

Annual Report



ALEPH

Alliance for Jewish Renewal

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ANNUAL
REPORT



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WELCOME

From ALEPH Co-Chairs Rabbi Rachel Barenblat & Rabbi David Markus
and ALEPH Executive Director Shoshanna Schechter-Shaffin

“Trying to give finite form to the Revelation of the Infinite is dangerous. You can’t drive forward while looking through the rearview mirror. The Revelation of Torah, for example, has no one single finite form. The Revelation might remain the same, but the form which mortals give it changes. Tradition, therefore, is a marker we leave behind us in previous life cycles so that when we come back we have some notion of where we left off. We need to look at tradition, therefore, not as a relic of the past but as a catalyst for the future.”

– Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi z”l

What Reb Zalman taught about the always-evolving flow of holiness applies also to the always-evolving flow of ALEPH and Jewish Renewal. As one of many expressions of spiritual flow in the human world, ALEPH by definition must continue evolving, leaning forward to pioneer the next turning of spirit that we call Jewish Renewal. To drive looking only looking in the rearview mirror is to defy our calling and reason for being.

With this inherence of continuous transformation and renewal comes r’shut (permission) and chovah (duty) to give as we received – to nourish the continuing flow of ALEPH and Jewish Renewal for all who thirst and all who follow after us. Making real this legacy asks us to look forward to the future – and also, yes, to look back. We look back to anchor ourselves in gratitude for all that we received and continue to receive – and also to ensure what Reb Zalman called “backwards compatibility” with what came before.

This Annual Report looks back with a leaning-forward purpose. We look back to 2015, certain that the legacy of Reb Zalman z”l palpably continues among us in love, learning and soul. We look back to a year of inspiring creativity and strength – ALEPH’s largest-ever ordination class and largest-ever entering class, a heart-warming “Getting It Together” weekend celebrating the 25th anniversary of The Jew in the Lotus, and more. We also look back to 2015 as a year of planting seeds for the future – a new executive director, new ALEPH Board co-chairs and members, new retreat-based programs, a new ALEPH Network of congregations, communities and spiritual leaders, and the start of an international Listening Tour about the next turnings of ALEPH and Jewish Renewal.

These seeds will bear fruit in 2016 and beyond. We look forward to an extraordinary Kallah in Fort Collins, exciting academic partnerships with sister seminaries and universities, new online learning programs, new travel and pilgrimage opportunities, collaborating with allies on a permanent commitment to Earth-based Judaism, new paths for outdated denominational models, alliances to incubate innovation, and much more.

Every day we are inspired by the energy, enthusiasm and dedication of so many who invest heart and soul to build an ever-brighter future of ALEPH and Jewish Renewal. You make all of this possible.

With boundless thanks to your support in all worlds, may we continue the holy work of paying forward the richness of ALEPH and Jewish Renewal. May the flow continue to inspire, nourish and grow among us in ways that serve all that is holy.

B’shalom,

Rachel, David, and Shoshanna

2. VISION, MISSION, AND GOALS

VISION

ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal envisions a contemporary Judaism that is joyous, creative, spiritually rich, socially progressive, and earth-aware. This vision arises out of our search for a renewed personal connection to the God of our ancestors and the legacy of our tradition, in service of our higher dreams for the future of our world.










MISSION

The mission of ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal is to fully embrace a contemporary egalitarian Judaism as a profound spiritual practice and social transformer, reaching beyond religious boundaries and institutional structures worldwide.

ALEPH brings spiritual vitality and passion into the daily lives of Jews through programs that empower leadership, build communities, and generate powerful experiences and practical resources.

GOALS

ALEPH contributes to Jewish Renewal by supporting new creative efforts that draw upon the rich legacy of Jewish mystical/hasidic traditions and the deep wisdom of Jewish life and practice. ALEPH inspires, motivates and engages communities and individuals to:

-  **Discover** new models for meaningful Jewish practices that elevate prayer, sacred chant, meditation, healing services, transformative ritual, music, movement, and the renewed study of traditional text.
-  **Revitalize** synagogue life with an infusion of new approaches to prayer, ritual and communal process.
-  **Transform** and renew kavanah (spiritual intention)
-  **Create** cutting-edge programs that offer life-changing inspirational Jewish experiences.
-  **Realize** a global vision of egalitarian Judaism by creating new opportunities for leadership.
-  **Celebrate** the creativity of inspired and inspiring Jewish artists, musicians and spiritual teachers.
-  **Engage** with members of other faith traditions in joint projects that inspire trust and develop pathways for shared activism.
-  **Grow** ALEPH's programming and sustain its vision with personal and financial commitment.
-  **Facilitate** a deep connection between those on a variety of spiritual paths.

3. ALEPH / Jewish Renewal Listening Tour

The [ALEPH / Jewish Renewal Listening Tour](#) arose out of a desire to learn more about who we are, where we've come from and where we're going. Decades after Reb Zalman and his earliest students first planted the seeds of Jewish Renewal, in some ways ALEPH and Jewish Renewal have grown and succeeded beyond their founding visions. This gratifying testament to all that this circle of teachers and seekers gave the world continues to inspire ALEPH and Jewish Renewal to lean forward into the future, to continue their direct legacy and also plant new seeds that will blossom in the years and decades to come.

Naturally, with growth and success come new opportunities and new questions. What ALEPH and Jewish Renewal can and should be in the 21st century is a core focus as we move into this new era together. Perhaps even more important is another set of questions: how should the values and needs of 21st century Judaism, world spirituality, societal and environmental challenges inform the next turning of ALEPH and Jewish Renewal? Who we are depends vitally on who we have been, but as Reb Zalman so aptly taught, nobody drives looking only in the rearview mirror. What is the view forward from where we are now?

In that spirit, in 2015 ALEPH co-chairs Rabbi Rachel Barenblat and Rabbi David Markus embarked on a year-long **ALEPH / Jewish Renewal Listening Tour**. With support of ALEPH Board members, teachers and staff, congregations coast to coast, Jewish thought leaders and allied seminaries within and beyond the flow of Jewish denominations, the Listening Tour seeks to hear from the breadth and depth of Jewish spiritual community engaged in the work of renewing Judaism. Some of these people are core parts of ALEPH now – whether as teachers, leaders, clergy or community members. Others once were connected to ALEPH in some way but now travel in other circles. Still others never formally connected with ALEPH but are partners in renewing Judaism in ways closely aligned in method, intention and heart.

In our Listening Tour travels across North America, ALEPH Board members and staff have been joining the co-chairs in cultivating a practice of receptive listening during shabbatonim, clergy conferences, focus groups and individual sessions both live and via video-conference. These sessions – with iron-clad guarantees of personal confidentiality about anything shared – have brought hundreds of people forward to share hopes, dreams and visions about ALEPH and Jewish Renewal. They, in turn, have shared a range of ideas about what ALEPH and Jewish Renewal can be (and must never be), as well as and reflections about where ALEPH and Jewish Renewal have

done well and where we can and must do better.












A full year of receptive listening is just that – a practical and spiritual commitment to be open, transparent and reflective without limitation, with no sacred cows, without judgment and without premature comment. For these reasons, the 2015 Annual Report – which mainly is a review of the year now behind us – is not the proper context to reflect on the Listening Tour and where the future might take us. What 2015 has revealed, however, is that the energy around ALEPH is palpable and electric: the Listening Tour finds enthusiasm, hope, longing and yearning. Now in this second year after the “redeployment” of Reb Zalman z”l, the Listening Tour finds a sense of optimism and obligation that Reb Zalman’s legacy – all he bequeathed to Jewish Renewal and the world – now can and must continue to flow through us all.

The call of bring forward the next turning of Jewish Renewal into reality is that flow. It is the work of this hour, the purpose of the Listening Tour, and the total commitment of the Board and staff of ALEPH.







Eliciting Participation

The Listening Tour was announced in April 2015, when ALEPH co-chairs Rachel Barenblat and David Markus began their terms. At that time, and periodically throughout 2015, ALEPH solicited participation from the entire membership of OHALAH (the Association of Clergy for Jewish Renewal), the entire ALEPH communications list, and the social networking sites of ALEPH and OHALAH.

