

The enlargement of awesomeness

Sitting with colleagues from other organizations recently, the conversation quickly turned into what the future of the community is going to look like. How can we extrapolate based on what we know today? How can we make predictions of what the community's direction will be?

I already know.

It's about leadership.

A massive percentage of Federation's leadership doesn't just "do" Federation. They also do synagogue, and JCC, and AIPAC, and Bonds, and other important work. Busy people do lots of things – that's why we keep asking you to do stuff, because you're good at it and you can handle it (sorry, to all those of you that we over-ask).

Doing three or four things – volunteering in an agency, helping out at your synagogue, giving time and resources to things you love, supporting your Federation – makes each individual component stronger and more enriching. Why? Because you learn the best practices from each and bring them wherever you go – and you learn how to avoid the common mistakes. How to do meaningful audits... how to ask tough questions... how to debate respectfully... how to think and plan strategically.



Being smart and a mensch and a good lay volunteer isn't something you just do once a week for an hour or two. You can't switch it off. It becomes part of you and it shapes you. And in turn, it shapes us. One of the most awe-inspiring aspects of being a Jewish communal professional in our community is seeing this process – the enlargement of awesomeness – in our lay leadership.

This past year our Jewish Federation has invested funds in raising the tide for lots of others. We've held numerous training seminars for our synagogue leaders on topics such as finance, fundraising, security measures, volunteer engagement, and more. We've trained partner agencies in public speaking and collaborated on financial management and good governance. And we're about to launch a coaching

program for many of our partner agencies to invest in their professional leadership – something which will have meaningful impact for years to come.

But most of all, we've become the training ground for hundreds of lay volunteers in our community. Our Federation offers incredible leadership training resources like Epstein, Borinsky, Wexner-Waldor, and more, to invest in the future of our Jewish community across Essex, Union, Sussex, Morris, and Somerset Counties. This is a game-changer – because you can see the future leadership of AIPAC, our synagogues, our partner agencies, and other organizations, coming through these programs right now. It makes quite an amazing statement about the impact Federation has across the community.

You don't need a crystal ball to see that.