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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Task Force on Jewish Identity and Continuity was established to address issues about the continued vitality of the Chicago Jewish community, with respect to changes taking place within the American Jewish community and American society at large. Objective measures of Jewish identification show that Chicago, the third largest Jewish community in North America, ranks higher in affiliation and observance rates than the American Jewish community as a whole. Chicago, however, is not immune to the general forces in American society. A rise in intermarriage rates among our younger age groups, and weakened attachments to the American Jewish community and to Israel are reflections of changes affecting Chicago as well.

Continuity, in the context of this report, deals with the challenge to this generation of Jews to insure the future of this community and improve Jewish life by expanding the breadth of individual involvement in Jewish life. Jews need an organized community to maintain continuity; the community needs involved and committed Jews. In essence the report asserts that "continuity" will be guaranteed by the success of the involvement of individual Jews and families in Jewish life, their involvement in a strong Jewish community through its institutions and organizations, and their kinship with Jews living in Israel and those elsewhere throughout the world.

The Task Force was comprised of representatives of fourteen major organizations in the Chicago Jewish community. In addition to its own deliberations and review of information from other Jewish population studies, the Task Force sponsored eleven community based forums throughout metropolitan Chicago. These forums invited local residents and organizations to address issues of Jewish identity and continuity as they affect their communities. In addition, an Israel Experience Committee was constituted as part of Chicago's participation as one of several communities in a national pilot program to increase the number of American Jewish youth who visit Israel.

The work of the Task Force has established three major goals:

1. Strengthening the Jewish identification of Jewish families and individuals.

Historically, the Jewish family has been the major transmitter of Jewish beliefs and values. While a high level of identification and involvement exists among intact families with children, social and economic forces have contributed to increasing family fragmentation and growth in the numbers of alternative households. At the individual level, increasing numbers of Jews show less interest in Jewish considerations and having Jewish connections in their lives.

The report acknowledges the importance of Jewish education as a key component in developing resources for Jewish continuity. The report maintains the need to take a perspective that recognizes that individuals and families may change their Jewish identification over the life cycle. It recommends programmatic involvement of individuals and families as early and as often as possible, especially at transitional points in their lives when they are open to changes. It recognizes the need to enhance the Jewish identification and involvement of those families and individuals who are already involved in Jewish life. We need to build upon areas of success and implement new programs which will enrich the lives of those who identify and are involved as Jews. This can only have an even more positive impact upon them in their development as individuals and families.

However, the report also recommends that need to reach out to target groups who demonstrate low levels of involvement and show the potential for involvement. It is the view that by targeting these groups, we can provide greater insurance as to their involvement in the future. These groups include: young married couples without children; families with young children; adolescents; college-age youth; young single adults; and single parents. The report also acknowledges the needs

of special populations including the disabled and Jewish refugees primarily from the former Soviet Union.

2. Strengthening the focus and effectiveness of Jewish organizations in fostering “Continuity.”

Although the rate of organizational affiliation in Chicago has remained constant for the past decade, the expectations and goals of many have been affected by the following: changes within the Jewish family, increased geographic dispersion, a generalized search for personal meaning and a more utilitarian approach to organizational involvement. These factors have also weakened tendencies toward involvement with Jewish communal institutions and the Jewish people as a whole.

This report recognizes that all communal organizations have the potential to involve individuals and families, and thereby provide Jewish meaning to peoples' lives. Synagogues in particular have a unique role in maintaining our traditions and beliefs. The report recommends that organizations evaluate their effectiveness in the area of continuity; what was adequate one or two generations ago may not meet fully address needs today. Meeting individual and community needs will require a high degree of collaboration and willingness to engage in organizational introspection and change. The report notes that to achieve these goals, organizations may need to evaluate parts of their structures and relationships and then secure professional staffing trained to facilitate changes with a view to meeting the overriding needs of our community more effectively.

3. Stimulating connections between families, individuals, and organizations.

A Jewish community is more than the sum of its people, its organizations, and institutions: it is the connections that exist between them. These connections

provide not only a sense of belonging and meaning, but a feeling that together, the community can respond to the challenges it faces. The report notes that our community's continued vitality depends upon reactivating a sense of involvement in neighborhood institutions, developing attachments to the metropolitan Chicago Jewish community, and fostering an enduring commitment to Israel and Jews throughout the world.

The report recommends a number of simultaneous efforts, including: neighborhood building that involves joint activity among our many organizations, the development and meshing of local and city-wide goals, and the development of educational and informational programs that will foster more direct contacts among Jews in Chicago and elsewhere.

Finally, the report acknowledges that the efforts of the Task Force to this point represent the completion of the first phase of work. The focus should now turn to the implementation of recommendations, a process which should be monitored along with actual program implementation. This will ensure that the continuity agenda continues to be promoted. Some of the recommendations are in fact being implemented simultaneously with the completion of the report. The Task Force recommends that a group comprised of representatives from the Task Force continue to meet on a periodic basis to modify or develop new recommendations as changes within the community arise over time.

I. COMING TO TERMS WITH THE ISSUES

Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, You shall be Holy; for the Lord your God is holy. [Lev. 19:1-2]

Akabya ben Machalalel: Keep three things in mind and you will escape the toils of wickedness. Know whence you came, whither you are going and to whom you will have to give an account of yourself. [Pirke Avot]

"Israelites of Chicago. What have you done for preserving our faith and transmitting the noble bequests of ages to posterity...? Indeed, indifference and dissension, ignorance and shallowness have long enough eaten the very marrow and root of our sacred inheritance..." [1876, Jewish Education Society of Chicago]

"We share in a moment of extremely serious challenge -- and of remarkable opportunity...The challenge, hardly new to American Jewry...is to renew and strengthen Jewish commitment despite the formidable obstacles posed to that effort by our society and our culture...this is (also) a moment of special opportunity...if we look at our problems squarely in the face...and do not fail to appreciate the immense resources stored up in our institutions and ourselves." [1991- Arnold Eisen]

These quotations, taken from different points in Jewish history are significant for setting the stage for addressing the issues of identity and continuity. They point out that we need to look to the past for guidance - that we are part of a history of a special people with a religious tradition that has enabled us to survive for thousands of years; that the challenges we face today deal both with factors internal and external to the Jewish community; that to address these challenges we need to take a local perspective, looking at our unique situation as part of the Chicago Jewish community; that we need to look at our resources within our institutions and ourselves as well as issues; and that even within the Chicago Jewish community, this is not the first time -- nor will it be the last, when concern about our future will be raised.

In order to understand fully the challenges we face, we need to understand fully the problems and how to define our task and purpose.

A. Framing the Issues

The issues are clear. Troublesome trends, identified by the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey, show a stable Jewish population as contrasted with a growing American population, increasing rates of intermarriage, and a loss of interest and involvement in traditional Jewish lifestyles among members of the baby boomer generation. The result: significant numbers of Jews now live beyond the pale of Jewish family and communal life.

Fortunately, Chicago's Jewish community is not a microcosm of American Jewry. The Chicago Jewish Population Study, designed to be comparable with the national survey, shows significant and positive differences. Although there is an upward trend in intermarriage rates among younger married couples, Chicago has not reached the national rate of intermarriage in the past decade. The Chicago Jewish community has actually grown in size, and its general level of involvement in Jewish life has held relatively constant. These characteristics show Chicago to be one of the most vibrant of major American Jewish communities in keeping with its reputation as a strong, well-structured community, which gives generously of its resources to the Jewish world.

However, given signs that indicate a weakening of peoples' attachments to the community, the question must be asked:

"What can be done to assure that the Chicago Jewish community of tomorrow will be at least as vital as it is today?"

The response will be related in part to the terms we use to define the issue.

Throughout the past three decades, the issue of passing our traditions to the next generation has been addressed under different rubrics, such as identity and survival. The heading most currently favored on the agendas of national and local Jewish organizations is continuity. Each of these catchwords embraces a different range of meanings.

Identity was the term in almost universal use in the 1970's. It had credibility within the social sciences and continues to have credence in the fields of social research and policy formulation. While we continue to use the terms "Jewish Identity" and "Jewish Identification" as in the very name of the Task Force itself, identity is possibly too neutral to rally leadership and the community. Further, Jewish identity, although embedded within a social framework, appears to focus too much on the individual and not the community.

Survival was never viewed as a neutral term because of its reference to the Holocaust and because it was intended to motivate the Jewish community to action. Yet this intent makes us reconsider the validity of the term to help generate a commitment to sustaining the American Jewish community when just 50 years ago the European Jewish community was all but obliterated. The term is found wanting on three counts:

- Invoking the Holocaust may diminish the unique quality of that tragedy.
- The echoes of the Holocaust do not resonate with the younger generations of Jews -- sadly enough, we must recognize this as an example of their distance from an epoch-making event in Jewish history.
- The issue of survival is insufficient. We are confident that American Jewry will survive, even if there is a decline in numbers. Our concern is enhancing the quality of Jewish life so that it may effectively speak to the coming generations.

Continuity is the term that now has the attention of the organized American Jewish community -- including Chicago. Unfortunately, there is no agreement or consensus on the many meanings -- or strategies attributed to this term. For example, continuity is often used to mean Jewish education, which is universally agreed to be a necessary element in fostering Jewish continuity.

A useful aspect of the term is that it offers a variety of perspectives that look at the cultural, religious, and organizational areas of Jewish life. Most importantly, continuity requires us to look at the past as well as the future. Indeed, the roots of the contemporary dilemma about the direction of the American Jewish community lie in our Jewish and American pasts. At the same time, we must recognize that American Jewry can decide its own future. As some have observed, the decision to live Jewishly in modern society is one which individuals can make every day.

Continuity also covers a far broader range of activities that refers to the general condition of Jews in the world.

This report's use of the term continuity incorporates both quantitative and qualitative applications. As the Task Force initiated its activities, the view was expressed that continuity should mean that, in the next generation, this community of more than a quarter of a million Jews will have significant numbers of Jews who lead fulfilling, Jewishly involved lives.

The Task Force agenda addresses fundamental issues about the quality of Jewish life in Chicago. In effect, the agenda challenges this generation of Jews to improve the quality of Jewish life in ways that will expand the breadth and depth of involvement in Jewish communal life and hence, to increase the probability of a vibrant, involved Chicago Jewish community in the next generation.

Indeed, the Task Force was purposely structured -- and its processes framed -- to generate interest in the issues of identity and continuity, and give the community its initial opportunity to contribute and exchange views.

During its meetings, the Task Force members used the term continuity in a variety of ways. Three of its most frequent uses were to describe one of the following action outcomes: enhanced individual commitment to living Jewishly; strong individual involvement in Jewish

communal life; and the existence of a strong Jewish community. The sense of community is an important dimension in addressing the issue of continuity, because it is through community organizations that continuity is sustained and expressed. As Jonathan Woocher noted in his keynote address to the Task Force:

"Although we hope to ultimately inspire individual Jews, this can be done by having vital communities, which create the experience and context in and through which Jews will come to feel their Jewishness as something compelling enough to justify investing their time and energy."

This concept of community has four components. First is the recognition that American Jews associate community with organizational life. Since modern Jewish communal life in North America is built around voluntary associations, it is commonly held that without organizations, we would not be able to act as a group or to fulfil our collective aspirations. Second is a geographical identification of community whether it be a local neighborhood, or an entire metropolitan area. Third, Jews throughout history have had a notion of community that transcends geographical boundaries to incorporate a sense of kinship through a common past and destiny (Am Yisrael). Finally, since communities are sustained both by their institutions and the allegiances of individuals, community also relates to the people who consider themselves part of it and who contribute to its perpetuation, privately as individuals and publicly as participants in its organizations.

B. Format

Although the major interest in any report is its recommendations, it is important for readers to travel a path that raises the questions and suggestions that illuminate the issues. Accordingly, this report is organized to provide readers with a sense of the process by which the recommendations were reached.

The following sections are:

- II. Goals and Objectives
- III. Process and Methodology
- IV. Key Findings
- V. Recommendations

II. GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Task Force was established to meet several objectives and, in the course of its deliberations, developed several others. Prime among them is the overriding objective of:

Developing strategies to assist our communal organizations to assure the continued vitality of the Chicago Jewish community both in terms of the quality of Jewish life and the numbers of people participating in it.

Key ancillary goals that emerged include:

- To review and compare the major trends found in the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey and the Chicago Jewish Population Study to appropriately frame the issues and communicate them to the local community;
- To allow the entire community to express concerns and raise pertinent issues so that they might be placed on the communal agenda;
- To identify target groups and the strategies most likely to boost their Jewish identity/involvement; and
- To raise and address pertinent value questions and issues dealing with identification and continuity.

III. PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

Several principles served as the basis for developing the Task Force's structure and process.

