

# SYNERGY



UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK AND SYNAGOGUES TOGETHER

## Outreach Perspectives and Practice for a New Time

### A Conversation

Demographic studies of the Jewish community universally demonstrate that those who are part of a synagogue community are more deeply engaged in Jewish life than are their counterparts at any point on the religious spectrum who are not. In an effort to increase synagogue affiliation (and to sidestep old shibboleths about *keruv*), over the past two years, UJA-Federation has funded a synagogue *keruv* outreach initiative through grants to the local regions of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation (JRF), the Orthodox Union (OU), the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), and United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism (USCJ).

In the conversation that follows, we have the opportunity to learn from leaders of each movement about their perspectives on outreach and what leads to success, particularly now. Participants include **Frank Buchweitz**, director of community services for the OU; **Kathryn Kahn**, membership specialist and former director of the William and Lottie Daniel Department of Outreach at the URJ; **Rabbi Charles Savenor**, director of the New York district



FRANK BUCHWEITZ

of USCJ; and **Rabbi Shawn Zevit**, director of outreach and affiliation for JRF.

**SYNERGY:** Let's start the conversation with how each movement defines *keruv*. What motivates or drives your efforts? Who do you seek to reach?

**Kahn:** The Reform movement defines *keruv* as "drawing near those who are far," referring to all who are considering or seeking a connection with the Jewish community, specifically with our Reform congregations. This includes born Jews seeking to come closer to their tradition, those who are



KATHYRN KAHN

not Jewish but are looking for a spiritual home, and those non-Jews who are in an interfaith relationship and are considering having a Jewish home, raising their children as Jews, or converting themselves. Our motivation is the belief that Judaism teaches a valuable and meaning way of life, and should be shared with all those who wish to be part of our tradition and our community.

**Buchweitz:** For the Orthodox Union, outreach is essentially reaching out to Jewish men and women having little or no affiliation with the Jewish community, or to those new to Torah observance,

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# New York Synagogues in the Economic Downturn

In late November 2009, SYNERGY: UJA-Federation of New York and Synagogues Together surveyed synagogues in New York City, on Long Island, and in Westchester County to gauge the impact of the economic downturn on congregants and on synagogues themselves, and to help shape effective responses. The full summary of findings can be found at [www.ujafedny.org/synergy](http://www.ujafedny.org/synergy). The following highlights relate to the strengths and challenges of New York synagogues as they seek to maintain and build their *kehillah*.

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## Impact of Economic Downturn on Congregants

**Jobs and Housing:** Reflecting the trends in the overall economy, every synagogue reported job loss among members — three large Manhattan congregations reported more than 45 members out of work. Thirty percent of synagogues reported that one or more members had lost a home.

## Synagogue Responses

New York synagogues themselves are actively providing relief and respite to affected congregants, and drawing on community resources available through UJA-Federation.

**Direct Relief:** Compared with a year ago, 90 percent of synagogues are providing special dues arrangements to more congregants, and more than half increased the use of clergy discretionary funds for emergency congregant needs. Seventy-five percent of synagogues have referred congregants to UJA-Federation's Connect to Care services for employment assistance, counseling, and legal and financial consultation.

**Counsel:** Similarly, more congregants are seeking supportive counsel from rabbis at 50 percent of synagogues, and from synagogue-based UJA-Federation-funded Partners in Caring social workers at 25 percent of synagogues.

**In-House Support:** Congregations have mobilized to create a wide range of new in-house aid for congregants including, in order of frequency, supportive workshops or groups, the use of public forums to offer aid, the enlistment of volunteers to help with job searches, increased use of scholarship funds for camp, online job bank or networking sites, special task forces to organize congregational help, and food pantries.

## Impact of Economic Downturn on Synagogues

Membership and program enrollment appear to be influenced by cost.

**Synagogue Membership:** Membership overall appears to be relatively stable, despite fears to the contrary expressed in a comparable

survey conducted in March 2009. More than 40 percent of synagogues report membership numbers at a similar level, 25 percent at a higher level, and 30 percent at a lower level compared with a year ago. Membership loss appears most pronounced on Long Island, where the number of synagogues reporting decreased membership match the number of those reporting similar or increased membership.