ALEPH also set a schedule of shabbatonim, with focus groups and “open mike” opportunities across the United States and Canada, as follows:


-  New York (May 2015)
-  Boston (October 2015)
-  Philadelphia (October 2015)
-  Washington, D.C. (December 2015)
-  Montreal (March 2016)
-  Vancouver (March 2016)
-  San Diego (April 2016)
-  Los Angeles (April 2016)
-  Santa Cruz (April 2016)
-  San Francisco Bay Area (April 2016)
-  Boulder, Colorado (May 2016)


In addition, ALEPH set a schedule of focus groups, consultations and “open mike” opportunities at the following gatherings:


-  Ruach Ha'Aretz Retreat: West Chester, PA (July 2015)
-  ALEPH Student Shabbaton: Broomfield, CO (January 2016)
-  OHALAH Clergy Conference: Broomfield, CO (January 2016)
-  Rabbis Without Borders: Reisterstown, MD (February 2016)
-  New Paradigm Spiritual Community Initiative: Falls Village, CT (March 2016)
-  ALEPH Kallah: Fort Collins, CO (July 2016)


Listening Tour Questions

Everywhere the Listening Tour goes, some common questions emerge – and they are much the same questions posed at the beginning of this endeavor. What do we most cherish about Renewal that we hope the future will carry forward? What should we jettison or change? What new focus would we recommend in coming years? Recognizing that Renewal is expanding beyond ALEPH alone, the Listening Tour has especially welcomed observations about the following:

-  **Innovation Space.** How can we cultivate a shared pan-Renewal “ecosystem” for continued spiritual and organizational innovation? What are ideal preconditions for successful spiritual and organizational innovation, and how can we best maximize those conditions? What do we most need to teach innovation to future leaders and seekers?

-  **Renewal as Alliance.** How can we together steward this “ecosystem” without falling into competitive traps of zero-sum financial games? Given that Renewal is a phenomenon far larger than ALEPH, should ALEPH aspire to make real its title (“Alliance for Jewish Renewal”)? What should ALEPH’s role be in such an alliance – hub, umbrella, incubator or something else?

-  **Strategic Strengths and Weaknesses.** What are ALEPH’s greatest strengths and weaknesses, and what specific recommendations for ALEPH and Renewal’s futures flow from them?

-  **Not Knowing.** What question isn’t here that should be? How would you answer it?

Anchor Participants, Collaborators and Hosts

Each Listening Tour stop has been supported by congregations, seminaries, projects, teachers and other leaders engaged in the ongoing work of revitalizing Jewish spirituality. Without them, the Listening Tour – and ALEPH – could not succeed. ALEPH is grateful to the hundreds of people who have participated in shabbatonim, focus groups, “open mike” sessions and personal meetings: the 2016 Listening Tour report will include a list of participants.

ALEPH is grateful to Rabbi Diane Elliot and Rabbi Dan Goldblatt for helping coordinate the Bay Area visit, and Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan whose hands-on support in 2015 made the January 2016 sessions at OHALAH possible. ALEPH is especially grateful to these congregations, seminaries and institutional leaders for anchoring, hosting and/or participating in Listening Tour visits:

New York

(May 2015)

[Romemu](#) and Rabbi David Ingber
[Yeshivat Maharat](#) and Rosh Yeshivah Rabbi Jeffrey Fox
[Lab/Shul](#) and Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie
[Hazon](#) and Nigel Savage
[CLAL](#) and [Rabbis Without Borders](#) Director Rabbi Rebecca Sirbu
[Academy for Jewish Religion](#) and Rabbi Jill Hammer
[Hiddush](#) and Rabbi Uri Regev

Boston

(October 2015)

[Hebrew College](#) and Rabbi Art Green
[B’nai Or](#) and Rabbi Hanna Tiferet Siegel
[Mayyim Hayyim](#)

Philadelphia (October 2015)	Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and President Deborah Waxman P'nai Or and Rabbi Marcia Prager Mishkan Shalom and Rabbi Shawn Zevit Shalom Center and Rabbi Arthur Waskow
Washington (November 2015)	The Jewish Studio and Rabbi Evan Krame Beth El of Montgomery County , Rabbi Greg Harris & Hazzan Matt Klein
Montreal (March 2016)	ALEPH Canada B'nai Or Community Synagogue and R.P. Sherril Gilbert Mile End Chavurah
Vancouver (March 2016)	Or Shalom and Rabbi Hannah Dresner & Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan
San Diego (April 2016)	Shir HaYam and David Rafsky Elijah Minyan and Rabbi Wayne Dosick Spiritual Directors International and Wendie Lash
Los Angeles (April 2016)	Holistic Jew and Rabbi Tmimah Ickovits B'nai Horin and Rabbi Stan Levy Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies and Dr. Mimi Feigelson Academy for Jewish Religion - California
Santa Cruz (April 2016)	Chadeish Yameimu and Rabbi Eli Cohen & Rabbi Lori Klein
Bay Area (April 2016)	Kehilla and Rabbi David Cooper & Hazzan Shulamit Wise Fairman Chochmat Ha-Lev and Julie Batz The Kitchen and Rabbi Noa Kushner Aquarian Minyan and Shoshanna Dembitz & Abigail Grafton
Boulder (May 2016)	Rabbinic Pastor Eve Ilsen and Judith Dack Nevei Kodesh and Rabbi Sarah Bracha Gershuny Yesod Foundation and Rabbi Tirzah Firestone & David Friedman Pardes Levavot and Rabbis Victor & Nadya Gross Colorado University-Boulder and Dr. David Shneer

Renewing Renewal: State of Renewal Report – Summer 2016

After synthesizing what we expect to be many hundreds of pages of notes from dozens of visits, open mikes, focus groups and discussions around the United States and Canada during 2015 and 2016, ALEPH intends to issue a report in late summer 2016 on the state of Jewish Renewal. This report, *Renewing Renewal*, will journey deeply into


who and where we are, where we've come from, and where this amazing and ever-changing enterprise of Jewish Renewal might be headed in the years to come. Stay tuned.

To share stories, advice, hopes, dreams, desires, concerns or complaints – or to plug into future Listening Tour visits or request a private meeting with ALEPH's co-chairs – please email ALEPH co-chairs Rabbi Rachel Barenblat and Rabbi David Markus at chair@aleph.org.

4. ALEPH Ordinations

The **ALEPH Ordination Program**, rigorous and strong, continues to grow strategically, and now ranks among the largest rigorous liberal Jewish seminaries in North America.

The ALEPH Ordination Program comprises four tracks toward ordination in spiritual service, including three clergy (primary ordination) tracks and a coordinate program in Jewish spiritual direction:

 **Rabbinic Program** (Rabbi Marcia Prager, Dean and Director)

 **Rabbinic Pastor Program** (Rabbinic Pastor Shulamit Fagan, Director)

 **Cantorial Program** (Hazzan Jack Kessler, Director)

 **Hashpa'ah Program** (Rabbi Nadya Gross, Director)

In January 2015, at the January OHALAH Conference in Broomfield, Colorado, the Va'ad (Academic Committee) of the ALEPH Ordination Program conferred ordination on ALEPH's largest-ever graduating class, comprising 10 rabbis, two hazzanim (cantors) and one rabbinic pastor. ALEPH's 2015 musmachim (ordinees) are listed below, and their official ordination biographies (current as of January 2015) follow at the end of this section:

 Rabbi Richard Backer

 Rabbi Rebecca Kushner

 Rabbi Evan Krame

 Rabbi David Markus

 Rabbi Abby Michaleski

 Rabbi Lori Shaller

 Rabbi Rhonda Shapiro-Rieser

 Rabbi Shifrah Tobacman

 Rabbi Rain Zohav

 Hazzan Daniel Kempin

 Hazzan Steven Klaper

 Rabbinic Pastor Heena Reiter

ordination from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College ("RRC"). Rabbi Teva completed with ALEPH a coordinate program of advanced study in Jewish Renewal approaches to spirituality and *halachah* (Jewish law), and conferred on him a second (Renewal) *smicha*. ALEPH also advanced to candidacy ("senior status") nine candidates for ordination in January 2016, comprising five rabbis, two hazzanim (cantors) and two rabbinic pastors. ALEPH looks forward to welcoming them into the ALEPH Alumni Association in January 2016.