- The Task Force was not seen as a permanent body, but rather as a group convened around a specific issue; the success of the Task Force will be measured by the communal activities it generates. (The recommendations, however, do call for maintaining an ongoing group to review the implementation, share programmatic ideas and concepts and develop modified/new recommendations as needed.)
- It was necessary to balance broad concerns, such as developing consensus, definitions of key terms, i.e., "Jewish identification," "affiliation," etc., with the need to develop recommendations for concrete programs.
- There is need to recognize that the issues of continuity and identity are not subject to instant panacea. Hence, any solutions proposed may require both short and long-term approaches that may suggest changes in organizational behavior and culture: A corollary principle is the need to establish priorities for proposing programs that may require further study or for which sufficient resources are currently unavailable. (This may be a difficult premise to accept for action-oriented individuals and organizations who believe that they have a thorough understanding of what the problems are and what the solutions should be.)
- Because the issues of identity and continuity cut across the entire Jewish community, Task Force membership -- and efforts -- should involve a broad array of organizational constituencies, with the understanding that time and size limitations will impose some restrictions.

- It was recognized that Task Force efforts are part of an ongoing effort rightfully being carried out by many organizations engaged in continuity issues. The Task Force report is best viewed and read as a snapshot in time that looks to the past to understand how issues developed, at the present to identify where we are, and to the future so that our community might move ahead.

In addition, the Task Force tried to insure that it would examine and involve the different facets of continuity and community: Jewish education; religious observance; Israel experience; neighborhood and metropolitan area communities; the individuals, families and groups which are the building blocks of Jewish community and continuity; and attention to the institutions and organizations which serve as the glue and enablers of Jewish community and continuity.

A. The Task Force: Composition and Structure

- Fourteen Chicago area Jewish organizations were invited to appoint representatives to The Task Force;
- The Task Force worked as a committee of the whole. A professional sub-group of Jewish professionals whose organizations are represented on the Task Force met separately to consider specific issues;
- After Chicago was selected as one of one of a few North American Jewish communities to participate in the Charles R. Bronfman Foundation's national pilot program to stimulate Jewish youth to visit Israel, the Task Force formed an Israel Experience Committee. Comprised of members from local organizations that sponsor or are involved in Israel programs for teens and young adults, this group works directly with the Charles R. Bronfman Foundation. The group will continue to meet after the publication of this report.

B. Regional Community Forums

Chicago has numerous congregations and organizations that affect and engage many thousands of our people. Some of these organizations are directly involved with continuity issues; others are not. Still, many of them are not formally connected to any other groups in the area. In addition, Jewish Chicago is dispersed over a metropolitan area comprised of individual communities and neighborhoods that display both similarities and differences.

To reach out to the people and organizations in our community, the Task Force scheduled eleven forums throughout the Chicago area (see **Chart I**) to obtain their views and make them aware of its efforts. Held in areas of concentrated Jewish population, the forums were publicized through organizational networks as well as the general community media. Prior to each forum, staff met with the leadership of area organizations to determine how best to structure the agenda so that it would generate items which could serve as a basis for Task Force recommendations/deliberations.

Each forum started with demographic presentations about the area, based largely upon the Chicago Jewish Population Study. These presentations were followed by discussions about the trends of Jewish identity and continuity in these areas.

Although the promotion and overall agenda of the forums were similar, their content varied by region. The high degree of consistency between issues raised in the "suggested" agenda items and those raised by people in attendance at the forums may well indicate that the relevant issues were discussed.

The findings of these forums are discussed in Section IV of this report.

C. Organizational Questionnaires

Questionnaires were sent to more than 100 Jewish organizations and congregations in the Chicago area. Information was sought about the organizations' purposes, aims, constituents, and central issues. This was viewed as an approach that would augment other information about communal resources. Nearly 30 organizations responded to the survey, although the quality of response varied significantly.

In addition, organizations that participated in the Task Force were asked to submit descriptions of "best community-related programs practices" to develop a sense of quality programs that might be replicated or emulated. Although the response was not large in numbers, the notion of continuing to publicize both local and national programs that have been found effective is a good one.

D. Population Study and Other Data Sources

The Task Force study incorporates information from a variety of sources, including Chicago's local Jewish population study, continuity reports from other communities, and the preliminary report from the national Continuity Study conducted under the auspices of the Council of Jewish Federations in cooperation with other national organizations.

April 13, 1994
Northwest Suburban JCC
(Buffalo Grove/ Long Grove Wheeling, Arlington Heights, Libertyville, Vernon Hills)

March 9, 1994
North Suburban JCC - Northbrook
(Glenview, Northbrook, Northfield)

April 20, 1994
North Suburban Synagogue Beth El - Highland Park
(Highland Park, Deerfield, Glencoe)

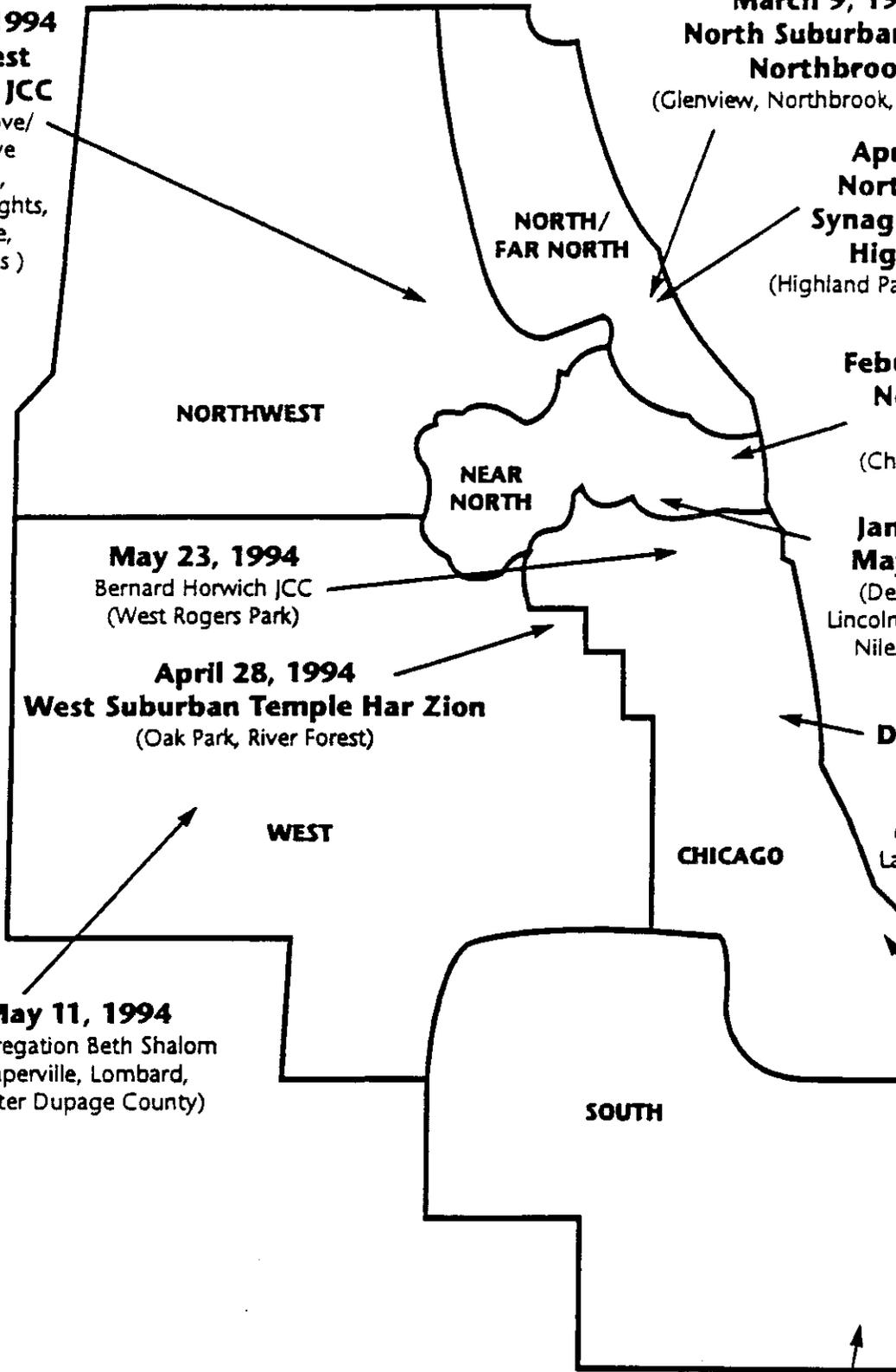
February 23, 1994
Northwestern University
(Chicago area college campuses)

January 31, 1994
Mayer Kaplan JCC
(Des Plaines, Evanston, Lincolnwood, Morton Grove, Niles, Skokie, Wilmette)

December 2, 1993
Anshe Emet Synagogue
(Edgewater, Uptown, Lakeview, North Center, Lincoln Park, Near North)

July 14, 1994
Congregation Rodfei Zedek
(Hyde Park, Kenwood)

March 10, 1994
Anita Stone JCC
(Homewood, Flossmoor, Olympia Fields, Park Forest, Glenwood)



NORTHWEST

**NORTH/
FAR NORTH**

**NEAR
NORTH**

May 23, 1994
Bernard Horwich JCC
(West Rogers Park)

April 28, 1994
West Suburban Temple Har Zion
(Oak Park, River Forest)

WEST

CHICAGO

May 11, 1994
Congregation Beth Shalom
(Naperville, Lombard, Greater Dupage County)

SOUTH

IV. KEY FINDINGS

A. The Framework

Often the prescriptions for "continuity" are based upon deeply held values which take priority over facts. What exists today should not be the sole determinant of our aspirations, our goals, or our views about the future. But as we formulate policy by building upon assets of our Jewish community life in Chicago or make changes, it is critical that there be a shared understanding of trends and characteristics within our community. Further, these trends need to be viewed in the context of changes within the American Jewish community and American society.

The findings are grouped into three basic areas which are essential to continuity:

Individuals and Families

In Jewish history, the family has been the building block of Jewish identity and the key transmitter of values from one generation to the next. However, even within the same individual or family, Jewish identity can change over a life time. Further, there have been changes in the family and household structures. Consequently, a life-cycle perspective can best define the critical periods during which Jewish identity issues can be influenced. From the life cycle approach we can identify specific target groups that merit particular consideration.

Organizational, Institutional, and Societal Changes

Jewish organizations and institutions are vehicles for realizing our collective goals and aspirations. Observers have pointed out that organized Jewish life over the centuries reflects the society in which Jews were living. American Judaism has been characterized by a strong voluntary organizational network, which has been viewed as a model by Jewish communities throughout the

world. One of the strengths of our Chicago Jewish community has been its strong organizational base. There is a need to assess how changes in individuals and families are affecting organized Jewish life and its relationship to the continuity agenda.

Community

Community is what connects individuals and families and organizations. Without a strong sense of community, Chicago Jewry will become fragmented. Community exists at various levels - local, metropolitan and international. There is overall concern that, at a time when American Jews are facing a major challenge vis-a-vis continuity, there are weakened attachments to community at the neighborhood and metropolitan levels. At the same time the entire American Jewish-Israel relationship is undergoing changes, which alter the nature and the strength of the connections between the two largest, strongest Jewish communities in the world.

B. The Chicago Jewish Community: A Comparative Perspective

Chicago is one of the largest Jewish communities in the North America, with its Jewish population now projected at 261,000. Only New York and Los Angeles are larger. Chicago's Jewish population actually increased by 10,000 Jews over the last three decades. Its Federation raises more funds than comparably sized Jewish communities and is second only to New York, with a Jewish population more than five times greater. Chicago continues to produce leadership for national and international Jewish organizations. Chicago is often looked to as a source of innovative ideas in Jewish communal programming. Further, although its population has become more geographically dispersed, many Chicago Jews still perceive themselves as a part of a metropolitan Jewish community.

Although a community's size does not determine the quality of Jewish life, a large Jewish community, like Chicago, with strong and varied institutions, organizations and neighborhoods, provides Jews more options to find meaningful Jewish niches for themselves and their families.

In a large Jewish community there are more opportunities for Jews to interact with Jews, and there is more likelihood that persons seeking Jewish marriage partners will find them. Three factors account for our Jewish community's population stability:

- Resettlement of Jews from the former Soviet Union. More than 24,000 Soviet Jews from the Former Soviet Union were resettled between 1976 and June 1996, second only to New York. This is a result of long term communal policy.
- Baby Boomlet-A result of demography, the baby boomlet accounts for the increase in births among adults of the baby boom generation who are now forming their own families. The proportion of Jewish children under six rose from 4.6% in 1981 to 8.0% in 1990.
- Movement of young Jewish adults to Chicago from the East and Midwest. They come for many reasons including employment, educational, and the presence of a sizeable Jewish community. The 1990 population study showed that 50% percent of all Jewish respondents and spouses aged 18 to 29 were not born in Chicago. One decade ago only 28% were not born here. In all age groups below 65, the percent of those born in Chicago is higher for 1990 than 1981, suggesting that those who move here when they were younger stayed in Chicago.