**Congregant Activity:** Participation appears to be at greater risk when additional costs are incurred; the desire to help others in the synagogue context draws increased participation. Education programs are suffering — 37 percent of synagogues with early-childhood centers have decreased enrollment, and 28 percent of all synagogues report decreased participation in religious school. On the other hand, member participation in *chesed* activities and volunteering is stable or up almost universally, and adult learning, prayer services, and social activities tend to enjoy steady or growing participation as well.

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DRU GREENWOOD

## From the Director...

### Shalom, friends,

With Pesach behind us and Shavuot just ahead — the time in our annual cycle that readies us for the giving of the Torah and our birth as a covenant people — this spring issue draws attention to the state of our New York synagogue communities and some of the efforts under way to hold them whole and assure that all have a place.

In these challenging times, attention to caring for, maintaining, and growing the *kehillah* is ubiquitous among New York synagogues. Your responses to the SYNERGY survey of the impact of the economic downturn on both congregants and synagogues reflect that reality, as you'll see from some of the findings, highlighted here. Many timely and creative responses — drawing on the commitment and skills of congregants and professionals to help those in need, new fundraising and restructuring of synagogue

priorities and systems, collaborations that begin to reweave the community in new ways — all are under way. In the process, many have renewed fundamental values, even as they have embarked on innovative ways to achieve them.

Here, we focus on the fundamentals of *keruv*, or outreach, one of the central principles of building our *kehillah*, writ large or small. First, movement leaders speak in their unique voices about a commonly held commitment and share available resources. We learn as well from the experience of a few of the many New York congregations that have renewed their outreach efforts in successful ways. Finally, general principles gleaned from the rich experience of the Reconstructionist movement's *keruv* initiative are shared.

Surely these conversations will continue in multiple ways in the months ahead. Please don't hesitate to share your thoughts and your experiences with SYNERGY.

The giving of Torah is one and eternal; the receiving of Torah is unique and daily. May each of us, and you and the *kehillah* you lead, be ready to enjoy a sweet and meaningful Shavuot. *Chag sameach,*

Dru Greenwood  
Director of SYNERGY:  
UJA-Federation of New York and  
Synagogues Together

## Sign On for SYNERGY Updates

SYNERGY e-mails for presidents, rabbis, and executive directors of synagogues in New York, Westchester, and Long Island provide timely information about grant opportunities, conferences designed for synagogue leaders, and a variety of community resources that benefit synagogues.

If you are not receiving SYNERGY e-mails and would like to do so, please forward your name, position, synagogue name and address, and e-mail address to Sarah Ecton at [ectons@ujafedny.org](mailto:ectons@ujafedny.org). Stay in touch!



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to develop a heightened sense of Jewish identity and identification. A welcoming and ongoing supportive personal connection is essential in developing a level of comfort and continued participation for linkage to the broader Jewish community. Although outreach can take place in many venues, our goal is to bring men and women into the synagogue, which can become a home away from home. Target populations can include young couples who may be inclined to join when they have preschool or school-age children, families preparing for a child's bar or bat mitzvah, friends, neighbors or co-workers, individuals who come to synagogue to recite Kaddish or participate in a simcha, members who may come just once or twice a year.

We engage in *keruv* because Jewish population growth worldwide is close to zero percent. With about 46 percent in North America, representing approximately 6.5 million Jews; an assimilation rate estimated at 50 to 52 percent; low fertility rates; and disruptive migration patterns, we project a decline of one-third, to 3.8 million over the next 80 years. We cannot sit idly by while witnessing such a great loss.

While these numbers may be staggering, we see that our efforts can effect positive change on the individual, synagogue, and communal levels. Outreach can result in a stronger personal and communal Jewish identity; a larger,



RABBI CHARLES SAVENOR

more vibrant synagogue community; and an increase in Torah and mitzvah observance. By engaging in outreach, the synagogue not only ensures Jewish continuity, but expands the potential to welcome new members, while invigorating its community.