As an article in the *Jewish Exponent* trumpeted, during ALEPH's summer 2015 admission cycle, ALEPH welcomed **24 new students** into the primary ordination programs for rabbis, cantors and rabbinic pastors. This largest-ever entering cohort brings ALEPH's enrollment in the primary ordination programs to 72 students in good standing (52 rabbinic students, 11 cantorial students and nine rabbinic pastor students). This enrollment level excludes students currently on leave of absence. In addition, ALEPH's three-year program in Hashpa'ah (Spiritual Direction) has 18 students in its current cohort scheduled for completion in January 2017, including 10 students who either already hold a primary ordination or are advanced non-clergy students studying on a non-ordination track. Taken together, the ALEPH Ordination Program now ranks among the largest rigorous liberal Jewish seminaries in North America.

Uniquely among rigorous liberal Jewish seminaries, ALEPH ordination students not only hail from around the world but also study toward ordination while rooted in their home communities, often serving in various positions of Jewish spiritual leadership in congregations and nonprofit contexts. ALEPH students currently reside on four continents (North America, Europe, South America and Africa), and in several dozen U.S. states and multiple

Also in 2015, ALEPH conferred rabbinic ordination on **Rabbi David Leipziger Teva**, who holds a primary

Canadian provinces coast to coast. Rooted in home communities, ALEPH students are specially positioned to learn and evolve spiritually while based organically in real-life contexts.

ALEPH academic course offerings continue to grow. In 2015, ALEPH offered 44 full-semester live remote-learning courses by video-conference attended by 296 students and taught by 32 teachers. In addition to ALEPH's full-semester course offerings, ALEPH offers in-person intensive learning courses offered at ALEPH residential summer programs, including Ruach Ha'Aretz, the ALEPH Kallah and the ALEPH Intensive Learning ("Smicha Week") retreat.

Expanding academic course offerings includes embracing new faculty, reviewing and refining curricula, and initiating new approaches to continually refine performance and expand capacities. The Rabbinic Pastor Task Force recommendations became the basis of several new rabbinic pastor courses and programs. The Cantorial Program also developed several new courses and inaugurated plans for a Cantorial Program Advisory Council to further develop the cantorial program.

Throughout 2015, the Va'ad and core faculty continued their administrative restructuring process based on the principles of sociocracy. This method of organizational governance is designed to promote transparency and inclusive decision-making transparent, and to grow in a manner that is consultative and accessible – with high-level engagement that seeks shared understandings of issues and potential solutions. As part of this endeavor, an array of working "circles" undertook high-level projects in curriculum evaluation and redesign, the integration of the former ALEPH Beit Midrash courses as full-semester AOP courses, the refinement of the role of the student's Director of Studies, and the establishment of a strong collaborative relationship with the AOP Student Association Board and its committees.

The ALEPH Student Board, the governing body of the ALEPH Student Association, has become an even stronger voice for students and productively collaborated with the Va'ad on significant matters pertaining to the success of the program. The ALEPH Student Association inaugurated an ethics forum, "Eye on Ethics," which engages students in a monthly pragmatic workshop on basic ethical issues that arise in the context of spiritual leadership.

The attractive and clear presentation of AOP in the new ALEPH website, and also the website's enhanced functionality, has greatly improved program visibility and ease of functioning. This year also saw a greatly improved computer infrastructure, including the newest Moodle update for online learning. ALEPH doubled server capacity for the ALEPH Ordination Programs, added a new network file server added to the system, built an integrated structure across multiple servers, and added extensive

library resources for ordination students through our password-protected Moodle site.

Projects in process include finalizing an agreement with New York Theological Seminary (NYTS) to add a cooperative and fully accredited Master of Divinity program to our already existing ALEPH-NYTS Doctor of Ministry program.

ALEPH CLASS OF 2015

biographies effective January 2015

Rabbi Richard Lawrence Backer, a resident of Newton, Massachusetts, has been studying for rabbinical ordination since 2008. With ten years of hospice and hospital chaplaincy experience, Mr. Backer is currently the Pastoral Care Coordinator for Winchester Hospital in Winchester, Massachusetts. In addition, Mr. Backer is a Board Certified Chaplain, certified by the National Association of Jewish Chaplains, and is a member of the Massachusetts Bar. Prior to beginning his second career in pastoral care, Mr. Backer had a distinguished career in international real estate, as Vice President for Gunwyn Development Company in Cambridge, Massachusetts and as Senior Vice President at Pembroke Real Estate, a division of Fidelity Investments in Boston, overseeing the acquisition and development of a real estate portfolio in: Boston; Washington, D.C.; San Francisco; Tokyo, Japan; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Sao Paulo, Brazil. Mr. Backer also served as a Real Estate Specialist at the United States Department of State in Washington, D.C. Mr. Backer earned his Bachelor of Science in Economics from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in 1978, a Masters in City and Regional Planning from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University in 1983 and a Juris Doctor from Boston College Law School in 1983. Also, in 2010, Mr. Backer received a Masters in Jewish Studies from Hebrew College, recipient of The David Nisson Touroff Memorial Prize for meritorious work in Jewish studies and psychology.

Hazzan Daniel Kempin lives in Frankfurt, Germany. He has been in the ALEPH Cantorial program since the beginning of 2008. He has served as Cantor/Shaliach Tzibur for the Egalitarian Minyan of the Jewish Community in Frankfurt since the beginning of 1994, and also travels to serve other communities in Germany. He was born in Wiesbaden, Germany. He studied music and several semesters of Jewish Studies at the University of Frankfurt and at a Yeshiva in Jerusalem. Since 1983 he has given concerts and taught workshops in Jewish music in Great Britain, Poland, Hungary, Russia, Israel and the USA. He has recorded five CDs, two of which won several musical awards. He has been engaged in the Interreligious Dialogue for more than thirty years, serving for 5 years in the Council of Religions in Frankfurt, and was a co-founder of the Interreligious choir in Frankfurt.

Hazzan Steve Klaper is a resident of Oak Park, Michigan. He has been in the ALEPH Cantorial program since 2010. He is a Jewish troubadour – a spiritual storyteller, minstrel and teacher. Steve collaborates with Franciscan Brother Al Mascia, promoting interfaith dialogue and reconciliation through the Song and Spirit Institute for Peace, and is spiritual leader of Shir Hanishama, a Renewal havurah that meets at Song and Spirit. Steve received smicha as a maggid from Maggid Yitzhak Buxbaum in 2008. With over 40 years experience as a professional musician, Steve infuses traditional Jewish teachings with ancient and contemporary melodies, mystical chant and wide-ranging stories. He has recorded several CDs of Jewish music as well as an award-winning children's music CD, *I Have a Little Shadow*, based on the poems of Robert Louis Stevenson. Steve is High Holiday hazzan at Cong. Shir Tikvah in Troy, MI, and presents concerts, classes and worship experiences at churches, synagogues, festivals and conferences throughout the country.

Rabbi Evan J. Krame, resident of Potomac, Maryland, has been studying in the Rabbinic Program of the ALEPH Ordination Program since 2008. He is the co-founder of the Jewish Studio, which provides Jewish experiences for adults in the Greater Washington DC area. Evan is a past president of several non-profit organizations including the Hillel at George Washington University and Shared Horizons, Inc. that manages a pooled special needs trust for persons with disabilities. Evan was a founder of the American Friends of the Anne Frank House and continues to serve as an officer after 20 years. Evan has been honored with Hillel's Exemplar of the Year, Israel Bonds Young Leadership Award, Jewish Federation of Washington's Campaigner of the Year, ORT's community leadership award and the Shared Horizons Humanitarian award. Evan continues as a partner in Krame and Biggin, a Maryland law firm specializing in estates and trusts work, with an emphasis on assisting the families of persons with special needs. Evan is a graduate of Brandeis University and George Washington University Law School and has an LLM in Taxation.

Rabbi Lucy Rebecca Kushner lives in Iowa City, Iowa, and has been studying for Rabbinic Ordination since 2009. She has part time pulpits in Temple Sholom in Galesburg, Illinois, Sons of Jacob in Waterloo, Iowa, and leads monthly musical Kabbalat Shabbat services at Agudas Achim in Iowa City. She has two degrees in classical music from the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany, and has worked over three decades as a professional flutist in German opera and radio orchestras. She has published both poetry and prose in German, the most recent being a contribution in "Transatlantic Immigration Stories." She is currently writing her thesis on "Zacharias Frankel as a Jewish Educator" for her Master of Science in Jewish Education at Spertus Institute in Chicago.