While Chicago will continue to attract young Jewish adults, its youth population may decline somewhat as the baby boom generation ages. However, overall, Chicago is expected to remain one of the largest Jewish communities in the United States.

Indicators of Jewish Identification

Size is only one way of looking at the community in the context of the American Jewish community. When looking at four dimensions of Jewish behavior--religious, communal-civic (primarily organizational) expressions of Jewish identification and involvement, connections to Israel, and Jewish education, Chicago compares favorably with the American Jewish Community

as a whole. The results are shown in **Table I**. At the same time, it is clear that even in Chicago, there is a wide range of expression of identification and involvement. On one hand, there is a group of involved Jews who affiliate with organizations and synagogues, are actively involved in synagogue life (attending at least monthly-which correlates with ritual practice), have visited Israel, and are engaged in Jewish philanthropy. At most, these represent a quarter of all of the households. They are the most involved. At the other extreme are the 15% of those who are not organizationally affiliated, do not participate in synagogue life, are not philanthropically involved, but may observe one or two home holidays. Between these two extremes are the 60% of Jewish households-who may involve themselves to a lesser degree than the committed, but certainly show greater level of identification than those only tangentially or not at all involved in Jewish community life.

Table I. Comparison of National and Chicago Jewish Identity Indicators

	Respondent (R)/ Entire Household (H)	Total % CJPS '90	Total% NJPS '90
RELIGIOUS PRACTICES			
Light Hanukkah Candles	H	84	74
Participate in Passover Seder	H	93	80
Fast on Yom Kippur	R	59	49
Attend Synagogue-Monthly or More Often	R	26	23
Attend Synagogue-Never	R	16	25
JEWISH CIVIC-ORGANIZATIONAL			
Current Synagogue Member	H	44	33
Previous Synagogue Member	H	20	22
Jewish Voluntary Work	R	30	18
Contributed to J. Philanthropy-1989	R	67	56
Belong to Jewish Organization	R	40	28
ISRAEL TIES			
Visited Israel	R	39	26
Have Family/Close Friends in Israel	R	37	25
JEWISH EDUCATION			
Formal J. Education in childhood	R	81	70
Participated in Adult J. Education	R	29	14

Total NJPS and CJPS refer to core Jewish households (i.e., with at least one Jewish person).

A key factor accounting for differences in Jewish identity in the national and local studies is whether households define themselves as Jews on a religious or secular basis. There is evidence to support those who argue that a religious basis of identity within the American context offers a surer prospect for continuity. Secular Jews are less likely to be involved in any specifically defined Jewish activities. The differences between secularly defined Jews and other Jewish households in Chicago are shown in **Table II**. Secular Jews are also less likely to have had a formal Jewish education, most of which takes place in a religious setting, i.e. congregation. Being a secular Jew today is different than it was several generations ago when there was still a strong immigrant culture and Yiddish could serve as a bind to other Jews and a plethora of Jewish institutions. Secular Jews even distance themselves geographically from the community. Fewer secular Jews live in areas with at least 1,000 Jewish households than the Jewish community at large, which is why only 7% of them maintain that all or almost all of their friends are Jewish. In the national study, nearly one out of every five persons interviewed fell into the secular Jewish category, whereas in Chicago, the proportion was less than one in twenty (or about 5%).

Table II. Comparison of Secular Respondents to All Chicago Jewish Households

	Secular Jews	Total CJPS '90
RELIGIOUS PRACTICES		
Light Hanukkah Candles	21	84
Participate in Passover Seder	49	93
Fast on Yom Kippur	17	59
Attend Synagogue-Monthly or More	1	26
Attend Synagogue-Never	54	16
JEWISH CIVIC-ORGANIZATIONAL		
Current Synagogue Member	3	44
Jewish Voluntary Work	2	30
Contributed to J. Philanthropy-1989	24	67
Belong to Jewish Organization	5	40
ISRAEL TIES		
Visited Israel	21	39
JEWISH SOCIAL TIES		
All or Almost All Friends Jewish	7	35
Live in Area of 1000+ J. Households	38	78
JEWISH EDUCATION		
Formal Jewish Education in Childhood	33	81
Participated in Adult Jewish Education	3	29

Only 14% of Chicago's Jews do not identify with a Jewish religious denomination. This may be due in part to Chicago's variety of religious institutions which can closely meet the needs of individuals regardless of residential location and religious orientation. It has strong Conservative, Reform, Orthodox-Traditional and Reconstructionist institutions.

Although a majority of American Jews and nearly all Chicago Jews define their identity in religious terms, for the most part religion does not have a major impact upon their lives. Nationally, it has been observed that Jews have a lower rate of religious participation and ritual observance than other religious groups in the United States, an observation that has held true for many decades. Within our Chicago Jewish community, the data are not as clear. While a majority of Jewish households are not congregationally affiliated, 84% of Jews attend synagogue at some times during the year. However, only 26% attend on a monthly or more frequent basis and less than one-quarter observe Shabbat regularly. It was observed during the Task Force meetings that there is an increased interest in spirituality among segments of the Jewish population which may not be readily apparent from the kind of surveys we undertake.

Jewish Education - A Factor in Continuity

Like the family, Jewish education is a strong factor in developing a Jewish identity. Misunderstandings continue to prevail about the inclusiveness of Chicago's formal Jewish education system; many believe that most Jews do not receive any formal Jewish education. However, Chicago's population study shows that at least four out of every five (81%) adults received formal Jewish education during their childhood (6-17) as compared with 70% nationally. The study also shows that a higher proportion of Chicago Jews received more years of Jewish education than the national average.

Similar percentages hold for Chicago Jewish youth. During the past decade, there has been a 33% increase in day school enrollment (from 3,000 to nearly 4,000), growing numbers of children involved in Jewish early childhood programs (projected at more than 6,000), and stable

supplementary school enrollment. The majority of Jewish youth continue to be enrolled in supplementary schools, however, their enrollment declines dramatically during the high school years. Analyses show that supplementary Jewish education during their childhood can have a meaningful impact upon adult Jewish identification and behavior, if it is pursued for a sufficient number of years (at least six according to one study).

During the past decade, the percentage of adults participating in adult Jewish education programs increased from 20% to 29%. This period was marked by a concomitant expansion of the opportunities for adult Jewish learning. The offerings range from formal study sessions-which make different demands upon the participant in terms of time and learning commitment-to more informal one-time events such as discussions, lectures, films, plays, etc. There has been more attention paid to what engages adults in Jewish learning, with the recognition that the younger adult population has had a more intense secular education, (more college and graduate school), a different family situation (more single adults as well as more dual spouse working families), and a less intensive Jewish background than the older generation of Chicago area Jews.

Accordingly, our community's effort to promote adult Jewish learning took some different forms to appeal to those who may have had a child-oriented Jewish education, which did not provide the adequate supports to live one's life fully as a Jew, such as the Melton Center, parent education programs, where the adult learns parallel with their children, and adult b'nai mitzvah in congregations. Further, there are increasing opportunities for adults to pursue learning in a group setting, at a pace and level that respects their needs. A number of Kollelim have opened within the past decade. Some congregations have created curricula for adult learning. Computer technology makes opportunities for adult learning that do not require the person to be present at a class (called Distance Learning). There is interest in educating leadership Jewishly and programs have been implemented to accomplish this objective. It is clear that many more organizations are offering opportunities for adult learning. We tend to underestimate the availability of such offerings and the willingness of institutions to meet the needs of learners. In 1994, the JUF News started publishing a list of adult learning opportunities directly before Rosh Hashanna to inform the community of the opportunities that exist. This is now being done annually.

The Dynamics of Changing Households and Families

Given the role of the Jewish family in identity development, changes in the family structure are of significant interest and concern. These changes include: more households which are different than the intact nuclear family; changes in family roles; increased fragmentation through divorce and remarriage; and more intermarriage. For the most part the trends do not represent sudden changes, but the continuation of changes noted in previous studies.

Although Chicago's Jewish community is different from many other communities, the major trends within Jewish households places Chicago squarely within what is seen in other communities. During a three decade period, the population remained stable, while at the same time the number of households increased by 23,000 (or nearly 25%) from 97,000 in 1970 to 120,000 in 1990.

The gradual pace of change, however, does not obviate the fact that significant change has occurred--and that the changes have implications for the way the institutions relate to households and how household members express their Jewish identity and relate to Jewish institutions. The 1990 study shows there are more households of singles, more households without children, and more elderly households. The population study shows the continuation of earlier trends--namely dual employment in the labor force and divorce/remarriage, and intermarriage. Both spouses are working in nearly 50% of all households with married couples, as much out of economic necessity as well as the issues of personal fulfillment. There are more husband-wife-children households which have experienced divorce. More than a quarter of our current Jewish youth will be involved in single parent households sometime during their lives.

Finally, there is the impact of intermarriage. In Chicago, the proportion of mixed marriages (i.e., when one partner is Jewish and one is not at the time of marriage) to all marriages involving at least one Jewish partner is lower than the American Jewish community as a whole: 20% in Chicago compared with 28% nationally. Further, local mixed marriages do represent a lower proportion of recent marriages than is seen nationally. The data show that an overwhelming majority (more than 7 out of 10) of marriages nationally involving a Jewish partner in the period 1985-1990 were mixed marriages, compared with about 4 in 10 locally. This does not obviate the concern about

Jewish identification, however, with the growing rate and numbers of mixed marriages. The dynamics of mixed marriage upon Jewish identity are discussed later.

Geographic Mobility and Dispersion

Historically, the movements of Chicago's Jewish population have been accompanied by the relocation of Jewish institutions, sometimes moving intact, sometimes only in name. In recent times, the degree of mobility has accelerated. This community acknowledged the issue of intercity mobility among Jews, implementing a program Shalom Chicago, which provides information about the metropolitan Chicagoland Jewish community and its synagogues, organizations and services. In addition to the mobility of individuals and families to and from Chicago area, there has been a high degree of movement in the metropolitan area. During the last decade (1980 - 1990), 50% of all Jewish households moved to their current communities. Establishing and maintaining Jewish connections is not easy when there is a disruption of family and friendship patterns. However, previous studies also demonstrate that those who are more Jewishly committed are more likely to maintain connections to Jewish institutions than those who are not. It is not only an issue of reaching out to interested persons, but knowing how to find and connect with them. This makes the task of tracking people and connecting with them more important to the community's vitality. In any case, increased dispersion of the Jewish population, makes access and service provision even more difficult.

Changing Values and Identity

Changes in social values also have an impact upon Jewish identity. Jewish identity, like other social identities, has never been constant. It has varied over time and between different societies in which Jews are located. In the modern post emancipation period, there have been some dramatic differences among Jews that often split Jewish communities in different societies and made it difficult to find consensus (e.g. secularism, Orthodoxy, Zionism, etc.). Within our own American Jewish history, there have been periods of religious-ideological conflict which strained relationships and understandings among Jews.

During the post-World War II period, however, certain events fostered the view of a common identity among Jews. These include the impact of two central events of the twentieth century, the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel. It was also furthered by the notion of a common identity. The emphasis upon ethnicity which arose during the 1960's, and the view that being Jewish was defined more by shared behavior (i.e. affiliation) than belief. During the past decade, Jonathan Woocher pointed to shared principles under the rubric of civil Judaism that applied not only to organizational leadership but presumably to the American Jewish community as a whole. These are: unity of the Jewish people, mutual responsibility, Jewish survival in a threatening world, the enduring values of Jewish tradition, Tzedaka, the centrality of the State of Israel, and the virtue of being American. They provided a common point of reference and action that transcended denominational and ideological differences among Jews.

Now we are in a period where this consensus is no longer as apparent. The Holocaust and Israel are not prominent points for defining Jewish identity for younger generations who did not experience them directly. Further, the combination of changes within the families and households, in combination with broader societal trends, has led to increased fragmentation of identity within the Jewish community.

The broader societal trends include:

- a greater interest in personal satisfaction as opposed to commitment to the community or communal institutions;
- a greater degree of emphasis on individual autonomy as opposed to the authority of institutions, which are being questioned; and
- a higher emphasis placed upon the personal meaning one derives by becoming part of a community or organization, rather than a sense of belonging.

The combination of these values and household dynamics is leading to unique variations of Jewish identity, which some refer to as privatized "ethnic religious identities". The search for

personal meaning and satisfaction leads individuals to value more of the unique components of their identity. At the same time, it also makes it more difficult deriving a consensus point of view and hence leads to more atomized or fragmented groups within the Jewish community. Those concerned with continuity would maintain that they could live with a more atomized, fragmented community if in fact that meant there were committed individuals. What is of concern is the absence of interest among some Jews to search for Jewish meaning.