**Savenor:** USCJ currently focuses on one distinct area of *keruv* — which we call *edud*, enthusiasm — recognizing the need to welcome intermarried families into our Jewish community; reaching out with warmth, passion, and compassion; and hoping for the eventual conversion of the non-Jewish spouse. As an example, Building Our Jewish Home, our pilot young-family *keruv* program here in New York, reaches out to families with nursery school–age children, particularly those that are interfaith and/or marginally affiliated with the Jewish community. Recognizing that conversion may be a long-term aspiration, our goal is to help all young parents feel more knowledgeable about Judaism, more comfortable with Jewish traditions, and more fully at home within the

Jewish community. Since children who attend Jewish early-childhood centers often do not continue their Jewish education after nursery school, we hope to counter this reality by enabling families to have positive Jewish experiences that will encourage them to continue their children's Jewish education through grade school and beyond.

We seek to educate and inspire, but most important to include and welcome — to make families aware that there is a place for them within the synagogue community.

**Zevit:** By its nature, Reconstructionist Judaism is inclusive and welcoming — our communities embrace and comprise Jews and their families of all backgrounds, orientations, configurations, and faiths. So *keruv*, for our movement, is an extension of our core values and principles.

In our *keruv* efforts, we are, of course, hoping to grow our movement, but more important, we hope to connect with those who have a Reconstructionist approach to Judaism but were not aware that their ideas have a home with us. Our siddur series, Kol Haneshamah, sends a welcoming message with meaningful translations, as well as transliteration. We view *keruv* as an effort to engage unaffiliated, but interested Jews in Jewish communal life, and to connect with Jews who may find a spiritual home in our communities. The search for personal meaning and community, as well as an openness to the

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# Innovations in Outreach: A New York Case Study

Rabbi Hannah Greenstein

The New York/New Jersey region of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation has completed its two-year outreach grant, Kehillah Kedoshah: Every Voice Matters, which enabled its New York congregations to learn, create, and implement new approaches to outreach. What follows are five key strategies for any synagogue interested in successfully reaching out to newcomers.

## I. Be strategic.

Identify target populations that reflect a pre-existing demographic at your synagogue.

**Plan a step-by-step recruitment effort that includes:**

- ✦ Marketing existing programming to your target demographic.
- ✦ Welcoming prospective members when they attend synagogue programs.
- ✦ Following up with prospective members after programs. The follow-up should be done by synagogue members of a similar age cohort as the prospective members.

## II. Create Welcoming Points of Entry

Think about all points of entry: website, phone calls, religious school, programs, services.

A friendly voice over the phone or responsive e-mail to prospective members goes a long way.

Keep records on who calls the congregation, the ages of their children (if applicable), and their interests. Be in touch with these people when synagogue programming occurs that may interest them.

## III. Work With What You Have

Programmatically — What programs are your most successful? Can your “signature programs” be marketed to the general population?

Marketing — Current synagogue members are your best resource. Encourage synagogue members to invite their friends to programs and share with acquaintances why they love your synagogue.

## IV. Follow-Up

Personally welcome newcomers.

You may want to consider a volunteer cadre of “ambassadors” to welcome prospective members at programs and services.

Connect newcomers to people with similar ages or interests. Building relationships is key to integrating prospective members into your community.

## V. Focus on the High Holidays

The High Holidays are a natural opportunity for locating interested parties.

Invite unaffiliated people to your High Holiday services through personal invitations and marketing in the local secular press.

Help prospective members feel at home in the community (this can be challenging among the High Holiday crowds).

Find or create opportunities for intimate settings where prospective members can make personal connections.

For additional outreach resources, visit JRF’s Keruv Outreach Resource Library, launched as the final step of the grant, at [www.jrf.org/keruv-library](http://www.jrf.org/keruv-library).

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Rabbi Hannah Greenstein was the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation’s New York outreach coordinator from 2007 to 2009.

