B.I.N.A.

**B**est practices **I**nformation **N**ews **A**warness

A Newsletter for Special Needs Jewish Education

Volume 7, Issue 3 Tammuz 5775 June 2015

**Summer 5775 /2015**

**Summer programs, looking ahead to school, and some of the outstanding programs in the area of educational and supplemental programming for Jewish Educators of diverse learners.**

**As usual, we welcome your input and articles, as well as comments and ideas for future issues.**

**Sharon Frant Brooks**

Thanks – Todah Raba! Thank you to the congregations and individuals that have contributed so far to keep BINA going! We welcome contributions to be able to maintain this service. Any agency or individual who is interested in offering support can send their financial support to:

*BINA, c/o Adath Israel Congregation – Resource Center Services, att. Hedda Morton, 1958 Lawrenceville Road, Lawrenceville, NJ*

More articles are at the end beyond those the ones noted in the Highlights index!

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More articles of interest follow these highlighted articles!

****National Ramah Tikvah Network Named as One of Eighteen Leading Jewish Organizations Committed to Fostering Inclusion of People with Disabilities****

The National Ramah Tikvah Network is a powerful incubator for young Jewish professionals who are motivated and trained to work with individuals with disabilities in the Jewish community. The network builds upon summer camp, which has proven to be an innovative and effective platform for disabilities initiatives in the Jewish community, and coordinates its disabilities-focused activities in year-round and professionally enriching ways. Staff alumni benefit from year-round professional development training and opportunities to sustain connections with their campers through weekly Shabbat-themed videoconferencing programs.  
  
Slingshot evaluators called the Ramah Tikvah Network "a trailblazer," and noted "only the Ramah Tikvah Network is creating a cohort of young Jewish leaders committed to promoting inclusion in their future careers."

The Disabilities and Inclusion Guide was produced in partnership with the [Ruderman Family Foundation](http://rudermanfoundation.org/), one of the funders of the Ramah Tikvah Network.

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[BECAUSE EVERYONE BELONGS](https://www.njcd.org/)

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## YACHAD/NJCD SUMMER PROGRAMS

### [Yachad Summer Programs](https://www.njcd.org/summer-programs/yachadsummer/)

  The camping experience can make all the difference in the development of any child or young adult. The same is true for anyone living with a disability. The summer…

### [Yad B’Yad Israel Experience](https://www.njcd.org/summer-programs/yadbyad/)

Summer 2015 registration and information newly released! Applications now available! Click here to apply! High Schoolers can download a copy of our recommendation letter here. (one recommendation form required) Yad B’Yad brings…

[Yachad Morris Sandelbaum High School Fellowship](https://www.njcd.org/summer-programs/yachad-morris-sandelbaum-high-school-fellowship/)

  Exclusively for current high school Juniors!   Fill out your application here.   What is the Yachad MSHS Fellowship Program? This program provides select students, who will have completed…

### [Become a Summer staff member](https://www.njcd.org/summer-programs/summerstaff/)

Are you interested in an exciting and rewarding position with Yachad/NJCD this summer? Look no further! Yachad is looking for people to fill many different positions within our variety of summer programs.…

### [Getaway](https://www.njcd.org/summer-programs/getaway/)

Looking for a relaxing two-week vacation? Want to get away from the city and have a good time? The Yachad Getaway is for you! The Getaway takes place in a large retreat…

### [Vocational Programs](https://www.njcd.org/summer-programs/vocational-programs/)

Yachad/NJCD offers full time work positions in both a sleep-away camp and day camp setting. Participants, both male and female, are supervised by a job coach/counselor, and are placed in…

### [Camper Programs](https://www.njcd.org/summer-programs/camper-programs/)

Yachad/NJCD provides unique and inclusive sleepaway and day camp programs. Our participants have the support of trained, highly motivated staff and, in a the sleepaway programs, sleep in their own bunkhouse.  Each day,…

minneapolis  
sabes jewish community center

# special programs for people with disabilities

From early childhood education to senior adult programming, we provide training, advocacy, support, and fun to ensure meaningful experiences for everyone. For parents, caregivers and loved ones of people with special needs, we offer support, information and education. For youth and adults with disabilities, we create social, educational, recreational and volunteer opportunities. At the Sabes JCC, we work to build a community where everyone acknowledges and respects peoples' differences and celebrates their unique gifts.