The Task Force discussed common elements of Jewish identity during a review of how the community approached Soviet Jewry. The community developed expectations about desirable behavioral outcomes of their acculturation. However, the Task Force did not carry this further to see whether there could be consensus, which would help to define shared goals and objectives from different segments of the community and provide direction to organizations and institutions.

C. Individuals and Families

Ultimately, decisions about Jewish continuity are made by individuals and families. To obtain a better understanding we first look at the kinds of critical choices that face them over their lifetimes. We go on to look at some critical family-household groups, which were suggested by the forums and population study data as potential target groups on our continuity agenda.

Life Cycle Decisions

Chart II (see page 29) portrays the continuity issue from the perspective of the life cycle. There are many different Jewish identity choices being made at different stages of one's life-which have impact upon the identity of current and future generations. This perspective emphasizes the dynamic quality of Jewish identification, which can change over time within the same individual or household. Those who are affiliated now may become the unaffiliated of tomorrow. On the other hand, those who are currently unaffiliated may become affiliated at a later stage of their life.

Sometimes, these decisions are made explicitly from a Jewish viewpoint and sometimes, the individual or family is not even aware that there is a Jewish choice being made. These are times

when the community can seek to intervene positively upon such decisions. One of the objectives of Jewish continuity programming should be to increase the number of decisions which are made from a Jewish point of view.

Life cycle decisions are usually made by the family and become more individually based as the child matures. The initial decisions about Jewish identification are really the result of choices of others--parents--e.g., how the child is identified, what informal/family Jewish experiences are available through the family, and whether the child will receive a formal Jewish education. This is usually followed by the decision to affiliate with a congregation even if the parent wants a day school education. These decisions in turn may reflect previous experiences of the parents. In fact, one of the concerns is whether parents are Jewishly knowledgeable enough to provide the guidance that children require. Conversely, the child can motivate the parent to continue his/her Jewish involvement.

Individual choices (and the influence of peers) become more apparent during the teen years, after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah when the parent's expectations may have been fulfilled, and children's interest/disinterest in continuing their Jewish education can be decisive. Individual decision making expands during the college years, starting with the choice of college and then followed by a series of choices as one becomes an adult. During these periods, however, a transformative experience, such as an Israel trip or a Jewish summer resident camp opportunity, can change the way that a youth or young adult looks at his/her identity as well as provide the opportunity for greater involvement. These individuals need follow-up experiences, opportunities, and programs.

Key issues affecting marriage and raising of children have an impact not only upon one's identity, but also upon others in the household--and then the cycle begins again for the next generation. Within each of these major areas of choice there are many other decision-making opportunities, which have implications for Jewish living (e.g. where to live).

There is no study which compares involvement at different stages of the life cycle using the same measures. If, however, we were to summarize from our own Chicago study and generalize from other data, differentiating among low, moderate or high levels of involvement, the picture of individuals at different stages of the life cycle may look like **Chart III** - with periods of higher and lower levels of involvement at different points in time. This view is preferred to one which divides the community into two camps - the affiliated versus the unaffiliated. For some the lower levels of involvement are tantamount to periods of "Jewish discontinuity" in their lives.

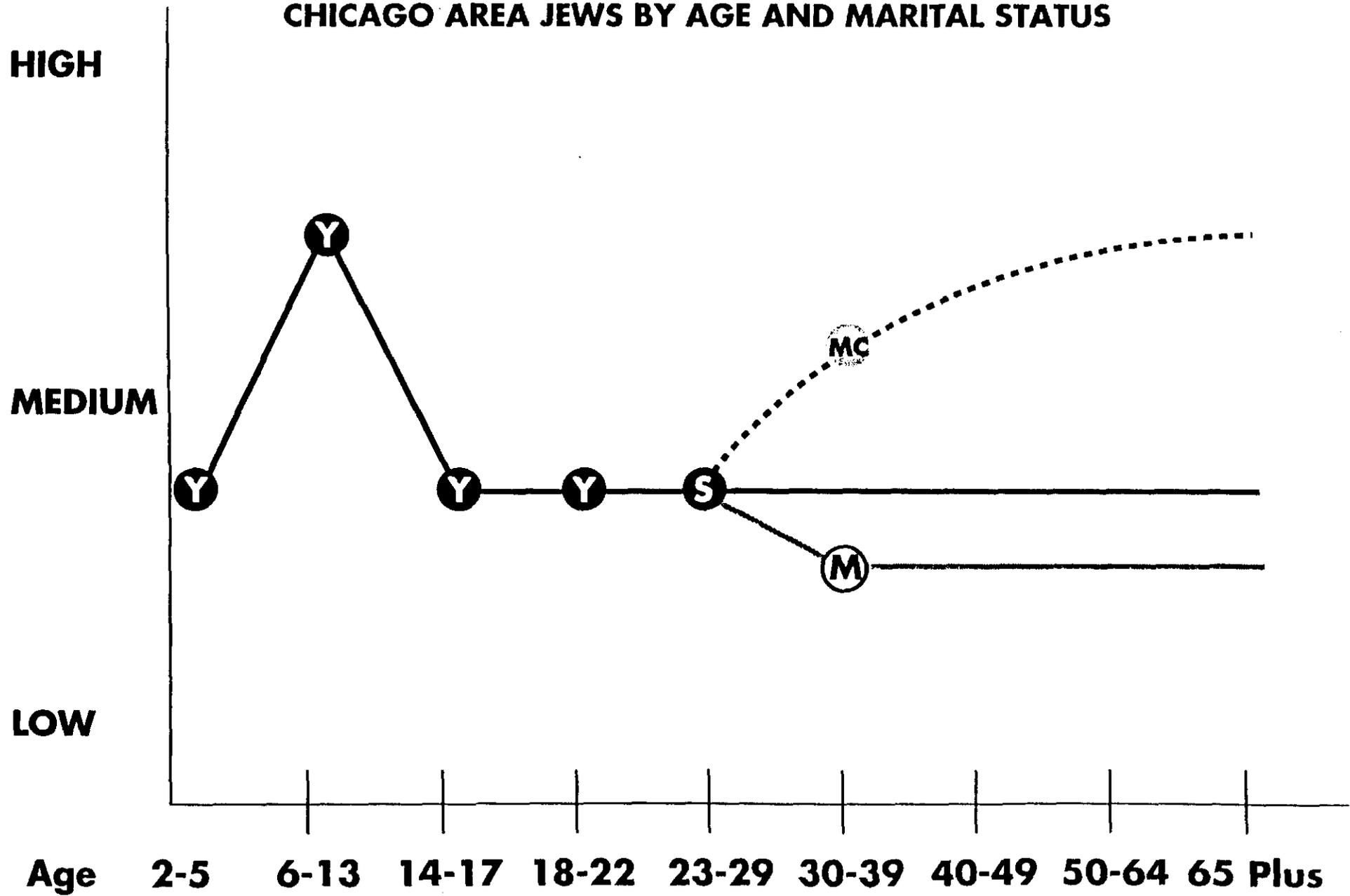
Briefly, involvement is low during the years immediately following birth. Involvement then increases somewhat during early childhood, although for the most part it is low. The high point is reached during the school age period when parents and their children are both involved. Involvement drops off when children reach adolescence, although parents may continue their involvement. Teens' decreased involvement continues through young adulthood, and with their own marriage adult Jews may actually decrease their involvement. The family's involvement increases once the children have reached school age.

To summarize, periods of lower involvement at the individual level include, pre-school ages and the period following adolescence through young adulthood, when choices/opportunities can have a major impact upon levels of identification and involvement.

The information in the chart suggests choices about how to approach continuity--that is, increasing involvement at younger ages (e.g. pre-school) would have an impact on later life stages. It also leads us to appreciate the dynamics of identity -- which change over time.

Chart III

PROJECTED LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT OF AVERAGE CHICAGO AREA JEWS BY AGE AND MARITAL STATUS



Y Youth

S Single

M Married

MC Married with children

Target Groups

Another way of looking at Jewish identification is to differentiate among target groups within the population. We are not a monolithic community. Generalizations based upon overall statistics are misleading. The following groups were identified in the data from our population study in presentations to the Task Force and/or the community forums. **Table III** provides an overview of the groups in terms of their numbers in the Jewish community. The sections below discuss each target group and the continuity challenges they face.

Target Groups - Table III

Households with Young Children (ages 0-5)	10,900 Households	20,800 Jewish Children
Households with Children (6-13)	12,500 Households	22,200 Jewish children
Households with Adolescents (14-17)	11,500 Households	15,100 Jewish teens
College Age Youth (18-22)	10,100 Households	11,500 Jewish youth
Post College Age Young Adults (23-29)	11,800 Households	16,000 Jewish persons
Younger Married Couples without Children (23-39)	5,400 Households	8,700 Jewish persons
Mixed Married Households	15,100 Households	21,500 Jewish persons
Single Parent Households	5,100 Households	12,200 Jewish persons
Refugees	6,800 (est.)	24,000 (est.)
Disabled	14,000 Households	N.A.

Note: Some households or individuals may be in more than one category

Households with Young Children (0-5)

There are 20,800 Jewish children below age six in the Chicago metropolitan area. A decade ago, it would have been correct to describe these households as “young families.” Given the later age of marriage, birth of children and second marriages, families with young children may have

parents of varying ages. This change has not altered the fact that the overall level of involvement of pre-school age children has a bearing among later trends, especially among the parents.

However, there has been one significant change: there are growing numbers of Jewish children enrolled in Jewish pre-school/early-childhood programs. It is estimated that some 6,000-7,000 Jewish children are involved in various Jewish sponsored/connected pre-school programs, representing about one-third of all pre-school age Jewish children. Studies have demonstrated that a Jewish early childhood program can have influence upon the Jewish home life of the family. The kinds of relationships and connections made by families with pre-school age children can endure for years. The community and its organizations have not maximized fully the impact that early childhood programs can have upon family identification and involvement.

Further, given the readiness of families to send their pre-school age children to a Jewish sponsored school, are there ways of reaching out to families even earlier, connecting them in some way to the community? More than a decade ago, the Jewish Home Start program was introduced in Chicago, with support from the Jewish Federation. It sought to promote family activities around holidays; particularly for Jewish home observances particularly for families of pre-school children. Currently, some communities are experimenting with programs that officially welcome families of newborns into the Jewish community by actually visiting them and/or providing pertinent material for a new baby. They seek to keep in touch with these families so they retain a connection with the community and can then make choices about pre-school/child-care from a Jewishly informed perspective. In Chicago, until recently there has been limited organized outreach by the Jewish community to families with newborns, although there are a number of pre-natal and infant programs.

Households with School-Age Children (6-13)

The number of Jewish youth aged 6-13 in Chicago is projected at 22,200. Youth in this age group, especially, immediately prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, have the highest enrollment figures in Jewish schools. Families with school-age children are more likely to show positive signs of Jewish

identification. Nearly 70% of all families with school-age children report that they are members of synagogues. Although these families have a higher level of identity and involvement, it tends to be minimal. For too many, their exposure to Judaism is limited to supplementary Jewish education, with an ultimate goal of being a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The youth do not always enjoy the benefits of informal activities such as a resident Jewish camping experiences, nor are the Jewish experiences consistently reinforced in their homes. The concept of child-oriented Judaism -- the term used to describe the effort to provide a Jewish education for children without family and parental involvement -- still seems to predominate. Institutions, however, have implemented programs that involve the entire family, precisely to counteract the emphasis on Jewish education for the child, rather than the entire family.

Households with Adolescents (14-17)

There are a projected 15,100 Jewish adolescents ages 14-17 living in the Chicago metropolitan area living in 11,500 households. This is a time of physical, intellectual emotional and social development. Adolescents challenge their sense of self, the notions they've carried from childhood, and in so doing, reduce their dependencies on home and family and rely more on peers. It has major implications for Jewish identity development.

Adolescence is a period when many youth discontinue their involvement both formal and informal Jewish educational activities. It is most evident in the decline in both formal and informal Jewish education, a period which starts one or two years after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, according to national and local Jewish educational enrollment data. Furthermore, the reduced level of involvement continues even into adulthood. Peer group pressure to remain involved is an important factor. Jewish youth groups-the paradigm of peer-group involvement, play an important role, but for only a minority (10%-15%) of Jewish adolescents. Basically, the youth groups attract a significant share of the already involved Jewish youth, preparing them to serve in future leadership positions. Although the teen drop out rate from formal Jewish education is higher, their families' involvement does not reflect a corresponding decline. That is, the data show that even when

comparing families with children, some of which have adolescent age children, the level of family identification and involvement may continue, while teen involvement declines.