# Stretching Outreach

## Elinor Nauen

Finding effective ways of engaging people is a challenge for every Jewish institution. Many synagogues find that focusing on age and affinity groups gets the best response. Congregations in the New York area have successfully reached out to young families, teens with special needs, the unaffiliated, and others.

Building Our Jewish Home (BOJH) is an 18-month-old program currently working with five Conservative synagogues in Westchester and Long Island, designed to draw families with nursery school–age children, help those families become more fully involved in their synagogue communities, and help young parents take an active role in their children’s Jewish education.

At Hewlett-East Rockaway Jewish Centre’s Mezuzapalooza, for example, kids and families learned what a mezuzah is and made their own. “Parents and kids were able to spend time together, parents got an opportunity to socialize with other young parents, and families learned about an important Jewish concept that they could put to use in their own homes,” says Rabbi Cara Weinstein Rosenthal, BOJH coordinator. “It was wonderful to see the parents’ joy at watching their children learn and create a Jewish ritual item, and wonderful to see the parents learn along with their kids.”

BOJH minimizes or erases the hurdles that often keep young families from participating in synagogue life. “Our programs are generally free,” says Rabbi Rosenthal. “Although they all incorporate Jewish themes, activities are carefully selected to ensure that people of varying backgrounds can feel comfortable participating.”

Westchester Jewish teenagers of all denominations with developmental challenges find a home in Congregation Kol Ami’s Yad B’Yad (Hand-in-Hand) program, which focuses on social skills and Jewish education through role play, class discussion, and field trips. Participants team with peer mentors and engage in social action, Jewish holiday programs, and other special events.

Yad B’Yad Program Director Karen Millman reports the greatest successes have been that the students become more socially savvy and confident, integrate better into their communities, and learn strategies to keep themselves safe. They also make new friendships with other Yad B’Yad teens and with students from the religious high school program, and many volunteer as assistant teachers with the younger grades or as helpers in Kol Ami’s Sunday Religious School.

Millman’s advice to other synagogues who would like to develop outreach programs: “Go for it! If you discover a need and have the passion and



desire to fill it, write up a proposal, and seek support for your idea from the clergy, principal, and board. With work and tenacity, you can make it happen.”

Temple Shaaray Tefila, a Reform congregation in Manhattan, has attracted young people in their 20s and 30s with a monthly Shabbat Unplugged service, sponsored by JeTSeT (Jewish Twenties and Thirties at Shaaray Tefila). Shabbat Unplugged features a prayer book, created by Shaaray Tefila’s Rabbi Joshua Strom, that is accessible to people of all backgrounds and levels of Jewish education, as well as a band that sets prayers to popular music. “We try to provide a worship experience and social opportunity that helps everyone in this age group feel comfortable, regardless of Jewish background or whether one is in a relationship or single,” Rabbi Strom explains.

Results? Attendance has tripled in the last 18 months, from 50 to about 150 and more. The challenge is one most shuls can only dream of: finding enough space for everyone. “We also have started seeing the benefits in continuing community and temple membership through additional holiday parties, social action projects, and other events,” says Rabbi Strom. “However, this is in its earliest stages, and we hope to eventually have an annual calendar filled with a variety of Jewish programming.”

The New Shul, “a progressive, independent, creative community in Greenwich Village exploring meaningful ways to experience Jewish life and ritual in the 21st century,” also directs a lot of effort toward young and unaffiliated New Yorkers. One initiative is Shabbat on Tap. With the tagline “Experience Shabbat where everybody knows your name,” they meet in a West Village bar to “discuss the big questions” with Rabbi Dan Ain.

The New Shul’s goals are to increase membership by 40 families or individuals and create a culture of “member marketers.” Among their marketing initiatives was a pop-up store and art installation, held in a vacant storefront, that explored the Days of Awe, with members trained to answer questions and hand out marketing materials.

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Elinor Nauen is a freelance writer and member of Town and Village Synagogue in New York.

