themselves in the art of chant they study Torah with heart, body, mind, and spirit and build a loving community of seekers.

In August C-DEEP sponsored an Alumni Retreat for the graduates of Kol Zimra 1, 2, and 3. Twenty-seven participants celebrated together for a week in ecstatic practice and transformative ritual in the high desert outside of Santa Fe at beautiful Synergia Ranch. Everyone delighted in the connection between new friends and old spirit-buddies.

Rabbi Shefa Gold, the director of C-DEEP, continues to visit many of the graduates of Kol Zimra as a scholar-in-residence, supporting them in bringing devotional, ecstatic practice to their communities.

Sage-ing® Co-directors Rabbis Victor and Nadya Gross taught Part Two, on end of life issues, in Colorado, May 9-14, 2010, which Co-directors Rabbi Shaya Isenberg and Bahira Sugarman attended. This training featured Reb Zalman in a cameo appearance via tele-conference.

The first of two intensives of Part Three was taught by co-directors Rabbi Shaya Isenberg, Bahira Sugarman, and Rabbis Nadya and Victor Gross October 10-17, 2010 at the Pearlstone Retreat and Conference Center. Reb Zalman also was featured in a cameo appearance via Skype®.

Part Three is the certification part of the **ALEPH Sage-ing® Mentorship Program**. This first cohort

continues their studies throughout the year, meeting four additional times via teleconference, meeting monthly in chevruta, and engaging in community projects. A final five-day intensive is scheduled for October 2011 in Colorado.

As a regular part of Isabella Freedman’s senior program, Sage-ing® was taught at Elat Chayyim for one week in June with Lynne Iser and for two weeks in July with Rabbis Nadya and Victor Gross .

Co-director Lynne Iser taught as part of the Hiddur Training Team at the UJA Federation Conference, Spiritual Needs of Jews at Midlife. Her presentation was entitled, “To Grow in Wisdom: The Practice of Spiritual Eldering.”

Ruach Ha’Aretz offered two summer “signature” retreats this year, in response to the desire expressed at the ALEPH Leadership Summit for smaller, local retreats. The East Coast retreat, held at the Pearlstone Conference and Retreat Center in Reisterstown, MD, followed the fourth annual Smicha Week. The two weeks cemented a new relationship with a state of the art, kosher, Jewish retreat center. The ALEPH Sage-ing® Mentorship Training began there in October, as well. The West Coast retreat saw a loving return to the Bosh Baha’i Center in Santa Cruz, CA, where the local affiliated community, Chadeish Yameinu, offered generous support for our program’s needs. The Ruach Kids programs at both retreats continued our tradition of amazing experiences for kids of all ages – and introduced new, young, inspiring, and creative program directors. The Ruach Advisory Board is already hard at work planning the 2012 retreats – when we will test the bi-coastal approach again. Concurrent with the summer retreats, Ruach administered the start of Kol Zimra 4, in Albuquerque, NM, a Kol Zimra Alumni retreat in Santa Fe, NM, the first Wisdom School Alumni reunion and the ongoing retreats for the Wisdom School second cohort in Colorado.

ALEPH FINANCIAL SUMMARY

| | 2007-2008 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Total Income | \$1,366,312 | \$1,583,247 | \$1,249,539 |
| Total Expenses | 1,275,448 | 1,503,797 | 1,190,723 |
| Net Income | \$90,864 | \$79,450 | \$58,816 |