The issue of adolescent involvement is one of critical concern to the community. One path which has been taken nationally, and locally, is the recruitment of youth to participate on Israel trips through financial savings/incentive programs. Chicago has been involved in the Send-a-Kid-to-Israel-Partnership (SKIP) program for more than a decade and recently introduced a Bar-Bat Mitzvah program that provides another source for saving money that will be matched by a communal contribution. Only now are we witnessing a growth in the number of teens who are using funds for Israel trips. Other approaches involve working with teens in volunteer and social activities, focusing upon particular interests of youth (e.g., politics, computers, selecting colleges, volunteer activities, arts and culture) or group activities which are more one-shot in approach. Supplementary High School programs continue to be revised with the notion of maintaining more youth in the programs and expanding internal programming.

College-Age Youth (18-22)

National and local figures confirm that some 80-90% of Jewish youth receive some college education at either two year or four year institutions. Our population study identified some 11,500 college-age students in the Chicago metropolitan area, most of whom are pursuing a degree at a two or four year institution. Others, a small minority, are already employed and may not attend college until later, if at all. Additionally, Chicago is home to another 9,500 Jewish youth who are enrolled elsewhere for college. The Jewish community recognizes that by virtue of the numbers and concentration, college serves as a major gateway to adulthood and is an opportune time to reach out and serve this age group.

For many youth, college is a time to explore different facets of their identity, sometimes in ways which will not be carried into adulthood. Plans and programs for involving our college-age youth on and off campus requires an understanding of the diversity of the Jewish student body and

the social and academic demands made upon them. Our Federation supports a state wide Hillel system that enables us to keep track of and serve many young adults from this community. Our Hillel system has created many innovative programs for which it has been recognized nationally.

Post College-Age Adults: Singles (23-29)

We estimate the number of young adult singles (23-29) in Chicago at around 16,000. Many of these young adults live in the city in the Near North Side. Others live throughout the metropolitan area. In addition there are some 11,000 single adults between 30 and 39. Some are here temporarily, others will make Chicago their permanent home and finally, there are others who have stayed here their entire lives. We need to be cognizant of the diversity within the post-college age group. It includes young adults from all religious streams and forms of identification, whose needs vary. Nearly half of the young adults between 23-29 moved to Chicago from other parts of the country. Their level of involvement is relatively low, but they represent an important resource for this community. They can contribute to the future of the community if they stay and it will be a loss to the community if they decide to leave. They move here for a variety of reasons, including ones that are educational and occupational, but also because of the vitality of the Chicago Jewish community. It is not clear how many are even aware of the specifics of Jewish life before they move, or if they know how to connect once they are here. A number of organizations have been successful in reaching out to singles, based on addressing philanthropic, political, social and religious programming needs.

Younger Married Couples Without Children

This group numbers 5,400 households. It is a group that is uninvolved in the Jewish community, except for those who are religiously observant. In nearly 85% of households two adults work full-time; this rate is the highest proportion of any group of married couples. Pragmatically speaking, this group has less free time than others and there are many organizations competing for their time. Because a significant proportion of this group is intermarried, many of these households

feel hesitant about being Jewishly involved. However, the higher rate of intermarriage makes it especially important to establish a precedent of Jewish involvement in the family before children are born, if we expect to reach their children.

Intermarried Households

There are 15,100 intermarried households in this community (i.e., mixed marriage between a Jew and someone who is not Jewish at the time of the marriage and does not convert to Judaism). The rate of intermarriage for Chicago is below the national figures, although it is increasing. Chicago's rate is 20% compared with 28% at the national level. Further, although Chicago's rate of intermarriage has increased during the period 1985-90, it is below the national percentage. As noted earlier, this gap may be related to our community's size--the larger the community, the lower the intermarriage rate. It probably relates to the increased opportunities to meet Jewish partners. Although intermarried Jews live throughout the Chicago metropolitan area, they tend to gravitate to areas with a relatively small number of all-Jewish households.

The data show some predictable results: a rising rate of intermarriage, the low level of involvement of such couples in Jewish community life and the fact that both men and women are increasing rates of intermarriage. The mixed marriages are not monolithic. Although they are in the minority, some 24% of parents are raising their children as Jews, and 35% are raising their children both as Jews and as members of another religion. The remaining 40% are raising their children in another religion completely or with no religion at all. Further, in these households, the percentage of children being raised Jewish is greatest when the Jewish parent is religious and the Gentile parent is not. When both parents are religious, a Jewish wife is more influential in raising a child as a Jew than a Jewish husband.

In addition to mixed married households are the Jewish households involving two Jewish spouses, including one who is a Jew by choice. These are not technically intermarried households. These households account for 6% of all current marriages within the Jewish population, up from

4.4% in 1981. It appears that adults 30 and over are more likely to marry a Jew by choice than those under 30 years old. These households compare favorably in Jewish identification with those in which both spouses were born Jewish. However, it is in the interest of the community to promote becoming Jewish by choice.

Single Parent Households

Single parent households (5,100) make up a relatively small proportion of the total population of households in the Jewish community (nearly 5%). Their impact is, however, heightened if we look at their number as a percentage of families with children (9%). Further, our data suggests that more than one-quarter of families with children will experience divorce/separation and hence, be a single-parent family at one time. The single-parent families responding to our population survey have been in this situation for some period of time. Single parent families are at risk in many ways. More often than not, they don't have adequate income or social supports. Most heads (and they are still predominantly female) are required to take on full-time jobs in order to support the family. Financial, as well as time constraints, can be real considerations in their participation in Jewish communal life. However, on top of that, is the concern expressed by single parents that they don't feel welcome in institutions which are more oriented towards the two-parent family. The net result is that there are two generations which are Jewishly at risk in these households--parent and children.

Special Populations

There are two target groups which are of special concern to this community: disabled and refugees/immigrants.

1) Disabled

Numbers on the disabled in the Jewish community are not easy to project. Using indicators from the Jewish population survey we estimate there are 14,000 households with at least one person who is characterized as physically disabled. More than ten years ago, the need to address the Jewish

educational needs of this part of the community was raised. The first area addressed was the needs of the learning disabled children in the area of formal Jewish education. A special program for Jewish learning disabled in a day school context was introduced -- P'Tach. This program has extended from the elementary to the secondary program. However, this did not include a growing number of youth who are physically and otherwise disabled, who live with their families, and are seeking a Jewish education whether in a supplementary or full day school context. A supplementary school, now operating under the partnership of the Community Foundation, Associated Talmud Torahs and Keshet was established, followed by a day school operating under the same framework. The Jewish Children's Bureau established a program for siblings of disabled youth enrolled at the school. Efforts to integrate disabled children in supplementary schools operating within a congregational context have also been undertaken. The major objective is to provide these youth with a solid Jewish background and education so that they can be educated into the continuing chain of our tradition.

2) Refugees and Immigrants

This community has resettled more than 24,000 Soviet Jewish refugees during the past sixteen years. Starting in 1979, when the first waves of Soviet Jews arrived in large numbers, programs were implemented to address Jewish education and cultural needs. This community has placed emphasis upon insuring that newcomers were integrated Jewishly. Programs included Shalom Sunday, the Transitional Day School, mainstreaming students into day schools, Family to Family programs, volunteer tutoring, and religious, and cultural programming for families and specific age groups (e.g. seniors). Quite reasonably, the question of their success in becoming Jewishly acculturated has been raised. Qualitative assessments suggest that there has been a greater interest in Jewish learning among the second wave of arrivals, and a greater willingness to stay in the Jewish educational school setting, even when families become responsible for providing a larger share of the funding. A study of first and second wave arrivals in Chicago, conducted by Zvi Gitelman, Professor of Soviet Studies at the University of Michigan, attests to the success of these efforts. He cautions us to remember that because of their background in the former Soviet Union, in which being Jewish is closely identified with national-ethnic identity and not with religious identification nor affiliation, the transition to an American Jewish identity takes a different path than

for native born Jews. However, insofar as Jewish identity is changing in this country as well, there may be much to learn about our own community from the Soviets and the programs which were developed to assist them in their Jewish acculturation.

D. Organizations and Institutions

For American Jews, being a member of the Jewish community has historically been equated with organized affiliation. Organizational life has defined Jewish community life. Data from our 1990 Chicago study showed that overall, the proportion affiliated with Jewish organizations other than congregations is 40% or approximately 48,000 households. This compares with 28% nationally. Further, more than 34,000 Jewish households (or 30%) engage in volunteer work in the Jewish community as compared with 18% nationally. While volunteers represent a minority of all Chicago Jewish households, the figures still reflect a reservoir of commitment that exists within the community.

However, it is clear that organizations cannot continue to rely upon the same formulas for engaging members and volunteers. As the community changes so too will organizations be compelled to change, or they will not be able to sustain themselves. Some of the change relates to demographics. The data show that the group most likely to be involved are nuclear families (either families with children or those whose children have grown up). However, given the changes in the composition of households, organizations need to take a much broader view toward recruiting alternative groups (singles, younger couples without children, etc.), or they will be targeting a minority of the community.

Further, as individual values change, placing greater emphasis upon personal satisfaction and self-meaning rather than organizational commitment or loyalty, organizations must be more responsive to the needs of individuals. Individuals are more likely to choose institutional involvement based on their own needs not on a commitment to the institution. Finally, the high degree of mobility weakens attachments to local organizations and institutions.

Since the membership base is important to any volunteer organization, organizations depend on their membership, but primarily on the quality of their professional and volunteer leadership. The process of leadership development is especially important. As the characteristics of the community change, so too will the kind of leadership who are recruited. Organizations need an effective leadership development program that provides leadership training to the membership it attracts.

Among Jewish organizations, the synagogue has a unique position as "Beit Tfillah"- a House of Prayer, "Beit Knesset"-a House of Assembly, and "Beit Midrash."- a House of Study. The synagogue is the primary bearer of the religious identity, which for American Jews is connected with Jewish identification and continuity. The synagogue becomes the entry point to the organized Jewish community. And it is the synagogue that most individuals will attend some time during the year, whether they are formal members or not. Within the synagogue, the congregational school is where most Jewish youth continue to receive their Jewish education. And because the synagogue is essentially a neighborhood based institution, it is close to the individual and family at critical points in their lives.

Data from the Chicago population study shows that the synagogues have the largest number of households affiliated of any Jewish organization--44% of the current households report affiliation with a congregation, and an additional 20% report previous affiliation. However the synagogue still acquires the largest part of its constituency from a single target group--families with school age children, which have become a smaller proportion of the total households. As local demographics change, synagogues will need to see whether they can change their recruitment and retention focus.

This Jewish community's current organizational structure was established over the past century. Some organizations can trace their origins one hundred and fifty years. The structure has evolved over the years, although its basic outlines have remained relatively intact. However, as we look forward and consider the institutions and organizations from the continuity point of view, further change may be necessary. The Task Force was apprised of one innovative approach dealing with this issue among young adults in the near north area called the City North Kehillah which seeks

to involve young Jewish adults who are not prone to affiliating with Jewish institutions. The project involves several synagogues and the Jewish Community Centers, which are creating a new form of membership which encompasses both synagogues and JCC's.

Another consideration is the Jewish content of organizations of programs. Nearly all Jewish organizations have some role in the community agenda. Two decades ago when the Jewish Federation undertook a long range planning project, it focused on the Jewish nature of its structure and services. Affiliate and beneficiary agencies were encouraged to look at the role that they play. Similarly, during the concern with family policy, when the issue of how institutions relate to the Jewish family was raised, organizations were asked to review how their formal and informal, internal and external policies affected Jewish family life. Experience gained has been useful and organizations are much more attuned to the role that they can and should play in both areas. There are some positive relationships which have developed between social services organizations and schools or Jewish education agencies, addressing the needs of at-risk children from both a Jewish content and social services perspective. However, there needs to be ways of insuring that organizations place continuity as a priority on their own agenda, and seek ways to: (a) develop programming that is explicitly concerned with continuity/identity; and (b) infuse current programming with Jewish content.

E. The Role of Community and Attachment to Community

Community is the glue between individuals and among organizations. A vibrant Jewish community is what makes Jewish continuity possible. Community exists at different levels:

- at a local neighborhood or regional level, where people who live in somewhat closer proximity to one another participate in Jewish community life;
- on a city or metropolitan basis, embracing the total Jewish population, and community wide institutions; and

- internationally, in terms of Klal Yisrael, the connection between Jews throughout the world with special emphasis upon the land of Israel.

