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Missions here and there

I've always loved federation missions because the values that we experience in them are the core values that we work towards – community (kehila), responsibility (areivut) and kindness (hesed). And a mission is also where some of the most dedicated and articulate supporters of these values gather together. So there's a lot of passion, a lot of dedication and ... unsurprisingly a lot of caffeine.

It's such an amazing pleasure to spend a few days in Israel, or a former Soviet republic, or with a small Jewish community somewhere in the world. You see how our federation helps people to take care of their needy and hungry, how to promote their young leaders, how to cooperate and educate, while at the same time build their future. We do that at home, and we do it in Israel and around the world.

I've always felt that the distinction of "here" and "there" in Jewish community life is false. It's meaningless. It cheapens our understanding of what Jewish community actually can be, and can aspire to be. If you draw up a border and limit your caring to a twenty-mile radius around our federation, you'll never understand the beauty, the depth, the impact of Jewish community and Jewish life.

But when you go on a mission, you get it. You see the connections, you see the community. And then there's a moment where you turn round, and look back "home," several thousand miles away. And that's when you understand what community means and what we can do. Together.

So it's been a powerful experience for me, these past few weeks, to do this exact same thing here at home. To do 'mini-missions' to see how we care, build and save here in our local community. To see the amazing talent of our local professional and lay leaders in agencies and institutions that serve the vulnerable, that educate, that inspire. And to bring my colleagues from different federation departments and philosophies with me to share in the experience.

Those visits are missions too. And we need more of them. From January we're going to organize a regular 'mini-mission' to a different agency (or maybe more than one each time) to see the work we do and how we do it.

If you live in this community, if you love being Jewish and you're proud of being part of the community, come with us. We'll start advertising them shortly. Come join us.

P.S. You can receive this blog by email by clicking on the "subscribe" button to the right.

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By Dov Ben-Shimon, Federation CEO

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Going to Israel (with kids)

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- Global Connections
- Holocaust Awareness and Education
- Leadership Programs
- Missions
- Synagogue Leadership Initiative
- Teens
- UJA Campaign
- Women's Philanthropy
- Young Families/Couples/Singles

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- Adults 60+ and Eldercare
- Books (Free!) for Jewish Preschoolers
- Careers
- Community Calendar
- Community Directory (including Synagogues)
- Disability Services
- Hebrew Words and Phrases
- Jewish Camping
- Jewish Education
- Jewish Life
- Jewish Resource Line
- Pastoral Counseling
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