

Shalom! Good afternoon and welcome to the Grinspoon Institute for Jewish Philanthropy's 8th Camp Conference. My name is **Eric Phelps**, Director of the Institute. I want to welcome you all to Western Massachusetts. I especially want to welcome Harold Grinspoon Foundation Trustees and staff. I also want to thank the Mass Mutual Center. And, of course, (the man who needs no introduction) Harold Grinspoon.

Ah, what a year it was...

- An H1N1 flu epidemic
- An economic downturn
- US troops in active combat overseas
- The uncovering of a massive fraud scheme
- A Democratic President who went on to win the Nobel Peace Prize

Yes, **1918** was quite a year...

1918 Almanac

- An H1N1 flu epidemic
 - Spanish Flu – 50 million deaths worldwide
- An economic downturn
 - WWI Debt; Flu impact
- US troops in active combat overseas
 - WWI (ending)
- The uncovering of a massive fraud scheme
 - Original Ponzi Scheme discovered (publicly disclosed in 1920)
- A Democratic President who went on to win the Nobel Peace Prize
 - Woodrow Wilson - awarded 1918; received 1919

In their 1991 book Generations (recommended to me by Fred Levick of Ramah Darom), William Strauss & Neil Howe describe in depth how the Generational Cycle of four generations (or roughly 88 – 92 years) marks numerous social, political and economic similarities. The Progressive Generation and the Millennial Generation are both what they call “Civic” generations. Strauss & Howe write: “The Progressives added ‘organization’ to new corporations... and ‘method’ to public agencies. [They] sought to expose scandal and open up the systems by insisting that there ‘ought be no place where anything can be done that everybody does not know about.’” The Progressive Generation leaders were some of the first to make use of consultants, including those from the newly established Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. They took an analytic approach to business systems, “recognizing that professionals and board members alike might not be competent in all circumstances.”

In 1918 1.7 million Jews lived in the United States, mostly immigrants from Eastern Europe. There were strong anti-immigration campaigns in the Congress which led to the National Origins Quota of 1924, restricting immigration from Eastern Europe. Jewish orphanages across the US met the needs of this growing population. And in 1918 - when Camp JORI (or Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island), Surprise Lake, New Jersey Y, Tamarack Camps (among others) were operating - they were all impacted by these considerable forces. The Spanish Flu pandemic which began in March of 1918 was so severe that it forced the closing of most businesses because there were so few healthy people to run them. Children were, in fact, *sent away* to camps to ensure their health and well-being. And – as with this year’s flu – the protocols were established by the hardest hit cities (which in 1918 were NY, Philadelphia and Atlanta). They shared their learning with state health departments throughout the US, thereby reducing the domestic impact considerably.

During the past 91 years, Jewish people have survived every conceivable difficulty: The Great Depression, WWII, staunch anti-Semitism, major health crises (including flu epidemics in 1957 and 1968) and 9/11. But in this century we have also realized many amazing achievements: we have seen the creation of the State of Israel, witnessed grainy pictures from Apollo 11, watched the fall of Berlin Wall, and saw Nelson Mandela ascend from prison to President of South Africa. And during these same years we have had the creation of more than 135 Jewish camps throughout North America whose legacy is strong and enduring.

The 2009 Swine Flu Epidemic had a HUGE impact on the operations, finances and management of camps, even those that did not have cases of H1N1. The economy has had a significant effect on the Jewish philanthropic community, with 2009 donations down by 9% overall – and as much as 26% for Jewish organizations. We all know that scholarship requests increased by approximately 25%, reinforcing the effects of the so-called “Great Recession.” BUT, there was also good news in the past year. We are honored that the Institute and HGF were awarded a Slingshot Award for our consulting services. Harold was recently honored by the Union for Reform Judaism with *The Alexander M. Schindler Distinguished Service Award*. You have embraced the abundance – the Institute affiliated camps raised an estimated **\$4.5 million** new dollars through matching grants. And, according to our colleagues at the Foundation for Jewish Camp, approximately 70,000 young people went to Jewish overnight camps throughout North America. Jewish overnight camps continue to not only *utilize*, but also *create*, a pool of strong leaders for the entire world.