Community at the Local Level

Historically, Chicago has been viewed as a city or metropolitan area of ethnic communities. Chicago was the home to urban sociology. One of the first academic studies concerned the Jewish community, **The Ghetto**, by Lewis Wirth, which addresses the near west side immigrant community. Wirth saw the Jewish neighborhood, the ghetto, with its immigrants, religious-ethnic institutions and distinctive, teeming Jewish life as a temporary way station on the path to acculturation and assimilation. Eventually, successive generations of Jews would move beyond into non-ethnically defined neighborhoods, integrate with the general population, and there would no longer be any geographically defined ethnic communities. As with many predictions, this has not proven accurate. In some cases, Jews created other Jewish neighborhoods in the city as they moved from one location to another within the city, West Rogers Park most closely corresponds to this description. Further, in the move to the suburbs, Jews tended to move to certain areas with other Jews. The old urban neighborhoods were not recreated in the suburbs, although in some suburban communities the proportion of Jews approaches that of urban Jewish neighborhoods. The major difference is not simply density but, rather, the different role the Jewish communities play in our lives. For many Chicago area Jews, both urban and suburban, the local Jewish community does not have much salience in their Jewish lives. More individuals both work and socialize outside of their residential communities.

The Chicago Jewish community is keenly aware of its urban neighborhoods and suburban communities. Jewish Federation has undertaken community area studies for several decades and has developed plans on the basis of these findings. In arranging the community forums, it was expected that they would provide opportunity for expression of regional and neighborhood views.

Table IV differentiates the socio-demographic and Jewish characteristics of the eleven community forum areas. **Table V** summarizes the issues raised in each forum. It is evident that

demographically, there is a wide range of differences among these regions in terms of age and household structure. For example, the proportion of aged - 65 years and older - ranges from 4% in the northwest suburbs to 25% in West Rogers Park; and the percentage of singles varies from a low of 11% in the Western suburbs to two out of three Jews (65%) in the North Lake front of the city.

The Jewish identity indicators also show variation across community forum areas. For example, synagogue affiliation varies from 30% in urban communities along the north lake front to 58% in West Rogers Park. In the western suburbs, which has a low concentration of Jews, only 15% of Jewish respondents report that all or most of their friends are Jews as compared with 59% in West Rogers Park. Further, the rate of intermarriage varies from 4% in West Rogers Park and the Northern suburbs, to 51% in those Southern suburbs outside of the six core communities.

The Community Forums provided an opportunity to highlight qualitative aspects of Jewish community life. In the southern suburbs, where the Jewish community is a relatively small proportion of the entire community and in which even the core area includes six separate communities, there is a strong sense of community. In fact, residents indicate that to live Jewishly they have made efforts to affiliate with a synagogue and to establish formal and informal networks. In other suburban areas with a much higher proportion and number of Jews, the viewpoint was expressed that Jewish residents are not even cognizant of Jewish community. Because of the higher density, they take it for granted and make little effort to affiliate.

The reason for going out into the communities was to listen to the local concerns. It was our assumption that the neighborhood concerns would vary, and this was confirmed by each forum. For example, the issue of young adults was more prevalent in the city than suburbs; issues about mixed married couples were raised in the three areas with higher concentrations. Certain groups, like teens and families with school age children, are of concern across the board. Conversely, not one forum mentions issues pertaining to single parent families, although the data shared with the Task Force and forums showed them to be a Jewishly at risk group. However, another issue raised at nearly all of the forums was the need for more inter-organizational cooperation so that issues could be addressed at across organizational lines.

TABLE IV
CHARACTERISTICS OF AREAS COVERED BY COMMUNITY FORUMS

Community:	Chicago	HYDE PARK	NORTH	LAKE FRONT	CHICAGO	NORTHERN	NEAR NORTH	NORTHWEST	SOUTHERN	WESTERN	OTHER	Suburbs
Population	11,630	3,200	24,600	18,140	15,120	51,710	63,080	11,790	5,790	11,840	6,600	135
Core Jewish Households	29,330	5,350	37,800	27,000	6,070	2,880	7,940	4,710	2,360	8,140	3,54	4
Jewish Individuals												
Non-Jewish Household Members												
Age												
Less than 6	9%	5%	6%	8%	4%	15%	7%	12%	13%	20%	4%	7
6-17	19%	9%	4%	8%	4%	15%	13%	18%	18%	20%	2%	10
18-29	11%	23%	24%	26%	14%	14%	12%	12%	11%	14%	8	10
30-64	36%	50%	46%	50%	46%	54%	54%	54%	43%	52%	60	60
65+	25%	14%	19%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	12%	6%	14	14
Total:	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100
Household												
Singles	34%	44%	65%	23%	12%	25%	19%	25%	25%	11%	19	19
Married - no children under 18 at home	34%	34%	21%	39%	46%	46%	31%	31%	37%	24%	15	15
Married - children under 18 at home	29%	20%	12%	33%	27%	46%	38%	46%	38%	56%	58	58
Single Parents	3%	3%	1%	6%	2%	4%	4%	4%	---	10%	8	8
Total:	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100
Intermarriage												
Intermarried couples as a percentage of married couples	4%	37%	21%	4%	12%	20% (a)	36% (b)	16% (a)	57% (b)	54%		
Jewish Identity Indicators												
Currently dues paying member of a synagogue	58%	30%	64%	50%	33%	54%	30%	51%	30%	40%	30%	
Light candles every Shabbat	50%	9%	93%	80%	72%	82%	72%	82%	40%	40%	40%	
Respondent attends synagogue more than once a month	51%	14%	27%	29%	18%	27%	18%	27%	25%	25%	25%	
Respondent participated in adult Jewish education	48%	21%	35%	28%	16%	26%	16%	26%	30%	30%	30%	
Respondent has visited Israel	59%	42%	52%	45%	17%	36%	17%	36%	17%	17%	17%	
Respondent volunteers for a Jewish organization	44%	20%	45%	33%	28%	37%	28%	37%	21%	21%	21%	
Respondent's close friends are all or almost all Jewish	59%	24%	51%	44%	26%	26%	26%	26%	15%	15%	15%	

(Detailed analysis was not done due to sample considerations)

a) Core suburbs
b) Non-core suburbs - lower density of Jews

CHARACTERISTICS OF ARI

Community Area	Chicago			
	West Rogers Park & North Park	Hyde Park & Kenwood	Edgewater, Uptown, Lakeview, North Center, Lincoln Park, & Near North	Other Chicago
Population				
Core Jewish Households	11,630	3,200	24,600	10,140
Jewish Individuals	29,330	5,350	37,800	15,120
Non-Jewish Household Members	2,280	2,850	6,070	4,500
Age				
Less than 6	8.9%	5.2%	6.3%	5.9%
6-17	18.9%	8.6%	3.8%	7.6%
18-29	11.1%	22.8%	24.2%	25.6%
30-64	36.3%	49.9%	46.4%	46.0%
65+	24.8%	13.5%	19.3%	14.9%
Total:	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Household				
Singles	33.9%	43.6%	65.3%	22.9%
Married--children under 18 at home	29.0%	19.6%	12.3%	32.5%
Married--no children under 18 at home	34.3%	33.6%	21.2%	39.1%
Single Parents	2.8%	3.2%	1.2%	5.5%
Total:	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Intermarriage				
Intermarried couples as a percentage of married couples	3.5%	36.6%	23.1%	21.4%
Jewish Identity Indicators				
Currently dues paying member of a synagogue	57.9%	*	30.2%	*
Contribute to a Jewish philanthropy	86.4%	*	68.5%	*
Light candles every Shabbat	50.3%	*	9.0%	*
Respondent attends synagogue more than once a month	50.6%	*	14.4%	*
Respondent participated in adult Jewish education	48.2%	*	24.6%	*
Respondent has visited Israel	58.7%	*	42.4%	*
Respondent volunteers for a Jewish organization	43.7%	*	20.2%	*
Respondent's close friends are all or almost all Jewish	59.2%	*	24.3%	*

*Detailed analysis was not done due to sample considerations.

(a) This percentage reflects the rate of intermarriage in the Northwest suburbs of: Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Schaumburg, and Wheeling.

(b) This percentage reflects the rate of intermarriage in the other Northwest suburbs.

(c) This percentage reflects the rate of intermarriage in the Southern suburbs of: Flossmoor, Glenwood, Hazel Crest, Homewood, Olympia Fields, and Park Forest

Community at the Metropolitan Level

At the city wide or metropolitan level, community is more than the sum of neighborhoods, people and organizations or institutions. It assumes that there exists a vehicle for achieving collective goals, which are above and beyond the ability of organizations individually to achieve. We live in a society in which the voluntary organization has a unique position unlike that of other countries in which Jews have lived. There has always been some tension between the proliferation of individual local organizations and the establishment of and role of community wide coordinating organizations. Over time, the Chicago Jewish community has evolved and developed community wide institutions, which can bring together people, and enable the community to act collectively, based upon consensus, which is not easily achieved within the Jewish community.

Chicago has been fortunate that it has a strong sense of Jewish community at the metropolitan level. A commitment to the metropolitan Jewish community and its institutions is not at all inconsistent with loyalties to the local Jewish community, and to local institutions: in fact, they can and do reinforce one another. However, maintaining a commitment to a metropolitan-wide community requires continual community building, especially given the geographic dispersion of the Jewish community in the metropolitan area. As Jews move further from areas of high Jewish density, emotional as well as geographic distances can develop. A strong sense of community at the metropolitan level also requires that their organizations be willing to work together for the sake of the broader community.

The assumption, nationally and locally, is that a community-wide continuity agenda requires the participation of many different organizations and groups of the community. It is not one which can be handled by single organization. The structure of our Task Force is based upon this principle. It requires organizations to consider new ways of working together in pursuit of a common goal that is broader than any single organizational agenda.

International Jewish Community

Ever since the end of the second World War, when it became the largest community in world Jewry, North American Jewry has taken a leadership role in international Jewish affairs. The commitment to provide assistance to Israel and to be involved with issues of world Jewry -- the most recent being the emigration of Soviet Jewry -- has resonated with leadership and the community in general. Israel became a central component of American Jewish identity, even though analysis suggests this commitment to Israel is fragile and most readily motivated by outside threats to the existence of the State.

The past few years have seen tremendous changes occurring in Israel, including the massive immigration of more than 600,000 Olim, the initiation of a peace process with Israel's Arab neighbors, and Israel's improved economic position. These trends appear to continue, even given tragic outbreaks of violence against Israelis. Some American Jews no longer perceive Israel as meriting the kind of support which has been provided in the past. There are a number of federated communities that have decided to assign a higher priority to local needs and, hence, have reduced their allocations to the United Jewish Appeal. This affects other international Jewish communities as well, because they receive support from UJA beneficiary organizations (e.g. American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee). In its 1994 Priority Report, the Jewish Federation-Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago affirmed the importance of our community's commitment to overseas in order to meet the continuing needs primarily in Israel and Eastern Europe, and in other places where there are Jews in distress. It was the view that Israel and other overseas Jewish communities will continue to have major needs for assistance in resettlement, social welfare, education and community organization.

At the same time, there is increasing recognition of the value that Israel can play in developing identity, both as an experience that can transform the views/outlooks of visitors or as a formative educational experience which can have long term impact. Travel to Israel can also be viewed as an indicator of ties to the land. According to the 1990 National Jewish Population study,

26% of respondents had traveled to Israel. However, among the Chicago Jewish community, the proportion was already 30% in 1981 and has grown to 39% in 1990. This is consistent with an emphasis upon missions and travel to Israel by Chicago Jewish organizations throughout the 1980's. There is a direct correlation with age, however: the older the individuals, the more likely they are to have traveled to Israel.

This community recognizes the impact of a learning experience in Israel as part of a child's Jewish education. Despite its involvement with support for Israel Experience programs dating back to the mid 1970's, this community is only beginning to make inroads among youth and their families. For example, the number enrolled in Send-a-Kid-to-Israel-Partnership, Chicago's Israel Savings Incentive Program, has increased from a few hundred more than one decade ago to 2,200 children today. Still, the community has not attracted a quarter of Jewishly identified youth who attend a Jewish supplementary school, which may reflect ambivalent views of the parents.

Chicago was selected as one of eleven national communities targeted to increase the number of youth participating in Israel Experience programs. This effort has involved setting up a committee comprised of various organizations involved in Israel programming.

F. Conclusions

The analysis in the previous section demonstrates that the Chicago Jewish community can best be viewed from three perspectives: 1) Individuals and Families; 2) Organizations and Institutions; and 3) Community.

Findings confirm the following assets exhibited by the Chicago Jewish community as a whole: it has a large, relatively stable Jewish population maintained by the influx of young adults and refugees who have arrived in the past few decades. It supports a strong vibrant set of institutions and exhibits a higher level of Jewish identification, including religious identity which place the overall degree of involvement among Chicago Jewry above the national figures and those of other

communities. The level of those receiving some Jewish education remains high for both Jewish adults and children. A higher proportion of adult Jews have visited Israel, when compared with the previous decade and the national Jewish population as a whole. At the same time, this community is not immune to the larger societal trends which are reflected in both national and other local Jewish communities relating to the growing challenges to the Jewish family (divorce, remarriage, both parents working) the growth in intermarriage, albeit at a rate lower than the national level, lessened attachments to the Jewish community and Israel among a significant proportion of the population, and changing patterns of organizational involvement. All of this takes place among a highly mobile population which can easily loosen its attachments to institutional life.