Sabes Jewish Community Center   |   4330 S. Cedar Lake Road, Minneapolis, MN 55416   |   952.381.3400   |   [info@sabesjcc.org](mailto:info@sabesjcc.org)



Several of the 36 under 36 for this year are connected to the world of Disability and Inclusion. Here are 2:

Public Face Of Inclusion Advocacy: Tikvah Juni, 32

When Tikvah Juni was 16, she received her first standing ovation.

“I remember all the people, cheering and smiling,” said Juni, who had been the guest speaker at an event hosted by Yachad: The National Jewish Council for Disabilities.

“That was the first time I really believed the world could change,” she said. Since then, she’s been trying to change the world one speech at a time.

Juni, who has Down syndrome, travels around the U.S. teaching audiences about inclusion. In Washington, D.C., she even lobbied state and federal legislators to increase resources for special needs students.

Though she begins each speech with a thought on the weekly Torah portion, she ends by detailing her experiences as someone with special needs.

“I hate the words ‘disability’ and ‘consumer,’ she said, two words commonly used to describe those with special needs. “People with special needs aren’t takers, and we aren’t incapable. We want to be accepted just as much as everyone else.”

Growing up in the 1980s when inclusion was rarely a topic of conversation, Juni often felt excluded.

“Schools kept closing their doors to me after they heard about my special needs,” said Juni, who grew up in the Orthodox community of Flatbush. Socializing was also difficult, and Juni spent much of her childhood reading books instead of romping with friends.

“People didn’t treat me so nicely. They judged me by the way I looked,” she said.

Even today, audiences are often surprised when she first walks up to the podium. “They’re expecting someone big and important, and here’s this small little girl,” Juni said. “But when I start speaking, they shift their focus. It’s not about my exterior — it’s about what I’m saying.”

When not on speaking tours, Juni works with special needs children. During the school year, she serves as a preschool teaching assistant; in the summer, you can find her at Camp HASC.

To reach an even broader audience, Juni completed a several-hundred page book about her experiences. Though not yet published, she’s hoping one day her story, and her message, can reach thousands.

**Capturing color:** In her downtime, Juni loves oil painting. She is particularly fond of landscapes. “An artist can see the world in a way no one else can,” she said. “It’s important to notice things other people don’t.”

[http://Facebook.com/tikvah.juni, njcd.org](http://facebook.com/tikvah.juni,%20njcd.org)

Advocating For Students With Special Needs: Adam Dayan, 31

Monday, June 1, 2015



As a kid in a Sephardic family in Flatbush, Dayan thought he’d become a writer or lawyer. Eventually he decided that a writer’s life was not necessarily financially lucrative.

In college he majored in industrial/organizational psychology, thinking he’d become a psychologist. Later, he considered becoming an international businessman.

Now, Dayan combines all of his interests is his work as an attorney who focuses on children with autism and other special needs, helping their families, sometimes on a pro bono basis, obtain government benefits and schools’ often-hard-to-line-up services.

On the job, Dayan writes such lawyerly fare as briefs and appeals, and a more creative, special education-centered blog. He gets to use his knowledge of psychology in dealing with educators and the legal system. And his interest in special education advances of other countries has taken him around the world; One day, he said, he might act on his interest in business as well, maybe by becoming a consultant.

“I’ve always loved kids,” he said. “School should be easy for kids. Life should be easy for kids.”

Dayan, who is Orthodox and attended the Yeshivah of Flatbush, is an active member of the Safra Synagogue on the Upper East Side.

His interest in special education was sparked by a research project on autism while an undergraduate at Baruch College.

He traces his interest in helping society’s powerless to what he learned at home and at school.

“That’s part of your Jewish education,” he said.

**Going bananas:** On a recent flight to Japan, Dayan and his wife Michelle discovered that their kosher meals hadn’t arrived. Instead, the flight attendants brought the couple a platter of “20, 30, 40 bananas,” Dayan said, “the only thing that wasn’t treif on the plane.” It was, he said, “a beautiful way to start the trip.”

**Ravenous reader**: One of Dayan’s favorite books is “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time,” Mark Haddon’s 2004 mystery novel told through the perspective of a teenage boy with autism. “The book captivated me,” Dayan said. “It reinforced what I was studying.”

