

Funders unite to launch special needs and disabilities network at JFN

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The Jewish Funders Network announced the formation of a peer network of funders dedicated to elevating special needs and disability advocacy in the Jewish community.

The network's 14 founding members include, among others: The Stanford and Joan Alexander Foundation (Texas), The Ted Arison Family Foundation (Israel), The J.E. & Z.B. Butler Foundation (N.Y.), Rachel & Larry Chafetz (Mass.), The Jewish Federations of North America, The Karma Foundation (N.J.), The Rita J. & Stanley H. Kaplan Family Foundation (N.Y.), News Corporation Foundation (N.Y.), Pears Foundation (United Kingdom), The Ruderman Family Foundation (Mass. & Israel), Saul Schottenstein Foundation B (Ohio), and The Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc. (Md.).

The network is a two-year initiative funded by the partners and administered by the Jewish Funders Network. An outgrowth of ADVANCE, the October 2010 conference on special needs held by The Ruderman Family Foundation, JFN, Jewish Federations of North America and Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, the network's goal is to assess the current state of funding of special needs programs in the Jewish community, identify successes that can be duplicated on a larger scale, and bring attention to underserved areas that would benefit from additional funding. The network will feature a dedicated staff director, whose appointment will be announced at a later date.

Murray Galinson, JFN chair, said, "With some 14 percent of the Jewish community identified as having special needs or disabilities, there is a growing call to elevate special needs advocacy to the forefront of the Jewish communal agenda. JFN is delighted to join with an elite group of philanthropists and foundations to answer the call. We are very pleased to be the home of this kind of innovative collaboration among Jewish funders."

Jay Ruderman, president of the Ruderman Family Foundation said, "It is extremely gratifying to see how the ADVANCE conference has catalyzed the funding community around special needs issues. There is no question that a consensus is forming to elevate the whole discussion of special needs programming within the Jewish community, including finding ways to more fully

integrate disabled and special needs individuals and families more fully into Jewish communal life. Many thanks to the Jewish Funders Network for providing a home for this unique effort; I am proud to be part of the remarkable group of philanthropic leaders who have joined this initiative.”