The basic units of Jewish community life ultimately reside in individuals and families. Our understanding of individuals and families is further aided by the fact that changes occur over the life cycle and accordingly by groups (target groups) within the population that show greater or lesser tendencies toward involvement.

The life-cycle perspective directs us to consider that there are patterns of increased and diminished levels of involvement in Jewish life over time and that there are critical junctures (e.g. birth, college, marriage) in the lives of individuals and families during which their decisions have an impact upon their future lives as Jews. These choices can be affected by activities initiated by the organized Jewish community.

In addition, there are also special one-time experiences which can affect their Jewish identification. Transformational experiences, such as a visit to Israel, Jewish camping a weekend retreat, an especially motivating speaker or educator have impact, but without adequate follow-up programs and extended experiences, the transformation engendered through these opportunities cannot be sustained. Nor are transformational experiences adequate substitutes for longer term involvement through formal and informal education.

Viewing different demographic groups confirms what is known: those most involved in Jewish communal life are representative of what is called the "traditional Jewish family" (i.e., couples and children of school age), although this group encompasses a smaller proportion of households now than in previous decades. Because of the many changes and choices open to individuals and families, as evidenced by a growth of the singles population, single parents, blended families and intermarried households, the number of unaffiliated and under involved households has grown.

Even though Chicago may reflect higher levels of Jewish involvement than other communities, the "highly affiliated and involved" represent only one quarter (25%) of the households, while on the other extreme some 15% of the total Chicago Jewish population has either minimal or no involvement at all. The other 60% lie somewhere in between "highly affiliated and involved" and "minimal or no involvement." Organizations need to decide very carefully where they should put their resources, recognizing that levels of involvement will change over the life cycle of individuals and families and vary by the demographic groups. While it is unlikely that individuals or households who are in the minimal or no involvement category will move to the highly affiliated and involved, it is more likely that those in the other categories will move back and forth over their life time. Those who are highly involved at one period of their lives will likely reduce their level of involvement at another stage but then may become reinvolved at a later point. The importance of this understanding is that levels of involvement are not static and simply to say that we should concentrate on the most involved, would do disservice to other segments of the Jewish population.

The fact that 80% of our Jewish youth and adults have received a Jewish education is positive. The growing numbers enrolled in more intensive day school education augurs well as does the fact that studies show that a supplementary Jewish education has a favorable impact when experienced for a reasonable period of time. Yet, day schools need increased financial resources, particularly as enrollment increases. While recognizing this as an issue, it should be noted that it is beyond the purview of this study.

There are opportunities in the following five target groups which show lower levels of involvement. Single adults, many of whom are not originally from Chicago and whose decisions about whether to stay in Chicago and how to be involved will have impact upon the future of our community; young couples without children, who currently are under involved; families with newborns and very young children, with whom we can start to establish a pattern of life-long involvement; adolescents, who are beginning a decline of involvement that, without intervention can extend until they are parents; college age youth, one of the few Jewish population that is concentrated within a single institution, the college (two year or four year) or the university; and single parent families also are at risk in terms of having resources and issues, and Jewish identification/involvement. At the same time, the fact that both families with elementary school age children and older adults are involved more intensively does not negate the need to involve them more intensively.

Additionally, there are new groups within the population that don't fit traditional characteristics, whom this community has sought to involve in Jewish education and communal life: 1) Individuals with disabilities, whose numbers are growing and who need opportunities to acquire and express their Jewish identification; and 2) refugees, who in many years past were seen primarily as a group needing assistance to assimilate into American society and the Jewish community, are now seen as an important group requiring access to Jewish acculturation experiences as well.

Further analysis of Chicago Jewry from the perspective of its institutions, organizations and community, the latter including local, metropolitan, national and overseas, provides insight into how individuals and families relate to the larger Jewish community. As well, the analysis highlights the responsibilities incumbent on the organized community if our Jewish community is to remain vibrant.

Findings show that Jewish individuals and families demonstrate a high degree of mobility, which weakens their attachment to institutions and organizations. Mobility results in the development of new communities, the decline of areas formerly inhabited by thriving communities,

and the change-over within the population of existing communities. An important finding is that the Chicago Jewish community is itself made up of various communities, which are differentiated by demographic and Jewish identification. For some areas, there is a strong sense of being part of a local Jewish community enabling organizations and agencies to work together. Other local communities with a lot of Jews inhabiting the area may lack a strong sense of community. This also hampers the ability of institutions collective efforts to address issues related to identity and continuity effectively.

The findings emphasize the importance of other levels of community: Metropolitan and International. Chicago Jewish community members have demonstrated their ability to work together on many different collective efforts and Continuity proves to be no exception. Some express concern that an increasing departure from a collective identity has led to a lost attachment to the metropolitan Jewish community. While there is evidence of organizational fragmentation, there has emerged a willingness to look at different ways organizations can cooperate more closely than in the past in the pursuit of addressing Jewish communal needs.

Equally strong is the concern that after a fifty year period, encompassing the Holocaust, the rebirth of Israel, despite the recent massive upheavals in Russian and Near Eastern countries, we now have generations without an historical relationship to world Jewry who do not feel any vital connection to Am Yisrael as a result. The connection with Israel and world Jewry is as much of a central issue of Jewish identity and continuity as are local concerns. The Chicago community has always been a leader in international Jewry and this can only continue with an understanding and committed Jewish community.

The challenges to maintaining a high level of commitment are clear: that the Chicago Jewish community's level of involvement may be higher than the American Jewish community as a whole at this point in time is not cause for complacency. Chicago is not a Jewish island unto itself and the trends seen within our community may simply be behind those experienced elsewhere. Without a deliberate effort to fashion programs and policies to strengthen Jewish identification and involvement, we will not have a vibrant community in the future.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusions, this report proposes recommendations based on the following considerations:

1. This report should be viewed as a snapshot of a very important point in time, given the pending onset of the twenty first century and the presence of a vibrant Jewish community in Chicago for more than 150 years. The report, however, also intends to stimulate action. In fact, the very process of the study has increased awareness and has generated recommendations for both changes and program implementation, some of which are already in process through activities of Jewish communal organizations. Through Federation's Community Long Range planning process nearly three decades ago, the Jewish community asked agencies and institutions how they were helping to foster Jewish identity. The same questions need addressing today in the context of the agenda described in this report.
2. Because the Task Force is comprised of representatives of independent organizations, it can only urge organizations to change their missions and agenda to include issues of continuity and identity. However, the Task Force can learn what is being done among the organizations and in the community, share successful program models, develop additional recommendations and explore new areas where coalitions may further the planning and action agenda of Jewish continuity and identification.
3. Further, while it is up to organizations to define where they should direct their resources in pursuit of Jewish identity and continuity, the Task Force has an obligation to identify priorities that extend beyond the scope of any one or group of institutional agendas that have a bearing upon the future of this Jewish community. A comprehensive approach to priorities, therefore, must identify needs presented by specific target groups as well as those addressed by Jewish organizations. The recommendations, therefore, speak to the three target groups: families and individuals, institutions and organizations, and community.

4. One of the positive findings of this study is that families with school age children report being involved in Jewish communal life. More than eighty percent of the Jewish children in these families are receiving a Jewish education. The issue, however, is not simply quantity, but rather quality. For those who are currently engaged in Jewish communal life, the goal should be to increase their level of identification and involvement. Not only because this can be regarded as a positive goal in itself - a Jewishly involved life is rewarding-but also because it strengthens the community and also increases the likelihood that members of these families or individuals will be involved at other points in their lives.

5. However, we have also pointed out target groups which are not involved in Jewish communal life. The following six target groups recommended for priority consideration have potential for greater involvement and should be more fully served in the Chicago area: families with newborn and/or pre-school age children, adolescents, college students, young adults, young couples without children and single parent families with school age children. These target groups represent 40% of our households and approximately 25% of all Jews in the Chicago metropolitan area. They are a significant number (nearly 50,000 households and more than 60,000 Jews). These target groups were selected because of the behavior of these groups can be impacted to influence their future identification and that of their families. Although many in these target groups are not currently affiliated or involved, many of them (e.g. adolescents) have been in the past or live within families in which other members are involved. Other target groups--families with school age children, the growing number of households with grown children and other single adults- continue to be important, but are already involved to a higher degree or have resources directed to them. We need to explore ways of furthering the identification and involvement of each of these groups, but not at the expense of underserving community members who do not (yet) show strong commitment to the Jewish community, as affiliation can change over time.

Recommendations for Specific Target Groups

Individuals and Families

- **Young married couples without children** represent one of the least involved groups within the community regardless of their inter-faith status. Though their time is limited by joint work responsibilities, this time in their lives provides an opportunity for outreach to engender a Jewish connection which will hold at later stages of their lives. This group has potential for serving as a core support group and leadership at a later time in their lives. They represent potential for serving as an important core of support for the Jewish community and leadership for the Jewish community at a later stage of their lives.

- **Families with young children** are targeted because an early outreach gains the organized Jewish community potential influence over their decisions about involvement in the Jewish community. This holds true especially if they are receptive to an outreach--and many are. The fact that nearly a third of the children below five are enrolled in some kind of Jewish early childhood program speaks to the fact that even these families are open to earlier involvement in Jewish institutional life. However, unless we take advantage and have impact upon Jewish behavior in the home, this will be a lost opportunity. As with young married couples with children, such outreaches represent a wonderful opportunity to let young families know that the community is vitally concerned about them and their needs as Jews. For families with pre-adolescent children, the need to involve the entire family further both at home and with organizations and synagogues.

- The data shows the decline of youth in formal and informal Jewish activities as soon as the **adolescent** years begin; this age brings about lower levels of involvement which extends through early parts of adulthood. Within the past two decades we have seen that efforts to involve adolescents in traditional formats (i.e., youth groups and continued Jewish schooling) have only been able to capture a minority of adolescents. Indeed, while many of

these involved teens develop strong leadership skills, there are many other teens who simply do not become involved at all. At the same time, the community has made a significant investment in insuring that all Jewish teens have the opportunity to experience Israel through the various savings/contribution and gift programs. We need to develop new methods to sustain the connection of as many teens as possible to the community during this period of development, recognizing that the boundaries between formal and informal activities need to be fluid. This period is also important for development of self-identity and experimentation. Teens internalize self-imposed and family pressures to succeed (i.e. they feel a great need to do well in school to secure acceptance by a good college or university). Peer group pressure on adolescent behavior plays a strong role in their lives.

- The **college age** represents a critical period of identity formation in the lives of our youth; it is during this period when decisions with long-range implications vis-a-vis Jewish identity are made. Programming that interests, attracts and involves Jewish students on and off campus may foster their continued involvement in Jewish life and activities following graduation.

- Chicago continues to attract a large number of **young Jewish adults**, many of whom are drawn to this community both because of the characteristics of the general community (its educational and occupational opportunities) as well as the Jewish community (for many, the size of the metropolitan area, including the fact that there are many other young Jewish adults, and for others, albeit a distinct minority, the rich Jewish institutional which is available). This influx represents a wonderful opportunity for the organized Jewish community to have some impact their decisions in relation to their Jewish identity and involvement, including partner choice. However, because this group is among the most mobile in terms of relocating outside of the Chicago area, occupational and social needs must be addressed if they are to remain in Chicago. A variety of offerings is required to meet the diverse needs of this group; however, consideration also must be given to bringing along more young adults to more intensive Jewish programming and cultivating the potential future leadership of Jewish Chicago.

- **Single parents**, whose numbers swell and decline over time as adults become remarried, may at points have minimal financial resources and are more isolated from others within the community as a result. They represent families whom we consider to be “at-risk” Jewishly; often there is a connection between their marital and family status and their level of involvement. The group most at risk are those who remain single parents over time. They often require social services as well to deal with the many problems and challenges they must confront. As noted above a large proportion do become remarried, which presents similar but also other kinds of issues. Because of fiscal and time constraints and general adversity faced by single parents, efforts will have to be made by reaching out to them and giving them opportunities to more fully integrate in the Jewish community.

Organizations and Institutions

Many institutions have a significant role to play in both involving groups, target or otherwise, or in addressing the Continuity agenda. Those institutions that have a meaningful impact upon individual lives and make important contributions to Jewish identities. Institutions should consider investing their resources more heavily in those individuals and families who have some interest in identifying and affiliating with Jewish institutions throughout their lives. Institutions need to be reminded that there is not necessarily a zero-sum game in affiliation; that is, individuals can and should become affiliated with different community organizations. Certainly, they cannot invest the same amount of time and energy in each organization and this will have some impact upon how leadership is developed. However, there should not be the sense that there are limited numbers available who will be affiliated. Rather the question is how to retain them within organizational life and encourage their development of Jewish identification once they become affiliated. One of the more interesting developments, which should be cultivated, has been the growing collaboration among social service agencies, Jewish education agencies/schools and congregations around issues of addressing other social/emotional needs of individuals and families that arise in the context of addressing their Jewish identification needs. This has been particularly noticeable in the area of early childhood. All institutions can learn from one another in the area of Jewish identification and continuity.