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**2015 SINAI Schools**|1485 Teaneck Road Suite 300, Teaneck New Jersey 07666

Dean & Administrative Office, Suite 300|Tel: [201.833.1134](tel:2018331134)|Fax: 201.833.8772|[info@sinaischools.org](mailto:info@sinaischools.org)|[Sitemap](https://www.sinaischools.org/sitemap)

**For Professionals**

At SINAI Schools, our decades of experience in special education put us in the unique position of being able to offer guidance and support to various professionals on a wide range of topics related to disabilities and special education. A major part of our mission is to serve as a resource to the general public by offering guidance and information.

Whether you are an educator looking for guidance on how to improve what you can offer to students with special needs, a teacher or administrator wondering if one of your students might require more attention than you can give, or a therapist who would like to learn more about our approach to special education and Inclusion by Design, we welcome your questions and are here to assist you in better serving the children you know who have special needs.

- See more at: <https://www.sinaischools.org/about-us/professionals#sthash.unnmQI3s.dpuf>

# Planning for College: Accommodations for the Student with Learning Disabilities and ADHD

**By Diane Robertson on Nov 18, 2014**

“Preparation is the key to success.”  We hear this phrase over and over, but it is particularly true for the student with disabilities who is planning to go to college.  In “Planning for College: Eligibility and Access to Disability Services,” published in The Jewish Link on November 6, I discussed the importance of researching the services available at different colleges, and eligibility for and access to these services.  In this article, I will discuss the accommodations that may or may not be available to students with Learning Disabilities (LD) and ADHD.

Colleges do offer some of the basic accommodations that students who have an IEP or 504 Plan may have utilized in high school, and they may even provide some accommodations to which students have not yet had access.  The important point is that colleges are not required to provide the same adjustments students have had in high school.

In fact, not only do they not have such an obligation, but the laws permit colleges to refuse certain requests.  Though they may choose to provide a student with waivers or substitutions of his or her requirements, colleges also can reject accommodations which are considered fundamental alterations to college programs.  This means that at some colleges, students may have to meet the same requirements as their typical peers for everything from admissions through graduation.

Many colleges also make a distinction between accommodations that are generally recognized in educational settings and those that they consider “personal services.”  Frequently, this is an issue for students expecting a certain level of tutorial support.  Postsecondary schools are not required to provide students who have LD and ADHD with tutoring in a one-on-one setting, or to ensure that tutors have a special education background.  Students with LD and ADHD have access to the same tutoring as their typical peers, and students who want such assistance must seek out schools that provide it (typically in a fee-for-service program).

Even within the classroom, accommodations which a student may have had throughout high school often are not available in college.  While some colleges do grant extended time to students who qualify, others do not.  Some colleges may suggest that in order to manage the workload, a student with LD or ADHD simply take fewer classes.  Students also may find it hard to get approved for alternative assignments or assessments (e.g., writing a paper instead of taking an exam, or taking an essay exam instead of a multiple choice one).  Also, colleges do not typically ask Disability Services or professors to provide study guides; students are expected to prepare their own.  Similarly, students should not expect to have adjustments made to class assignments, as they may have been in high school.

**In order to prepare for these changes in accommodations, if you have a learning disability or ADHD you need to be prepared.**  Before you apply to a specific college, inquire to find out if it might make the accommodations you need.  This information can usually be found on the Disability Services page of the college website, but if the information is not clear or does not address your particular needs, call the Disability Services office.   You should also research the graduation requirements of the different colleges to make sure that they do not include classes you fear you might not pass.  Once you are in college, you should choose a major taking into account that required classes for your field of study may not be waived.  Most high school college guidance counselors have some knowledge about the different levels of support at various colleges, but there are also professional consultants who specialize in helping students with LD or ADHD identify the best post-secondary choices for a fee.

The post-secondary system bears some resemblance to the one at the secondary level, in that certain basic accommodations are available (at no cost to the students) at every college in the country, no matter the level of competitiveness.  For the student with learning disabilities or ADHD, research and preparation are the keys to a successful college experience.

Part 1 of this article, entitled “Planning for College: Eligibility and Access to Disability Services,” is available online at[*www.sinaischools.org/content/planning-college-eligibility-and-access-disability-services*](http://www.sinaischools.org/content/planning-college-eligibility-and-access-disability-services).

Diane Robertson teaches Language Arts and Mathematics at SINAI’s Maor High School at Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School, including the William Solomon Judaic Studies Program.  SINAI operates several inclusive special education schools throughout northern New Jersey for Jewish children Grades 1-12, as well as programs for adults with developmental disabilities.