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discovery and revaluing of Jewish ritual and tradition, are centerpieces of Reconstructionist Judaism. They are also the ways in which many contemporary Jews often practice, or wish to experience their Judaism. We believe that Reconstructionist Judaism and our congregations offer an inspiring, meaningful, contemporary approach to Judaism that is rooted in tradition, yet open to change. Through *keruv*, Jews who are seeking this meaning and community can find one another.

**SYNERGY:** What is the importance of *keruv* in these times — and are there any differences with times past? What challenges do congregations face?

**Zevit:** Being part of a supportive community is more important than ever; and in this challenging economic climate, *keruv* efforts must be redoubled. The challenge is that our communities were understaffed before the economic crisis, and with budget cuts, some volunteers are taking on even more day-to-day operational tasks. While on the surface, the ability to engage in *keruv* seems to be a luxury, in reality *keruv* is a long-term investment and is just as, if not more, essential than short-term volunteer and staff efforts to provide current members with quality programs. If there is no long-term stability, then short-term programs are simply a “quick fix.”

**Kahn:** The mitzvah of loving the stranger, of drawing near



RABBI SHAWN ZEVIT

those who are far, is an ancient one that we are commanded to observe today as we have in the past. However, today we face a demographic imperative as more and more Jews are intermarrying with those who are not Jewish. This is an opportunity for all of us to embrace these partners and invite them to understand the beauty of Judaism, in the hope that they will establish Jewish homes and families. The relevance of the Jewish way of life attracts many today, Jewish or not, who are seeking meaning in their lives, and we have an opportunity to help and support them on this path.

The challenge that congregations face is learning how to truly welcome all who approach our synagogues. If we look only for membership, we fail to understand the sacred purpose of our community, which is to support, to teach, and to enable Jews to repair the world. This can only happen when we gather together. Reform Jewish Outreach is a commitment to the mitzvah, and we have found that



when we engage in welcoming the stranger who is not Jewish, we learn better how to welcome the born Jewish stranger.

**Buchweitz:** Outreach is a process that takes time, a commodity in short supply as synagogue leaders grapple with other pressing issues. All the more so, it must become more than programs and activities for those involved. It can become a passion and be a catalyst for developing relationships and providing tremendous inner satisfaction and rewards for all involved.

**Savenor:** We find that outreach to young families is particularly important today as synagogues face increasing institutional challenges. Changing demographics and the economic downturn have decreased synagogue membership rolls, making it even more crucial than before for synagogues to incorporate young families in order to keep their communities robust and vibrant. Young-family outreach is also particularly challenging today, as families face an increasing number of demands on their time, energy, and financial resources. Often, families who might be interested in participating in synagogue life hesitate to do so because of the cost or because they are loath to give up any more “family time” from their already overstretched schedules.

And so Building Our Jewish Home is designed as a “low-barrier” approach to young-family *keruv* — minimizing or erasing the hurdles that often keep young families from participating in synagogue life. Our

programs are generally free of cost, and provide ways for parents and kids to spend time together while making new friends and learning something Jewish. Although all of our programs incorporate Jewish themes, activities are carefully selected to ensure that people of varying backgrounds can feel comfortable participating.

**SYNERGY:** Even with similar challenges, we would expect diverse approaches to outreach. What is one successful effort or program that highlights your movement’s approach? Rabbi Savenor, you’ve already begun to describe one.

**Savenor:** I’m enthusiastic! One exemplary program was Mezuzapalooza, recently held at the Hewlett-East Rockaway Jewish Centre. [See description in accompanying article on page 6.] Another helps synagogues include preschool families in Shabbat and havdalah programming. First Hebrew Congregation of Peekskill hosted a “PJ Havdalah” that welcomed families to the synagogue on Saturday night to mark the end of Shabbat together. Led by Rabbi Lee Paskind, parents and kids joined in the havdalah service, enjoyed a family-friendly dinner, and made their own havdalah sets to take home and use. Participants were able to spend meaningful time together on a Saturday night, parents and kids were able to share in the magic of havdalah together, and no one had to worry about what to make for dinner! Like Mezuzapalooza, PJ Havdalah made it easy for young families to participate in a Jewish activity together.