Meeting this objective will require greater collaboration among Jewish organizations and institutions. Sharing fiscal and personnel resources will enable organizations to complement each other's missions. At the same time organizations need to assess what they are doing in the area of Jewish Continuity, and change emphasis as a result. This need not entail developing entirely new programs, but rather introducing change into existing programs. Chicago Jewish area organizations may benefit from sharing programs relating to identity and Continuity. Opportunities for professional in-service training may also be helpful in preparing professional staff to implement a dimension of Continuity into their programming.

The Jewish community must remember that while Jewish education is not identical with continuity, it is an important factor in Jewish identification. This community has a strong set of Jewish educational structures and has witnessed growth in early childhood, day school and adult Jewish education. Although it is beyond the purview of this study, the community needs to be aware that the strength of the Jewish educational system is correlated with the resources available to the schools and the absence of financial barriers which prevent the participation of any family in the Jewish educational structure of their choice.

- An important institution is the local synagogue, the entry into Jewish communal life for many. The overall Jewish community in Chicago benefits from strong local involvement in synagogue life. As the community changes its socio-demographic structure, synagogues therefore face important challenges. Synagogues play a role in the lives of all congregants and they have an opportunity to offer ways for all individuals and families to infuse their lives with Jewish content and meaning. Specifically, they can retain their connections and impact upon all households by responding to the needs of emerging constituencies (e.g., elderly, singles) while still retaining their commitment to families.
- Again, program collaboration between synagogues and other Jewish institutions, exemplified in the Kehilla Program. Synagogue Fairs and Israel Experience programs, is not only an excellent way to maximize community resources, but promotes strong feelings of

community cohesion for program participants as well. As values of consumerism become more prevalent, leading some to understand organizational affiliation in terms of “buying a product,” the synagogue needs to develop new ways to convey a sense of kiddush and holiness which it legitimately offers.

Community

- Our ability to thrive as a people is dependent in part on our success at promoting identification with a community, defined in both local, national and international terms. A collective sense of community is an important dimension in addressing the issue of Continuity because it is through community organizations that continuity can be sustained.

- The Chicago Jewish community is still comprised of “neighborhoods”, even though the Jewish population continues to be spread over an even larger geographic area that now covers Cook County, DuPage County, part of Lake County and even part of McHenry County. However, the nature of that neighborhood varies tremendously, and even the concentration of Jewish population alone is no guarantee that Jews living in these geographic areas feel part of a local Jewish community. We need to recognize the unique characteristics of neighborhoods-in terms of structure, population, institutions and values to determine what kinds of identity and continuity programs will best work in specific neighborhoods. A community-wide plan is only as good as its ability to adapt to the needs of the neighborhoods. We need to encourage the collaboration among local Jewish community institutions in efforts that will benefit them and the community as a whole. At the same time, we need to be mindful of maintaining a connection between individuals living within local Jewish neighborhoods and the community as a whole as represented by community wide institutions.

- Chicago Jewish organizations need to work together to set realistic goals for participation among target groups in Jewish communal life. Examples of realistic goals include: 60% synagogue affiliation of all households, 40% participation in Jewish programming sponsored by an agency, 80% of Jewish households contribute to JUF, 60% of teens will receive some

sort of Jewish education beyond becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, 50% of all Jewish teens will participate in an Israel experience. Such goal setting must be approached carefully; otherwise it can easily devolve into the inability to set and address meaningful targets. While we recognize that Jewish identification is becoming more personalized and privatized, implicit in this approach is selecting some criteria for Jewish identification/involvement which we would like to see universalized across the community. An effort to discuss such standards among different organizations would be useful in possibly developing a consensus or at least an appreciation for acceptable differences.

- Community wide activities, co-sponsored by multiple organizations, provides an excellent way to build community. Examples include Jerusalem 3000, Yom Ha'atzmaut, Walk with Israel and The Year of Jewish Learning. In addition, organizations should work together to increase the number of community wide volunteer opportunities made available in the community. Often individuals are available for short term involvement in volunteer activities, but on a repeated basis. Opportunities to tap this interest and energy require careful thought about how to structure these activities and maintain follow-up.
- As part of the new information technology, the Internet can be used as an effective community building tool. In the most general terms, the Internet can foster connections never before possible between individuals and groups of Jewish within Chicago and between Chicago and any other community. The Internet offers a way for discussions to take place involving countless numbers of individuals representing communities anywhere in the world with access to this tool. On a local level, Chicago Jewish organizations can highlight community programs, including Jerusalem 3000, Yom Ha'atzmaut, Walk with Israel and Year of Jewish Learning. In addition, the Internet can be used to recruit volunteers.
- Linked to our sense of community is, of course, a connection with Israel. All Jewish organizations have a responsibility to promote opportunities for their constituencies to experience Israel, which has a positive impact upon identification regardless of age. Organizations should work to complement each other's efforts vis a vis educational

information about Israel. More than simply engendering an appreciation for Israel, based on first hand experience, we need to develop stronger ties between Israel and the American Jewish community so that both groups feel a sense of shared destiny as part of the Jewish people and can be responsive to one another as a result. This involves a much broader agenda than Israel experiences, an area in which Chicago Jewish community organizations are working to promote. It requires that institutions think through the ways in which they work collectively toward the development of an educational agenda that affects all age groups. The closeness of American Jews to Israel has been reflected in the aftermath of unfortunate and frequent tragedies and the fact that more than a third of Chicago area Jews report having friends or relatives living in Israel.

However, these are other opportunities to foster personal connections between Chicago area Jews and Israelis. Partnership 2000, a new project of the Jewish United Fund, in which the Chicago Jewish community is connected with the Kyriat Gat Lachish-Shafir region in the Northern Negev, offers the Chicago Jewish community a way to establish relationships with an entire community or region on a much broader basis than was possible through Project Renewal experiences.

- With any program an organization or institution sponsors, leadership plays a key role in the guiding of institutional development and change. Organizations need to foster Jewish leadership. Chicago has benefitted from several generations of committed leaders who made their mark on the national and international Jewish scene, not only Chicago. Another generation needs to be brought on board. In some ways the organizations are more conscious of the need to develop leadership and some of the ways to go about it; what we need is a willing pool of resourceful potential leaders who are willing to make the necessary time commitments and develop the skills that will assist them to adequately deal with the current and future communal challenges. This requires both lay and professional leadership development. Further, without leadership's commitment to the issues of Continuity, the Continuity agenda will suffer.

Implementation of the Task Force Report

The work of the Task Force was seen in the development of recommendations; agencies and leadership working independently and together will implement recommendations. Several of the recommendations which have emerged through this process have already been implemented, as noted below. It was the view of the framers of the Task Force process, that once it had completed its work, it would be disbanded. However, Task Force representatives should continue to meet on a periodic basis to assess what is being done among the organizations and in the community to share successful program models, to develop additional recommendations and to explore new areas where coalitions may further the planning and action agenda of Jewish continuity and identification.

TARGET GROUPS

Target Group(s)	Issues/Objectives	Recommendations for Actions
<p>ies with newborns and infants</p>	<p>Introduce Jewish life into the home as early as possible (i.e. in advance of the traditional points of entry for this population). Establish a connection with families so future contacts by the organized Jewish community can be made easily (recognizing high degrees of mobility among families at this life stage).</p>	<p>Establish community program to welcome families with newborns to the Chicago Jewish community. Personalize welcoming through volunteer visits. Funding is being provided by Jewish Federation for a new program to reach out to families through a 1996 Priority Grant. Advise families on synagogue affiliation and early childhood care opportunities. In addition, offer ways for families to learn Jewish home practices and to connect with other families with infants. Pair families with other young Jewish families in Israel, abroad (Project Renewal; Sister City Relationships; Partnership 2000; Jewish communities in other parts of the world). Develop a tracking system to stay in contact with families, despite mobility and family change.</p>
<p>es with pre-school age children</p>	<p>Improving our ability to connect with 6-7,000 young children and families participating in early childhood programs, and attract others who may want to take advantage of Jewish early childhood programs, but aren't aware of them Cultivate home practice using educational materials, such as books and videos, to bridge Jewish households with Jewish institutions. Achieve earlier affiliation with synagogues and other community institutions.</p>	<p>1995 Federation Priority Grant funded to address issues related to personnel, availability of programs and those pertaining to the system of Jewish early childhood education as a whole. In addition, the project will enhance follow-up with pre-school families by congregation leadership.</p>

Target Group(s)	Issues/Objectives	Recommendations for Action
Families with school-age children	Enhancing community involvement of pre-teen age groups and their families.	<p>Develop more opportunities for informal education (e.g. camping/Israel experience). Families of school-age children also need to be involved in family education experiences.</p> <p>Change family priorities to increase emphasis on Israel experience.</p> <p>Encourage families to place Israel experience high on list of priorities.</p>
Teens	<p>The disaffiliation rate among teens from the community and Jewish activities is high, though other family members may be active.</p> <p>Acknowledging diverse needs among the teen population is important.</p> <p>Insuring that Jewish teens and their families take into consideration Jewish values when selecting colleges.</p> <p>Increasing the number of teens who participate on Israel experience programs.</p>	<p>Rethink how we reach youth of high school age through <u>formal</u> and <u>informal</u> programs to maintain Jewish youth in an educational structure as long as possible. Work with teens and develop both leadership programs and more opportunities for mass-based involvement for teens (e.g. social, arts; civic, philanthropic, volunteer, diverse opportunities for involvement). Recognize, train and encourage quality professionals to work with teens.</p> <p>Cultivate teens' interests in Jewish activities and learning so they feel encouraged to seek out Jewish experiences while in college.</p> <p>Assist teens to make Jewishly informed college choices from a Jewish perspective-through an annual fair, contacts with families and career/guidance counselors at schools with Jewish teens.</p> <p>Expand the base of enrollees in SKIP/BAR-BAT MITZVAH. Establish pre- and post follow-up experiences. Build anticipation for an Israel experience as a natural part of the teen years. Develop a cadre of teens with Israel experience to help recruit others. Work with those involved in Israel experience and Jewish education through the Israel Experience Committee.</p>

TARGET GROUPS

Target Group(s)	Issues/Objectives	Recommendations for Action
<p>College-Age Students</p>	<p>Maximize our impact on Jewish students on and off the college campus.</p>	<p>Work with graduate and professional students to develop links between their professional interests and their Jewish identities (enhance the GAP program). Develop mentor programs for Graduate and Professional students.</p> <p>Expand program opportunities for Jewish students to visit Israel, study in Israeli universities and participate in educational and cultural programs in Israel.</p> <p>Extend and enhance Hillel services to campuses which cater to commuter students. Expand city-wide programming so that students at colleges with low Jewish populations have the opportunity to meet and interact with other Jews.</p>
<p>College-Age Young Adults Professionals</p>	<p>Low level of involvement in Jewish organizational life. Concern about opportunities for Jewish marriage partners.</p> <p>Insure that they stay in the Jewish community by connecting with Jewish institutional life. Recognize that young adults will use many different pathways to become more involved.</p> <p>Recognize that there is a high degree of mobility among this group and increasing geographic diversity within the metropolitan area, although a significant number still live within the city limits.</p>	<p>Explore options for occupational assistance (e.g., mentoring) and expanding opportunities for involvement in Jewish life through social, voluntary and philanthropic mechanisms. Expanding peer opportunities.</p> <p>Reassess organizational involvement of the young adults through changing notions of membership and affiliation (e.g., Kehillah Program).</p>

TARGET GROUPS

Target Group(s)	Issues/Objectives	Recommendations for Action
3 married couples without children	Raising the level of involvement in Jewish life, which is currently low.	Develop outreach programs based on young couples' needs and interests. Convene couples in similar situations, perhaps through exploring workplace related programs. More study of the characteristics, views and patterns of participation of this group to develop programs that would attract them to Jewish communal life. Assess whether or not affiliation is a major barrier to involvement. Seek to develop future community leadership among this group.
children/families with special	Easing individual/institutional barriers to involvement in Jewish life.	Continued consideration by all organizations to enhance opportunities for the involvement of all members of the family in Jewish community life. Consider ways of involving adult disabled Jews as they age.
parent families	More Jewish families will be single parent families at some time during their lives; the real need is to reach those families who maintain a single parent status over time and are at risk, socially, economically, psychologically and Jewishly. Perceived financial and social barriers to institutional involvement.	Organizations must think through their institutional barriers to single-parent family participation. Respond to changes in family status to encourage families to remain involved.

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