*Graduating senior Menashe Shershow spoke at SINAI's annual Staff Appreciation Dinner on May 27.*

# How I Have Grown: My Pride in Graduating from SINAI’s Maor High School

**By Menashe Shershow on May 28, 2015**

*Here are his heartfelt words:*

When I first began my journey at SINAI’s Maor High School I wasn’t really sure how it would go. I had been to five different elementary and middle schools by the time I turned 14. By the end of 8th grade I wasn’t sure where I would end up next. I nearly failed 8th grade pre algebra, and my mom knew I needed to make a change. When she first told me about Maor High School, I was reluctant to go for an interview. I’m still not entirely sure how I did end up there, but looking back it was by far the best decision I could have made.

In ninth grade, my self-esteem had dramatically improved. Ms. Robertson carefully explained each math equation to me from different angles and described how they logically worked. This was the first year I can remember passing math class, without extra tutoring outside of the classroom.

During my sophomore year I really understood how to study correctly. In Ms. Robertson’s English class, we experimented with different study techniques that enabled me to work for hours at a time, taking short 10-minute breaks. By the end of the year I was confident enough in my study skills that I spent that summer taking an SAT course 4 days a week. This was something I couldn’t have even imagined doing a few months earlier.

As my study skills improved so did my knowledge. I began taking an interest in the religious topics discussed in my classes with Rabbi Gold and Rabbi Horowitz. They helped me understand the Torah, and the valuable lessons that it teaches. Then I began studying with Rabbi Rohr at the beginning of my junior year. Every class was full of passion and an appetite for knowledge. I will continue my spiritual journey for the rest of my life. I will never forget the passionate conversations that we had.

This year, I took Ms. Carle’s environmental science class. We researched EVERYTHING there is to know about solar panels. If anyone is interested, “Sun Power” solar panels are a great investment. Ms. Carle helped me create a website, a research paper, and a power point regarding the benefits of solar power.

Mr. Gandler was more than a teacher for me. Even when I was no longer in his class he continued to be a mentor, an inspiration, and a good friend. He brought history to life for me.

For all four years of high school I have been an active member of the Kushner wrestling team. There has been a constant trend of Maor students trying out for wrestling. Undoubtedly this is because of our coach. Coach Cilio works tirelessly to expand the wrestling team and maintain rapid growth. Right now he is conducting a team practice. I would not have succeeded in wrestling if not for him. But it goes beyond the wrestling mat. He teaches us life lessons regarding discipline, dedication, and perseverance. These lessons convert to every aspect of my life, including academics.

Words cannot express my gratitude to Ms. Robertson. She never lost faith in me and helped me at times when I was the most discouraged. She was crucial in my academic growth. Without Ms Robertson I am confident I would not have achieved my goal of entering The University of Hartford next year.

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About Shefa

The Shefa School is a new Jewish community day school in Manhattan, currently serving students in grades 2-5. Shefa will ultimately enroll children in grades K-8 who would benefit from a specialized educational environment in order to develop their strengths while addressing their learning challenges. We specifically serve students with language-based learning disabilities who have not yet reached their potential levels of success in traditional classroom settings. Shefa is a pluralistic community school serving families across the range of Jewish involvement and observance.

Why Shefa?

Even among the excellent schooling options available to families, there exists an unmet need at the nexus of Jewish day schools and secular special education schools. Shefa seeks to fill this gap by offering families in the tri-state area a new choice: a school providing excellent research-based instruction to children with language-based learning disabilities, seamlessly integrated with Jewish community, culture, and traditions. At the Shefa School, students experience a comprehensive Jewish-values based education that prioritizes each individual child's learning needs.

Our Mission

The Shefa School is a new Jewish community day school for children with language-based learning disabilities. Shefa is Hebrew for abundance, reflecting our belief that each child possesses abundant strengths. Our mission is to build upon these strengths while teaching students the skills to overcome their challenges in a caring and supportive school community that seamlessly integrates Jewish values and traditions. Embracing families from a range of Jewish backgrounds and practices, Shefa nurtures our students’ Jewish identity and teaches the skills to enable them to participate fully in Jewish life.