Rabbi David Evan Markus, a resident of Westchester County, New York, has been studying for rabbinical ordination since 2008. He has served since 2012 as associate spiritual leader of Temple Beth-El of City Island (New York City, New York), an independent congregation dedicated to Jewish spirituality through music, prayer and learning. Markus is a syndicated blogger for My Jewish Learning, and his published scholarship focuses on spiritual direction and liturgical innovation. Markus also serves as Vice Chair and General Counsel of ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal, the umbrella organization for Jewish Renewal that includes the ALEPH Ordination Programs. In secular life, Markus has a full-time public service career on behalf of the State of New York. He currently presides as Judicial Referee in New York Supreme Court, Ninth Judicial District. Previously Markus served as special counsel to the Chief Judge of New York State, senior counsel to the New York Senate, and faculty at Fordham and Pace Universities. Markus earned his Juris Doctor magna cum laude from Harvard Law School, and his Masters in Public Policy with honors from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, which bestowed on Markus prestigious Innovator in Public Service award. He earned his Bachelor of Arts summa cum laude from Williams College.

Rabbi Abby Beth Michaleski, a resident of Camden County, New Jersey, has been studying for rabbinic ordination in the ALEPH Ordination Program since 2006. Prior to entering rabbinical school, she worked for many years as a b'nai mitzvah tutor, teacher, cantorial soloist and lay leader for multiple congregations in the South Jersey and Philadelphia areas while earning her Master's Degree in Jewish Studies from Gratz College in Pennsylvania. Ms. Michaleski has served as the Spiritual Leader of Temple Beth El of Hammonton, NJ since 2006 and will continue as their rabbi following ordination, bringing the creative, dynamic and spiritual energy of Jewish Renewal to this congregation and the larger Jewish community. While following this path of Jewish learning and teaching, she has also worked as an Addictions Specialist, certified and Licensed by the State of New Jersey since 1991. She has been providing education, training, assessment and therapeutic services in a wide variety of settings and offers this specialized knowledge and experience to the Jewish community as well. Ms. Michaleski maintains a private practice and works as a Substance Abuse Evaluator for the New Jersey Judiciary. She earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology with Highest Honors from Rutgers University and an Associate's Degree in Applied Science from Camden County College.

Rabbinic Pastor Heena Reiter lives in Charlottesville, Virginia, and began studying for rabbinic ordination in the ALEPH program in 2008. In 2011, during her required unit of chaplaincy, she recognized her calling to pastoral care and transferred to ALEPH's Rabbinic Pastor program.

In 1991 Heena helped found P'nai Yisrael Chavurah, and has since served as its Co-Spiritual Leader. She directed the Geshet Center for Jewish Spirituality, Meditation and Healing in Charlottesville from 2000-2009. She served Congregation Beth Israel, Charlottesville as a religious school teacher, coordinator of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Music Programs and tutor during the past 25 years. Passionately interested in and committed to the power of listening as a tool of healing, Heena participated in three Compassionate Listening Project delegations to Israel and the Palestinian territories, beginning in 1998, and remains involved in local interfaith and inter-spiritual peace initiatives. In all her work, Heena strives to integrate her knowledge of psychological/personality systems, a commitment to meditation, spiritual practices and personal growth, and her background as a psychiatric nurse and holistic health practitioner with her Jewish studies and the interfaith education she received during her chaplain residency. She received a B.S.N., from Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing, C.U.N.Y., and her M.S.N., from the University of Illinois at the Medical Center in Chicago.

Rabbi Lori D. Shaller lives in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts, on the Island of Martha's Vineyard. She has studied in the Rabbinic Ordination Program since 2007. Lori has been the guest spiritual leader with various Jewish congregations and Unitarian Universalist churches for three years, teaches private students, leads interfaith, clergy spiritual direction groups and sees private clients in spiritual direction. The Jewish Women's Archive has published Lori's curriculum on Jewish women in the Labor Movement. Lori has been a rabbinic fellow with Rabbis Without Borders and was a participant in the 2014 Jewish and Muslim Emerging Leaders Retreat sponsored by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College's Department of Multifaith Studies and Initiatives. Lori has been an educator and curriculum writer for twenty-five years, working in the areas of world history, Shakespeare and curriculum design. She was a recipient of the award for excellence in teaching through Northeastern University's World History Center. Lori earned an ALB cum laude from Harvard University and Masters of Teaching Social Studies Education, Grades 9-12 and Masters in American Jewish History from Boston University.

Rabbi Rhonda Shapiro-Rieser lives in Western Massachusetts in Greenfield. She entered the ALEPH program in 2003. She is the Smith College Jewish Student Advisor and also facilitates a support group for parents of Jewish religious school children who have emotional and physical difficulties. Shapiro-Rieser also works as a therapist with a specialty in Autism Spectrum Disorders, and has co-authored the forthcoming book, *The Secret Rules of Social Networking*. She is currently working on a handbook on Autism Spectrum Disorders to be used by synagogue religious school staff. She received a Masters degree in Counseling Psychology from Antioch University,

a graduate certificate in Autism Spectrum Disorders, and a Doctor of Ministry in Jewish Spiritual direction from the Graduation Theological Foundation. In 2010 she was recognized by Interfaith Connections of Western MA, for her work in strengthening faith connections for individuals with disabilities. For the last two years she has been nominated as Advisor of the Year by Smith College students. Shapiro-Rieser is also a novelist who writes about Jewish subjects. She published the book *A Place of Light*, which was a finalist for the Harold Ribalow Prize.

Rabbi Shifrah Tobacman lives in Emeryville, California, and has been a student in the ALEPH Rabbinic Ordination Program since 2007. Shifrah has served as a member of the spiritual leadership team of Congregation Ner Shalom in Cotati, CA where she is currently developing an adult education program titled *The Spirit of the Matter*, aimed at enriching the work of social justice and environmental activists through deeper engagement with Jewish texts and tradition. She earned a Masters in Jewish Studies from the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley CA (2010), with a thesis titled *Ancient Threads, New Weavings: Counting the Omer Then and Now*, and is the author of *Omer/Teshuvah: 49 Poetic Meditations for Counting the Omer or Turning Toward a New Year*. Shifrah has dedicated most of her professional life to supporting and promoting the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities and society as a whole. She trained professionally as a Feldenkrais Practitioner® with the Somathematics Training Program, San Diego, California (1991) and has served as a massage therapist Feldenkrais Practitioner®, health educator, and public health professional. Shifrah earned a Masters in Public Administration with a focus in health care and organization change from California State University, Hayward, CA (1998).

Rabbi Rain Zohav resides in Rockville, Maryland. She has studied for rabbinic ordination in the ALEPH Program since 2007. She currently serves as Director of Education of Shirat HaNefesh congregation in Chevy Chase, Maryland. Her published D'verei Torah include: *Washington Jewish Week*. "And God Saw That It Was Good," B'reishit, Oct. 15, 2014; "Misguided Challenges to Leadership," Korach, June 18, 2014; "Plagues in Our Time Prompt Need for Change," Va'era, Dec. 26, 2013 (originally published as "The Challenge of Living Sustainably" on kolaleph.org Jan 29, 2013); "The Creation of Earthlings," B'reishit, Oct. 11, 2012. She earned a Masters in Jewish Studies with Highest Honors from Gratz College and was also the recipient of the Graduate prize in Bible studies 2012, and the Bible studies and Jewish studies Graduate prizes in 2013. She earned her B.A. in Philosophy and Religion, Summa Cum Laude from Mary Baldwin College, and was the recipient of the Outstanding Adult Degree Student Award.

5. ALEPH PROGRAMS

In addition to ALEPH Ordinations, ALEPH is the home of a consortium of retreat-based and online programs and institutes for Jewish spirituality. These bring forward Jewish Renewal spiritual technologies, and are a focus of ongoing “research and development” in Jewish spiritual life. The year 2015 was a landmark year in ALEPH programming:

Getting it Together and Ruach Ha’Aretz

Last summer, over the Fourth of July weekend, a diverse group gathered at West Chester University (West Chester, Pennsylvania) to celebrate [Deep Ecumenism](#) with a weekend called [Getting It...Together](#) (a reference to Reb Zalman’s oft-quoted phrase, “The only way to get it together -- is together!”).