The theme of this conference is Leadership, Leverage & Legacy. Harry Truman said “People make history, not the other way around. In periods where there is no **leadership**, society stands still. Progress occurs [only] when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better.” I believe that the people in this room are among the finest leaders in Jewish communal service. Your commitment, knowledge and passion have driven Jewish overnight Camping to new heights. I invite you all to learn

more about leadership from the workshops & presentations - but most of all from *each other* - throughout the next two days.

I recently attended the URJ Biennial in Toronto. I returned from the Biennial on Friday afternoon. As I was preparing for Shabbat, I started to open a bottle of wine. But as I was attempting to pull out the cork, the wine opener broke, with the auger stick in - and protruding out of - the cork. So, I got a pair of pliers out of the junk drawer and tried to pull the cork by the auger, but it wouldn't budge. I realized that I needed to brace the pliers against something in order to create a new lever. I tried the edge of the countertop, another wine bottle (it slipped) and even the knife-holder (they weren't the same height). I gave up, exasperated and sat on my couch. While I was sitting then, I notice the end table seemed to be about the height of the wine bottle, so I put the bottle on the floor and rested the pliers against the end table. The cork came out with ease. It was then that I realized the leverage against a matching force makes it possible to move things with ease. And that is how the Matching Grants program of the Institute have worked to **leverage** more than **\$54.9 million** in collective fundraising (\$9.8 million HGF; \$45.1 million raised) from more than 1,500 distinct donors.

The **Create a Jewish Legacy Program**, which you will hear more about throughout the conference, has been a tremendous success. During an 18-month period 19 camps have secured more than 657 pledges with an estimated total value of more than **\$29.2 million**. The average estimated value per camp? \$875,000. And while these funds are substantial, more importantly - they represent a new and significant commitment to Jewish overnight camping. These pledges are a bold statement that your alumni, parents, staff and donors are creating an enduring legacy for campers for many more generations.

The fourth "L," which didn't make the official theme, is **"Learning."** Throughout the past year each and every one of you have already done a great deal learning. During 2008/2009 the Institute provided more than 8,900 hours of consulting services (not including travel), facilitated an estimated 60 trainings and retreats, and hosted six webinars. We have also added more than 50 online documents to our resources section for your use. I invite you to continue learning throughout this conference and to take home what you have learned to your organizations.

And the fifth "L" – which also didn't make the official theme – is Tech-Know**L**-edgy. During the past two years, the Institute has significantly expanded our technology services. We now provide a comprehensive technology assessment, tech support for numerous programs & tools, training regarding social networking, donor database management, alumni outreach and research about cutting-edge technologies for nonprofits. This new commitment is led by Kevin Martone and supported by our new Business Systems Analyst, Joe Ruotolo who recently marked his one year anniversary at the Institute. One of our technology offerings can be found in your conference bag – the Flash Drive! It contains most of the materials being presented during the conference and is yours to keep! And

throughout the conference you will feel our presence in cyber space – twitter, facebook and internet throughout!

During the summer of 2009 the Institute engaged in an internal planning process – Strategic & Tactical Reorganization to Improve Vitality & Efficiency (S.T.R.I.V.E.). During this process, we created a new Vision Statement, a new Mission Statement and developed operational and strategic plans that will enable us to better serve camps, day schools and Jewish organizations dedicated to ensuring Jewish continuity. We identified some critical areas for growth pertaining to camps, including:

- Piloting a Development Directors Training program
- Developing and strengthening strategic partnerships that further our goals with FJC, PEJE, Avi Chai, Samis & other foundations & organizations.
- Evaluating our effectiveness, not only in terms of money but also in strengthening organizational capacity
- You will hear about some additional growth this evening and tomorrow.

Thank you all for joining us here for the 2009 Grinspoon Institute for Jewish Philanthropy's Camp Conference. The lay leaders and professionals here represent the future of Jewish overnight camping. You have leveraged the support of volunteers, donors, staff & alumni and have transformed the entire sector in just five years.

Together, we can ensure the enduring legacy of Jewish overnight camping for another 91 years –taking us to the year 2100.

L'dor v'dor.

Thank you!