We prioritize each child’s learning needs by providing excellent, individualized, research-based instruction to foster academic, social, and emotional competence and confidence. We empower students to become active, joyful, lifelong learners, critical thinkers, kind and responsible individuals, and contributing members of the Jewish community and the broader world.



[info@shefaschool.org](mailto:info@shefaschool.org)

NATIONAL RAMAH TIKVAH NETWORK

# Programs for Campers with Disabilities

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[Online Program Directory](http://campramah.org/content/specialneeds/SpecialNeedsProgramDescriptions.php) | [Printable Program Directory](http://campramah.org/pdf/tikvah_network_program_directory_201502.pdf)

The Ramah Camping Movement is a pioneer in the field of inclusion for Jewish campers with a wide range of learning, developmental, cognitive, and social disabilities. Since the first Ramah Tikvah program opened in 1970, a variety of programs for campers with disabilities—overnight and day camp programs, vocational education programs, and family camps and retreats— now operate in all Ramah camps across North America.

The goal of the programs in the **National Ramah Tikvah Network is** to enhance Jewish identity and teach Jewish values in a supportive, inclusive, fun environment. At Ramah, campers with disabilities have many opportunities to connect and participate in activities with campers throughout the camp. These interactions provide an exceptional benefit to the entire Ramah community by fostering a heightened sensitivity toward individual differences.

Regardless of their geographic location, families are directed to the Ramah camp that best suits their child’s needs. Summer program offerings include:

[Overnight camp programs](http://campramah.org/content/specialneeds/SpecialNeedsProgramDescriptions.php#overnight)

[*Day camp programs*](http://campramah.org/content/specialneeds/SpecialNeedsProgramDescriptions.php#day)

[Vocational education programs](http://campramah.org/content/specialneeds/SpecialNeedsProgramDescriptions.php#voced)

[Family camps and retreats](http://campramah.org/content/specialneeds/SpecialNeedsProgramDescriptions.php#family)

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INCLUSION TRAINING GUIDE FOR JEWISH SUMMER CAMPS

**A PROJECT OF**

FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CAMP

In Partnership with

**To download the complete guide: Jewishcamp.org/InclusionResources**

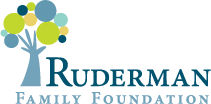
INTRODUCTION

Dear Friends and Colleagues in the Jewish Disabilities Inclusion Field,

The Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC) and the National Ramah Tikvah Network (NRTN) are receiving an unprecedented number of calls and emails from camps wishing to start programs for people with disabilities, expand services, or become more inclusive. Camp directors and staff members are actively seeking guidance, support, and resources. Proudly, we see that attention to including campers with disabilities is exploding as a priority across movements, and organizations with interest in overnight camping, day camping, vocational training programs, family camps, and more! We therefore welcome you to this Resource Guide, which we hope will evolve through use and feedback, as a regularly updated, hands-on, online resource assisting you in all aspects of your work with campers with disabilities. FJC is grateful for the generous support of, UJA-Federation of New York – Neshamot Fund, and our partner, NRTN on development of this Guide. Through the collaborative efforts of Lisa Tobin, Director of the Disabilities Initiatives at the Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC) and Howard Blas, Director of the National Ramah Tikvah Network, this co-branded resource has emerged. In an effort to get useful training material in the hands of camp personnel in time for the 2015 camp season, Lisa and Howard, their teams at FJC and NRTN, and many helpful colleagues in the disabilities camping field have worked tirelessly to collect, organize, and bring online the many useful resources in this guide. Whether you are a camp director, inclusion specialist, director of a disabilities camping program, counselor, or activity specialist, there is something here for you! We see this project growing and expanding over time. This first version offers basic information on the history of disabilities camping, models of camping for people with disabilities, benefits of camping for both campers with disabilities and the typical camp community, overviews of various disabilities, and many useful tools for day to day work with campers. You will read materials designed by FJC, you will “hear” the voice of Tikvah, the pioneers in the field of disabilities camping since 1970, and you will see forms and resources which have been contributed by several partners in the field. For this reason, some terms and names of programs or divisions (for example zimkudia or solelim) may sound camp- or movement-specific. This guide is designed to be used optimally by various camp stakeholders. Feel free to go directly to the section most useful by clicking through to what you need immediately, on the chart of Links by Use/Stakeholder, just above the complete Table of Contents