The weekend celebrated the 25th anniversary of the trip to Dharamsala, India, by a group of rabbis from across the denominational spectrum, prominently including Reb Zalman, to share secrets of survival and spirituality with His Holiness, the XIV Dalai Lama of Tibet. This exchange, and the relationships built before and after, offer an extraordinary example of pluralism and trans-denominationalism, as well as an amazing Jewish-Buddhist dialogue on levels both deep and high. These, in turn, became the subject of the best-selling book by Rodger Kamenetz, *The Jew in the Lotus*, which chronicled the dialogue between the Dalai Lama and the visiting rabbis. Kamenetz’s book continues to re-inspire the spirituality of many thousands and profoundly affect the continuing flow of Jewish Renewal.

Several participants from that trip reunited for the weekend, including Rodger Kamenetz, Marc Lieberman, Rabbi Moshe Waldoks, and Blu and Rabbi Yitz Greenberg. Together they reflected on the continuing flow of deep ecumenism in the legacy of Reb Zalman, whose first *yahrzeit* on the secular calendar coincided with this reunion weekend.






Immediately following the Getting It Together weekend came ALEPH’s biennial [Ruach Ha’Aretz retreat](#), which also focused around a Deep Ecumenism theme. At Ruach Ha’Aretz ALEPH launched a new program: Educating for Spirituality.

A. Educating for Spirituality

[Educating for Spirituality](#) (EfS) is built around the mission to enhance authentic spirituality in religious education and communal life by creating and providing resources and training to educators and clergy of all faith traditions. Rabbis Reuben Modek, Lori Shaller and Rain Zohav constitute the Executive Committee of EfS, and Rabbis Lori Shaller and Rain Zohav are the Program’s Co-Directors and lead teachers.

-  EfS shares a Renewal approach to education through:
-  yearly institutes;
-  online classes;
-  peer-reviewed curriculum and lessons through an online resource center;
-  a listserve for EfS participants to share best practices and support;
-  consultation for religious school programs.

The target audience for EfS is clergy, religious and spiritual program teachers and directors, and seminarians of all faith traditions. With intention to bring Renewal engagement techniques and best educational practices to spiritual program educators both within and outside of the Jewish Renewal world, the goals of EfS include:

-  model successful techniques for bringing prayer into the classroom;
-  develop pedagogy and strategies for curriculum development;
-  focus on children’s spiritual education by creating lessons on prayer, language acquisition and holidays around students’ spirituality;
-  reflect and develop educators’ own spirituality as reflective pedagogical process; and
-  create safe and comfortable environments to explore these ideas.

B. C-DEEP: Center for Devotional, Ecstatic, and Energy Practices

In 2015, C-DEEP added a new and successful program, a weeklong [Ecstatic Meditation retreat](#) held at the Fitzgerald Center in Jemez Springs, New Mexico. Another such retreat is planned for May 2016, a silent retreat centered around practice of *devekut* (Oneness with God). To reach the place of *devekut*, connection with the Great Mystery, we invoke each of the elements (earth, water, fire and air) through chant and ritual.

Also in 2015, we began training the eighth cohort of [Kol Zimra](#) (Chant Leaders Training for rabbis, cantors, and lay leaders) in Mendham, New Jersey, as the seventh cohort graduated from their training in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The seventh cohort was an amazing group of 19 leaders,

now initiated onto a path of love, spiritual practice and leadership. They return to their home communities in California, Arizona, New York, Texas, Florida, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Oregon, New Mexico and Canada... inspired to serve and spread the joys of

deep immersion in our heritage through the Magic of Hebrew Chant.

Kol Zimra 9 will begin in July 2016 and applications for participation are now open.

"To anyone who has been searching for an experience of genuine spiritual depth in a Jewish context, I would say: your search ends (and begins) with Kol Zimra. In Kol Zimra, Shefa has succeeded in creating an entirely new phenomenon within Judaism—a simple, practical technology, based on Hebrew scripture, that anyone can utilize to their great spiritual and psychological benefit. In keeping with the tradition of all great spiritual revivals, it's no exaggeration to say that Shefa has thrown wide open the gates of Jewish prayer. All who sincerely wish to enter them, can naturally, effortlessly enter them here." – *Rabbi Alan Green*

"Rabbi Shefa Gold brings a rare authenticity to everything she teaches. While many students, myself included, first encountered Reb. Shefa through chanting, in this retreat [Ecstatic Meditation] she brings front and center her lifetime of experience with meditation, as well as the profound wisdom of Jewish and other spiritual traditions. Shefa's teachings enriched and deepened my long-standing meditation practice and made it alive again after it had become dry and routine. Guided deep into the silence, I reconnected to heart and opened to being in the presence of the Divine both in and out of meditation practice. I continue to experience this connection unfolding in my daily life long after the retreat has ended, which is the mark of life-changing learning from an inspired and inspiring teacher. – *Maxine Fraade*

C. The ALEPH Sage-ing® Mentorship Program

The [ALEPH Sage-ing® Mentorship Program](#) consists of a three-class cycle. The first class in that cycle -- Part One, "Wisdom of the Heart: From Age-ing to Sage-ing®" -- was taught by Sage-ing® Co-Founders and Co-directors Bahira Sugarman and Rabbi Shaya Isenberg during July 2015 at West Chester University (West Chester, Pennsylvania) at the Ruach Ha'Aretz Summer Retreat. They will teach Part One again at Kallah in July 2016.

Co-Directors Rabbis Victor and Nadya Gross taught Part Two, "Death as Home Coming: Life is the Answer" on end of life issues, in Tampa, Florida, during January 2015 with Lynne Iser, Rabbi Shaya Isenberg and Bahira Sugarman participating. The Grosses again taught Part Two in January 2016 with Rabbi Shaya and Bahira participating.

Parts One and Two have been attracting increasing numbers of participants. The present generation of 'elders' is now waking up to this opportunity to meet the third act of their lives in new ways, as we have met each preceding stage in our lives.

A third cohort began Part Three, the certification part of the ALEPH Sage-ing® Mentorship Program, in October

2015. Their studies continue throughout the year, meeting five additional times via teleconference, meeting monthly in chevruta, and creating their own community projects with individual faculty guidance.

The final five-day intensive for Graduation Week, will be held in fall 2016 at Pearlstone Retreat Center (Reisterstown, Maryland), where students will present their community projects. Faculty will also present cutting edge work in progress. It is a time of ever deepening learning for us all.

Graduates from the previous Cohorts are engaged in consciously continuing on their Sage-ing® journey in their communities in Canada, Brazil, Israel, California, Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. They are creating an ever more conscious generation of people who are sage-ing.

D. Embodying Spirit, En-Spiriting Body

During 2016, Rabbi Diane Elliot and her co-teachers continued the successful [Embodying Spirit, En-Spiriting Body](#) program. This program is designed to gently and joyfully guide participants in learning to dance their soul's yearning and to move sacred text off the page. This in-depth, innovative program also provides participants with skills to become "embodiment facilitators" in their home communities.

Participants said:

"I felt that the heavens reached down to open a path of light and love to me, filling it with dancing soul sisters of deep intent and full hearts, all beckoning me onward on the journey that is mine. A life-giving feast for body, heart, mind and soul!" – Evelyn Gould, Professor, University of Oregon, lay leader at Temple Beth Israel, Eugene

"This was very meaningful integration time... and an amazing journey. I utilized what I learned immediately, both personally and in all of the classes I teach — including b'nai mitzvah, pre-natal yoga, and Embodied Prayer yoga." – Mia Miriam Cohen, midwife, Jewish ritual leader and rabbinical student

"Diane's way touches and opens my being to such great depths, to a place where I can truly access more of my essence and authentic self and, in turn, gain more access to our Torah and liturgy.... Information becoming wisdom, nourishing, challenging and illuminating deep places within me." — Alisa Fineman, Cantorial Soloist at Congregation Beth Israel, Carmel Valley, CA

E. Looking Ahead to New Programs in 2016

In early 2016, ALEPH launched [Tikshoret: Connections](#), a new online adult education initiative that offers adults an opportunity to dive deeply into the spiritual and educational gifts of Jewish Renewal from home. The Hebrew word Tikshoret comes from the root for "deep connection," and that's what these classes are designed to be: an opportunity to connect with the riches of our

tradition. Our first Tikshoret classes are already underway: stay tuned for further updates!