**Buchweitz:** I’ll speak more generally. Every program has the potential of attracting new people to the synagogue. I see successful outreach where Outreach Committee members consider each program’s feasibility for their target groups and coordinate responsibilities among the members of the committee, including of course a personal call of thanks to attendees, inviting participants to other activities. Be sure to add names of participants to the database!

In particular, Simchat Torah, Chanukah, and Purim celebrations, and public *sedarim* are all joyous experiences for children and families — a wonderful opportunity for communal programs. Some take the synagogue into the community by lighting the menorah in the lobbies of nearby apartment buildings, inviting tenants to join in the lighting, singing, and refreshments, followed up with an invitation to future synagogue programs. Synagogues have indicated that parents are thirsting for practical ideas and suggestions on strengthening parenting and marital skills. The OU has been in the forefront of developing programs in these areas for synagogues and schools. These programs not only serve synagogue membership but attract so many others from the general community. Once again, *keruv* is most effective when the synagogue Outreach Committee follows up with a personal call of thanks to attendees, while extending an invitation to future activities.



**Kahn:** One program that has had wide success in synagogues across the country is A Taste of Judaism: Are You Curious? a barrier-free program that invites all to learn about Jewish spirituality, ethics, and community. Since 1994, through advertising in the secular press and now online, this three-session course is open to all, Jewish or not. We welcome participants into our congregations to be taught by our rabbis about what Judaism has to teach about God, Torah, and Israel. Since its inception, we have welcomed over 90,000 people to connect or reconnect with Jewish tradition. Forty-five percent of participants have subsequently gone on to more learning, conversion, and synagogue affiliation. We're pleased to be offering a "taste" now in Manhattan, in partnership with the Conservative and Reconstructionist movements, with the support of UJA-Federation.

**Zevit:** Well-connected, deeply satisfied members are the most effective PR tool! One low-cost approach to *keruv* is letters sent out by Bet Am Shalom in White Plains to current members, encouraging them to share their love of the community with friends and family members. Even among those who would not join, raising the profile of your community can result in recommendations to those who would be interested in membership.

Another important part of outreach is integrating new members into the community. West End Synagogue in Manhattan developed a series of programs to integrate new members,

including inviting new members to light Chanukah candles at veteran members' homes. To maximize the success of this program, think about its potential to create social networks and organize invitations accordingly.

**SYNERGY:** Thank you all for joining in this conversation! Readers can find further resources from each movement online.

## Outreach Resources

### Jewish Reconstructionist Federation

[www.jrf.org/keruv-library](http://www.jrf.org/keruv-library)

### Orthodox Union

[www.oucommunity.org](http://www.oucommunity.org)

### Union for Reform Judaism

[www.urj.org/outreach](http://www.urj.org/outreach)

### United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

<http://metny.uscj.org/regional-education-programs/building-our-jewish-home>

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## Synagogue Responses

Various revenue-enhancement, cost-saving, and collaboration strategies have been initiated to maintain viability and stabilize synagogues.

**Kol Nidre Appeal:** Of those who responded, 43 percent reported higher actual donations, 28 percent reported similar donations, and 26 percent reported lower donations. Westchester County led the way with higher donations, and Nassau County trailed.

### Dues and Fundraising:

Forty percent now expect similar revenues in both these revenue categories compared with a year ago, and 13 percent and 25 percent anticipate higher revenues in dues and in fundraising, respectively. Forty-six percent of synagogues do anticipate lower revenues from dues, which many attribute to the increase in abatements or decreased membership.

### Revenue Enhancement and Cost-Saving Measures:

Most common, in order of frequency, are increased fundraising (69 percent have already acted, compared with 37 percent in March, and another 18 percent are considering for the future), fewer mailings, more modest programming, and energy audits.