Later in 2016, ALEPH will launch the **ALEPH Scholars and Speakers Bureau**. This initiative will connect communities with the spiritual resources of Jewish Renewal, and offer individual [ALEPH Network](#) members with speaking, teaching, davening, workshop leading, exhibition, and performance opportunities.

6. The ALEPH Network

During 2015, ALEPH spent many months in conversation with alumni, affiliated communities, and members of OHALAH (the transdenominational association of Jewish Renewal clergy) about the affiliation model. These conversations have raised up a sense that denominational structures are weakening across the Jewish world – a common refrain in the Listening Tour – and that ALEPH's own models likewise must evolve.

Partly in response to those conversations, ALEPH is pioneering a successor to the denominational affiliation model. We are calling it the [ALEPH Network](#), and it was soft-launched in late 2015.

The ALEPH Network will be an alliance of nonprofit organizations, individuals, synagogues, chavurot, and more – all standing together at the vibrant cutting-edge of Judaism where meaning, heart experience, soul experience together call forward those spiritual technologies that will best serve the core needs of Jewish spiritual seekers today and tomorrow.

The ALEPH Network is not a denomination with a top-down approach to management, governance, theology, resources and financing. ALEPH has never been that and will never be that. Rather, the ALEPH Network will unite ALEPH affiliated communities (and might replace that model in time) with congregations and communities that either are independent of any denomination or that participate in a denominational system. Participation in the ALEPH Network will help brand the member as doing innovative, heart-centered, spiritual, meaningful work in resonance with the overall non-denominational principles of ALEPH and Jewish Renewal.

The ALEPH Network will be just that – a network paradigm far more horizontal than vertical focused on connecting people, institutions and communities on a peer-to-peer basis where the energy and "juice" comes from the collective. The ALEPH Network will harness resources, support shared branding, provide ethics jurisdiction, and offer a portal for resources, ALEPH programs and *hevreschaft* – all without the rigidity of the now-eroding denominational era.

There are three levels of ALEPH Network membership: organizational, congregational, and individual. In 2016 ALEPH will launch a new section of its website featuring a directory of ALEPH Network members: communities, congregations, nonprofit organizations, and individual artists, teachers, rabbis, and scholars.

We're already seeing a lot of interest in the Network from people and places which had not previously been affiliated with ALEPH, and we look forward to helping the Network grow in coming months.

For more information about the forthcoming ALEPH Network, please contact ALEPH executive director Shoshanna Schechter-Shaffin at shoshanna@aleph.org, or call 215.247.9700 x24.

7. Sustainability & Donor Recognition

A. ALEPH Endowment and Legacy Giving

In 2015, ALEPH finalized efforts to create an endowment. Now, when donors contribute to an ALEPH endowment fund, they will help create a permanent legacy of support for ALEPH. Endowment funds are a permanent, self-sustaining source of funding. Assets are held and invested by the Richmond Jewish Foundation.





Each year, a portion of the value of the fund is paid out to ALEPH to support the fund's purpose, and any earnings in excess of this distribution are used to build the fund's market value. In this way, an endowment fund can grow and provide support for its designated purpose in perpetuity.

Here are a few ways donor legacy giving can make a lasting difference:

ALEPH Scholarship Endowment Fund

Minimum Gift: \$1,000.





Legacy gifts to the scholarship endowment fund help to:

-  Greatly relieve the financial burden of many future and current students, while at the same time, attracting many new highly qualified and talented students to our programs.
-  Allow current and future students to take the courses that they need in a timely fashion and therefore be ordained in a more reasonable amount of time.
-  Remove the financial burden away from students in true financial need and deeply struggling to make it through the program, despite presenting strong academic skills and professional promise.
-  Ensure a strong future for ALEPH and the transformative legacy and vision of Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, z'l by helping produce generations of highly skilled, talented Jewish Renewal spiritual leaders

B. Named Scholarships

Donors can name a scholarship for oneself, a family, or in memory or in honor of someone. The scholarship will be recorded as "The [Name of Your Choice] Scholarship." Named Scholarships require a minimum gift, or pledge of \$18,000 given over a maximum of five years. Scholarships will be granted to ALEPH students in that name once the donor achieves the total commitment pledged.

Special thanks to everyone who has donated to launch this endowment in 2015. ALEPH's originating named scholarship supporters include:

-  The Lasko Foundation
-  Heritage Trip Participants "In honor of Reb Marcia, Reb Leila and Hazzan Jack"
-  Hoberman Family Scholarship
-  The Susan A. Wehle Cantorial Scholarship

Featured Scholarship

The Susan Wehle Fund has established the Susan Wehle Cantorial Scholarship through ALEPH to further what Susan started as the first female cantor ordained through the Jewish Renewal Movement.

Each year, a student accepted to the ALEPH Cantorial program with financial need may apply to receive assistance to pursue this passion to complete the training and bring its wisdom back to their communities.






Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi Endowment for Jewish Renewal

Gifts to this fund will support ALEPH program development.

Minimum Gift: \$500

ALEPH has always served a role as the Research and Development for innovative Jewish Renewal programs. Your gift to the Reb Zalman Endowment Fund will help lay the foundation for start up programs and new initiatives from ALEPH. You can make a general gift to this endowment, or designate your support for a specific project. Contact us to find out what new programs are on the horizon and how you can become our partner and stakeholder in ALEPH's development, implementation and impact!

Support to these Endowments may also be done via

-  Gifts Through Your Will
-  Charitable Bequests
-  Beneficiary Designation
-  Charitable IRA Rollover
-  Gifts of Real Estate

For assistance in planning your endowment gift, please contact Shoshanna Schechter-Shaffin, Executive Director by email at shoshanna@aleph.org or call 215.247.9700 x 24.

C. Minyanaires 5776

During 2015 we inaugurated a new group of ALEPH supporters: **ALEPH Minyanaires**. We are seeking at least 10 members of the community to pledge \$10,000 each during the Jewish year 5776 (2015-2016).

The support of our Minyanaires will guarantee an outstanding 2016 Kallah featuring some of the Jewish Renewal world's finest teachers, among them [Rabbi Tirzah Firestone](#), [Rabbi Shefa Gold](#), [Rabbi Andrew Hahn](#), [Rabbi Jill Hammer](#), [Hazzan Jack Kessler](#), author [Rodger Kamenetz](#), [Rabbi Jay Michaelson](#) and [Rabbi Marcia Prager](#). We are also planning new innovations, including outdoor programs with [Wilderness Torah](#) and [Adventure Rabbi](#).

We extend our deepest gratitude to our 5776 Minyanaires thus far:

Anonymous

Susan Raskin Abrams

Binah Block

Judith Dack

Rabbinic Pastor David Daniel Klipper

Rabbi Evan Krame

Rabbi Yocheved Mintz

Jade Netanya Ullmann

When 10 come together in prayer, we form a true community (and can recite the prayers which feature a call and response.) When 10 come together in tzedakah, our community is strengthened. Help us make the Kallah affordable to young people; help us guarantee the future of Jewish Renewal; help us share Jewish Renewal Torah with those who thirst. Will you [help us make our minyan](#)?

2015 Donor Supporters

(As of 12/31/15)

Thank you to everyone who supported ALEPH in 2015.

Minyanaires

Anonymous

Susan Raskin Abrams

Binah Block

Judith Dack

Rabbinic Pastor David Daniel

Klipper

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ALEPH also would like to thank the thousands of individuals who are members and supporters of ALEPH via Affiliated Communities and ALEPH Network Communities:

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 Shir HaYam
 Temple Adath Or
 Temple Beth El of City Island
 Temple Or Olam
 The Congregation Eitz Chayim
 The Jewish Studio, Inc.
 Yavneh: A Jewish Renewal Community


8. GOVERNANCE AND STAFF

In 2015, ALEPH Board Chair **Rabbi Jeremy Parnes** concluded his ALEPH leadership after years of visionary service. Jeremy continues to serve on the ALEPH Board as Past Chair and Chair of the ALEPH Board's Nominating Committee. In April 2015, the ALEPH Board welcomed **Rabbi Rachel Barenblat** and **Rabbi David Markus** to three-year terms as Board co-chairs.


During 2015, the ALEPH Board accepted the resignations of **Rabbi Malka Drucker** and **Joan Cooke** from the ALEPH Board. ALEPH is deeply grateful to them for their years of service. Rabbi Malka continues to serve as a member of the ALEPH Publishing Circle and member of the forthcoming ALEPH Advisory Council.


Also during 2015, the ALEPH Board welcomed new Board member **Jane Graver**, who brings substantial experience in entrepreneurship and Jewish leadership from her various roles in New York. In late 2015, the ALEPH Board welcomed back former ALEPH Board chair **Linda Jo Doctor**, who brings both substantial institutional memory and wisdom, and extensive program experience from her work with the Kellogg Foundation. Jane and Linda both were confirmed to three-year terms.


On the ALEPH staff, 2015 was a time of continuing change and exciting new horizons:


 **Shoshanna Schechter-Shaffin** began her first full year as ALEPH executive director, succeeding **Joseph Laur**, who continues as a rabbinical student in the ALEPH Ordination Program. Shoshanna's role includes Board-staff coordination, strategic management, visioning and overall responsibility for ALEPH. Shoshanna is based in suburban Richmond, Virginia.

 **David Brown** was promoted to ALEPH's Chief Operating Officer, overseeing all aspects of ALEPH operations and administration. David is based in Philadelphia.

 **Tamy Jacobs** began her position as ALEPH Director of Development and Special Events. Tamy's role includes coordinating Kallah and cultivating ALEPH's sustainability program. Tamy is based in Chicago.

 **Rabbi Nadya Gross** and **Rabbi Victor Gross**, recognizing their pre-eminent role shaping and stewarding ritualcraft for ALEPH, were named Co-Directors of Programs and Ritual. Rabbis Nadya and Victor coordinate ALEPH Programs and component projects, and lead the development of spiritual ritual for and throughout ALEPH – in addition to their roles in the ALEPH Ordination Program and their own retreats. They are based outside of Denver, Colorado.

 **Shir Yaakov Feinstein-Feit** left his position as ALEPH's Creative Director to focus on his rabbinical studies in ALEPH and continue building his spiritual community, Kol Hai, an ALEPH Network community in New York's Hudson Valley.

 **Jessica Shimberg** left her position as Kallah Coordinator to focus on her rabbinic studies in ALEPH and continue building her spiritual community, The Little Minyan, in Columbus, Ohio.

9. ALEPH BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Rabbi Rachel Barenblat

(Board co-chair) was ordained by ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal as rabbi in 2011 and mashpiah (spiritual director) in 2012. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in religion from Williams College and a Masters in Fine Arts in Writing and Literature from the Bennington Writing Seminars. She is author of three books: 70 faces: Torah poems (Phoenicia Publishing, 2011), Waiting to Unfold (Phoenicia, 2013), and the forthcoming Open My Lips (Ben Yehuda Press, 2016), as well as several poetry chapbooks. A Rabbis Without Borders Fellow, Rachel is an alumna facilitator for the Emerging Jewish and Muslim

Religious Leaders retreat organized by RRC's Office of Multifaith Studies and Initiatives. Since 2003 she has blogged as The Velveteen Rabbi, and in 2008, TIME named her blog one of the top 25 sites on the internet. Her work has appeared in The Wisdom Daily, Lilith, The Jewish Daily Forward, and The Bloomsbury Anthology of Contemporary Jewish American Poetry. Her downloadable Velveteen Rabbi's Haggadah for Pesach has been used around the world. She has taught at the ALEPH Kallah and at the inaugural week of Beyond Walls, a writing program for clergy of many faiths, at the Kenyon Institute. Rachel serves as spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Israel (North Adams, MA), part of the Reform movement and the ALEPH Network.



Rabbi David Markus

(Board co-chair) brings to ALEPH extensive background in Judaics, governance and management. David earned dual ordination as rabbi and mashpia (spiritual director) from ALEPH. David serves as co-rabbi of Temple Beth-El of City Island (New York, NY), a member of the ALEPH Network.

An alum of CLAL's Rabbis Without Borders and curated blogger for My Jewish Learning, David's academic work on liturgy and spiritual education have been published in New Matrix Publications, Shma Magazine, Avenida Books and Velveteen Rabbi. David serves as spiritual direction faculty and

adjunct instructor in the ALEPH Ordination Program; he also taught at OHALAH, Routes, Limmud, and Fordham and Pace Universities. In secular life, David presides as judicial referee in New York Supreme Court, Ninth Judicial District. Previously, David served as special counsel to the Chief Judge of New York, senior counsel to the New York Senate, state deputy director of voter protection for a major presidential campaign, policy associate to environmentalist Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and director of a healthcare advocacy nonprofit. David earned his Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School, Masters in Public Policy from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, and Bachelor of Arts from Williams College.



Susan Raskin Abrams spent almost her entire career as a children's librarian, recently retiring as Supervisor of Children's Services at the Newton (MA) Free Library. Professionally, she was chair of the New England Roundtable of Children and Teen Librarians, President of the New England Library Association, chair of the children's roundtable of the Minuteman Library Network, chair of the Jordan-Miller Storytelling Committee for many years, as well as serving on the MA Library Association board. She has been very active in B'nai Or of Boston, serving on the ritual committee, Chesed Committee, fund-raising committee and the Steering Committee. She served on the board of Newton Kesher (a Jewish after-school program) and was a library trustee for 6 years in Framingham, MA. Susan loves to tell stories and has been telling them for about 30 years. She is an ordained Maggid.



Rabbi Aura Ahuvia was until late 2015 the spiritual leader of the Woodstock Jewish Congregation, in Woodstock, New York. Ordained by ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal as both a rabbi and a Mashpiah (spiritual guide), Reb Aura belongs to the OHALAH Rabbinical Association. Prior to ordination, she co-founded (along with her husband), and later served as student rabbi for, the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation. She holds two masters degrees from the University of Michigan, one in journalism (1996); the other in Judaic Studies (2006). Her two sons are currently in college.



Judith Dack had a profound life-changing experience at Elat Chayyim, The Jewish Renewal Retreat Center, in 1997, and has been passionately serving the flourishing of Jewish Renewal ever since. Currently, she creates spiritual community using the transformative powers of art-making, chanting, meditating and writing in a variety of contexts. She is on the faculty of Kol Zimra, Rabbi Shefa Gold's two-year Chant Leadership Training. Judith is a graduate of the first cohorts of both DLTI (Davvenen' Leadership Training Institute) and Kol Zimra. She has served in various capacities at Elat Chayyim, and subsequently at The Isabella Freedman Retreat Center, where she was best known as the yoga teacher, mispacha group leader, and "stand up" fundraiser for many summers and Shavuot retreats.

Judith currently resides in Boulder, CO where she recently graduated from Naropa University with her Master's degree in Art Therapy & Transpersonal Counseling Psychology. Judith's psychotherapy practice specializes in treating young adult women in transition. She is the mother of two grown daughters.



Linda Jo Doctor brings over 30 years of experience in leadership roles working in non profit, academic and government sectors. She currently serves as a Program Officer for the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and provides guidance for investments supporting sustainable and equitable food systems and public health efforts. She brings specific skills in organizational development, management, leadership development, and working cross multiple sectors and disciplines. She lives in Ann Arbor Michigan with her husband, Rabbi Elliot Ginsburg and famous cat Simon, who loves studying Zohar with his best bud. Linda is the proud step mother to three amazing young adults, and "safta" to two gorgeous grandchildren. She is a member of Pardes Hannah, a Jewish Renewal Community affiliated with ALEPH.



Laurie Franklin serves as the spiritual leader of Har Shalom, Missoula, MT, and is an AOP rabbinic student. She serves as the ALEPH Student Board (ASB) co-president and joins the ALEPH board as its ASB liaison. She loves to sing, play guitar and Scottish smallpipes, grow vegetables, walk in the mountains, and build Jewish community. She is grateful to have the opportunity to give voice to student needs on the board and to participate in the development of ALEPH as a positive force in Judaism.