## Synagogues and UJA-Federation of New York's Connect to Care

UJA-Federation's Connect to Care draws on the resources of outstanding network agencies to provide one-stop local employment, legal, financial consulting, and supportive counseling services to Jewish New Yorkers affected by the economic downturn. From its inception in June 2009 through the end of March 2010, Connect to Care has served more than 20,000 clients in New York. Its success in reaching and helping those in need is in large measure owed to the integral involvement and collaboration of New York synagogues and their rabbis. Close to 20 percent of Connect to Care clients have been referred by rabbis or synagogues, the most productive referral resource outside of the agencies themselves. Collaborations on job fairs, networking opportunities, and skills workshops have reached thousands with substantive help and the knowledge that their Jewish community — agencies and synagogues — care about them.

For further information on Connect to Care, visit [www.ujafedny.org/connect-to-care](http://www.ujafedny.org/connect-to-care).

Clergy and staff changes are also common — 34 percent have eliminated staff or clergy positions, up from 15 percent in March 2009. Of those who responded, 44 percent have reconfigured staff, while 90 percent have not and are not considering reducing clergy hours.

Fifty-two percent are now using volunteers to fulfill synagogue functions.

### Collaborations and Mergers:

Forty-two percent have collaborated with other institutions, and 35 percent have shared programmatic resources.

A merger is being considered by 12 percent of reporting congregations.

### Synagogue Leaders Speak

"This year, we aggressively reached out to any congregants who did not send in their dues to let them know that if they needed help, we would work with them. We still lost more members than usual, but probably would have lost even more."

"We did 'fair-share' dues, and the average paid by households is down but the number of households is up."

"We do not charge dues, and ask members to contribute what they can. The wealthier members support us, and the poorer ones, we ask that the shul be the place they give all or most of their *maaser* money."

"We appealed to those who have not been impacted by the recession — or, at least, minimally impacted — to increase their contributions to make up for those less fortunate. Results were very positive."

"Our attention to Kol Nidre appeal and fundraising efforts has increased considerably as a result of declining income, and the extra effort seems to be paying off. We added a 'spring' appeal that we never did before, and have increased the number of fundraising events, particularly those that bring in outside money."

"We have increased dues 30 to 50 percent and have added a double *chai* (\$3,600) category this year, and have 12 double *chai* members so far."

"We are very interested in exploring alternative funding models and creative dues structures. Families find our dues structure costly, and there are other options available to them (Chabad, individual tutoring for bar or bat mitzvah), which is a serious concern for us."

"We are here for everyone! Whether you are on Long Island or in Osh Kosh, every Jew should have the opportunity to be part of a shul. By the way, we don't turn non-Jews away. We are a House of God open to all."

"We lost money last year. I anticipate we'll lose money again this year. We can only raise dues so much without increasing the rate of arrangements along with it. I'm hoping that we will be able to weather this storm —

## What's New About Mergers? Considering Partnership in a Post-2008 World

Facilitated by

**Alice Mann and Robert Leventhal**

*Senior Consultants, The Alban Institute*

**Wednesday, June 2, 2010**

Webinar Offered From

**12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. and 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

In response to this time of dramatic change in the synagogue world, this workshop will explore innovative forms of collaboration and merger relevant to the current situation. You will examine myths about mergers that could harm your chances of success, consider how congregations shift from a survival focus to a visionary stance that favors thoughtful innovation, and discuss how leaders address the loss and disorientation members experience along the way.

Register online at

[www.ujafedny.org/event/view/synergy-mergers-webinar](http://www.ujafedny.org/event/view/synergy-mergers-webinar).

As a follow-up to the webinar, interested congregations can apply for a consultation to discuss the dynamics and procedures involved in the merger process, with Alice Mann through the Synagogue Leadership Development Project at UJA-Federation. **Contact Gayle Bloom at 1.212.584.3346 or [bloomg@ujafedny.org](mailto:bloomg@ujafedny.org) for further information.**

without losing what's good and what works so well about our synagogue."

"We have lived with deficits and austerity budgets for a very long time. This crisis just cut the funding

available further. The struggle to live the vision of the congregation has been made harder by the downturn, but also highlighted [our vision] by seeing it in stark choices which had to be made."

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