R. Dan Goldblatt has been the spiritual leader of Beth Chaim Congregation in Danville, California for 22 years. He has worked as a journalist, theater director, and award-winning writer/director/producer of documentary films. He served seven different congregations as spiritual leader before entering the ALEPH Ordination program through an attraction to the life and work of Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi z"l. He has served as Chair of the OHALAH Ethics Committee, is on the Board of both OHALAH and ALEPH and is Past President of OHALAH. Dan is assembling the first cohort for a Sacred Storytelling training program and is readying for publication a book, *Miracles Happen: Stories That Break Open the Heart*.



Jane Graver is a serial entrepreneur and activist who has spent her life involved in Progressive Judaism. Over 12 years Jane served as a board member for three different synagogues in New York and New Jersey. As the top executive at Romemu, the fastest growing Jewish Renewal Synagogue in New York City, she oversaw the rapid growth of membership budget. Jane has served as a board member for three different synagogues and has been active with the World Union and European Union for Progressive Judaism. She has a deep curiosity about how institutions, organizations, and even religions can grow and change. Named as “Entrepreneur of the Year” by Inc. Magazine, Jane successfully started two technology companies, (one which went public), an educational foundation, and an organic tea company. And she has authored a bestselling technology book. She holds leadership positions in several professional and one political organizations. Jane has earned Master’s Degrees in Instructional Technology and Information Science. Jane taught ethics in Hebrew School for over two decades, co-teaching with Rabbi Sally Priesand. She lives in NYC and is the proud mother of two amazing sons. Her third chapter professional life is focused on management consulting for emerging companies and supporting others in their third chapter.



Rabbinic Pastor David Daniel Klipper (Treasurer) was ordained in 2007. He is a chaplain and certified ACPE Supervisor and assists in the training of mashpi'im (spiritual directors) through ALEPH's Hashpa'ah program as a senior faculty member. He is also the Pastoral Education Coordinator for the ALEPH Ordination Program. Prior to starting chaplaincy training in 2002, he was an investment banker for 24 years. He is married and has two sons.



Rabbi David Ingber is the founder and Spiritual Director of Romemu, NYC's largest Jewish Renewal Community. David studied in Orthodox yeshivahs before receiving ordination from Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. David is a sought-after national and international leader and educator. His unique, open-hearted and embodied approach to Jewish teaching has taken him from all along the East Coast, to communities in London, Jerusalem, Aspen, and Montreal. He has taught at JTS, Pardes, and Skirball. David spent 10 years studying sacred healing art traditions, including Yoga, Shiatsu, Pilates, Gyrotonics, Kung Fu, and Chen school Tai Chi. He is also a certified Astrologer. Rabbi David promotes a renewed Jewish emphasis on meditative practices and is working for the integration of

sacred body practices into mainstream Judaism.

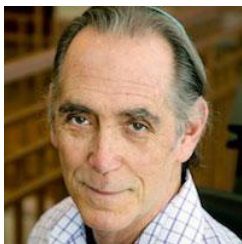


Rabbi Evan J. Krame brings to the ALEPH Board 35 years of experience as a lawyer and Jewish community leader. Evan was ordained by ALEPH as rabbi and spiritual director. He is a co-founder of The Jewish Studio, focusing on providing meaningful and enjoyable Jewish experiences to adults who are unaffiliated, under-affiliated or disaffiliated. Evan has been honored by both local and national organizations for his service, most notably receiving the Exemplar of Leadership award from Hillel International, recognizing his work on behalf of the Hillel of George Washington University. Evan is a founding officer of the American Friends of the Anne Frank House. Evan is a graduate of the George Washington Law School with both a J.D. and LL.M. (taxation). In his legal career, Evan is an attorney in

private practice, serving as advocate and fiduciary for persons with disabilities. He lives in Potomac, Maryland, with his wife, Jodi, an attorney in Washington, D.C. Together they have a son (Zach, in Atlanta working for Turner Broadcasting) and a daughter (Sarah, studying at NYU Law School).



Rabbi Jeremy Parnes is the spiritual leader of the Beth Jacob Synagogue in Regina Saskatchewan and received smicha from the ALEPH Rabbinic Program in 2012. Jeremy previously spent twenty years working in sales management and training and a decade in the area of community development. He has worked in and for non-profit community groups and has consulted on inner-city issues including community planning, visioning and development projects.



David Rafsky retired from a long career as sales and marketing executive in information and communications technologies, including 25 years with AT&T, Sprint and Toshiba. David brings his experience in customer relations, marketing feedback and business communications to the ALEPH Board, which he has served since 2000. After traveling all over North America and England for decades on business, David is very glad to not be doing that anymore. Instead, he studies Judaica and Mideast history and issues at the JCC, San Diego State University and University of San Diego. He lives in San Diego with his wife Rhonda Mason, who together provide some vertical energy for ALEPH affiliate Havurah Shir HaYam. David holds his MBA from National University (San Diego, California), and his B.Sc. in marketing from the University of Arizona.



Janice Rubin is a Houston-based photographer, musician and teacher. For over 30 years, she has served as a cantorial soloist and Jewish educator, facilitating classes in meditation and Jewish music and chant. She is a graduate of DLTI 4. Since 2005, she has created musical services and helped organize ALEPH programs in Houston. She specializes in Yiddish music and performs widely. She sings with hospice patients and serves with the chevra kaddisha. She is also an internationally-published photographer and creator of the touring exhibit and book, *The Mikvah Project*, which explores the contemporary renaissance of ancient ritual. She is married to artist Charles Wiese, and they have one son.



Jade Netanya Ullmann was most recently the Director of Development, Membership and Outreach for Romemu, the NYC Jewish Renewal center. Jade is a 2012 NYC Pipeline Fellow, supporting woman-led for-profit social ventures and has helped the Fetzer Institute develop programs for next generation philanthropists. She sits on the board of the Common Fire Foundation, which completed the highest level green building project on the Eastern US. Through the Threshold Foundation, she has been concerned with restorative justice, co-existence and community organizing. She is also involved in her family foundation. Jade received her BA from Naropa University, where she was an Area Coordinator for Students for a Free Tibet. She has been trained as a Be Present facilitator, exploring the issues of race, gender, power and class. Jade is certified as a Yoga & Jewish Spirituality teacher through Isabella Freedman's 18-month training program.

10. ALEPH STAFF

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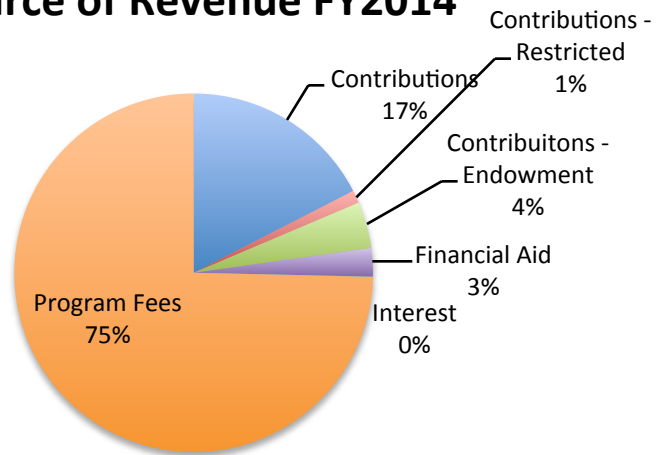
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11. 2014-5 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal
Profit and Loss
August 2014 - July 2015

	FY2015	FY2014
INCOME		
Contributions - unrestricted	\$244,425	\$133,700
Contributions - program restriction	\$62,457	\$8,750
Contributions - endowment	\$21,710	\$32,118
Contributions - Scholarship/Financial Aid	\$28,439	\$19,558
Interest Income	\$174	\$225
Program Revenue	\$998,053	\$571,722
Total Income	\$1,355,258	\$766,073
EXPENSES		
Administrative	\$40,450	\$32,340
Occupancy	\$21,133	\$19,441
Conferences/Meetings	\$28,639	\$26,406
Professional Fees	\$56,585	\$24,219
Salary	\$621,483	\$446,849
Employee Fringes	\$43,822	\$42,252
Insurance	\$5,497	\$7,226
Program Expense	\$561,205	\$167,718
Fundraising	\$4,585	\$562
Total Expenses	\$1,383,400	\$767,013
Net Operating Income	(\$28,143)	(\$940)
Scholarship/Financial Aid released for use	\$52,369	\$23,200
Net Income + Scholarship	\$24,226	\$22,260

Source of Revenue FY2014



Source of Revenue FY2015