INCLUSIVE CAMPING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Research on Serving Children with Disabilities at Jewish Overnight Camps As the only agency dedicated to working with all nonprofit Jewish camps, regardless of denomination or affiliation, FJC has become the leading force for growth and expansion of Jewish camps’ programs and services. We understand modalities, methodologies, and the support camps need to implement change, in Jewish/Israel educational experiences, leadership development, marketing and recruitment, and more. We are keenly aware that Jewish children with disabilities have been underserved by the field of Jewish camp. It is our hope that, after 15 years as a research- and data-driven agency with a reputation for delivering programs of excellence that elevate the Jewish camp experience, FJC’s standing will enable us to successfully broaden access to Jewish summer experiences for all Jewish children. FJC believes that inclusivity is as important to typically developing children and the camp community at large as it is to children with disabilities. A fully internalized Jewish identity should certainly include a mandate to help others overcome challenges. These summer communities must be accessible to all Jewish children; they must also be infused with an ethos built around including all individuals, regardless of their needs. Moreover, sharing the camp experience with children with disabilities helps typically developing youth gain a greater appreciation of, and learn from, the strengths and abilities of their peers who face challenges. As a first step towards initiating field-wide changes in this arena, FJC engaged in a research project mapping current, potential, and desired services available to children with emotional, intellectual and physical disabilities at nonprofit Jewish overnight camps across North America. Laszlo Strategies delivered the results of the research (conducted in early 2013), the first of its kind in the Jewish community. The survey garnered results from 423 camp staff members (from 124 camps), 262 parents, and 141 campers. This study indicates that the majority of those involved in Jewish camps care about this issue and agree that every Jewish child, regardless of a disability or need, should be able to attend a Jewish camp. Most respondents note a preference for an inclusion model. The survey shows that the field of Jewish camp is serving no more than 2,340 to 2,590 children with disabilities, out of 75,000 total campers. While this number is more than originally estimated, it is far less than ideal. The biggest barrier to camps offering or expanding programs for special populations is not the camps’ physical attributes, but rather is a dearth of relevant training and knowledge, followed by insufficient funding to adequately educate their personnel. Armed with the findings of the survey and our understanding of what Jewish camps currently are and are not offering in the arena of disabilities programs, and encouraged by conversations with leaders in the field of Jewish camp, parents, and potential funders, FJC is now working to address the needs of children with disabilities whose right it is to have access to and benefit from immersive summers at Jewish camp. By employing a diverse set of approaches to expand camp accessibility, we are confident that we can increase access to Jewish camp so that children with wide-ranging differences can experience the best of what camp offers: joyous Judaism, new friendships, developmental growth, and fun. For more about the 2013 Inclusion Study, click below: Key Findings: http://www.jewishcamp.org/sites/default/files/u4/Key%20Findings%20- %20Jewish%20Camp%20Survey%20on%20Disabilities.pdf Full Results: http://www.jewishcamp.org/sites/default/files/u4/Jewish%20Camp%20for%20Children%20with%20Disabiliti es%20and%20Special%20Needs%20-%20Full%20Survey%20Findings.pdf IN



[The High Price Of Disrespect](http://www.rudermanfoundation.org/blog/disabilities-rights/the-high-price-of-disrespect)

*May 21, 2015*

[](http://www.rudermanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/michael-levy-courtesy-of-sandee-brawarski-of-the-jewish-week.jpg)

**By: Rabbi Michael Levy**

Courtesy of Sandee Brawarski, NY Jewish Week

2015 is the 25th anniversary of the signing of the ADA. We will be posting 25 posts over the course of 2015 which will focus on the ADA- how it has changed society and what still needs to be done. Our goal is to cover for you, dear reader, as many different angles and issues as possible. Below is the fifth post in our #ADA25For25 series. The most recent post was[*Defining inclusion*](http://www.rudermanfoundation.org/blog/disabilities-rights/defining-inclusion).

In Ferguson Missouri, Staten Island New York, and Baltimore Maryland, violent incidents involving African-Americans and the police escalated into nationwide protests. Enraged African-Americans felt that law enforcement officials neither respected them nor sought their input.

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**An Ancient Tragedy Attributed to Lack of Respect**

Nearly 2,000 years ago, during the season immediately following Passover, 12,000 pairs of Rabbi Akiba’s students, studying in partnership, perished from a dreadful suffocating disease. Tradition ascribes their deaths to the fact that they did not accord each other sufficient “*kavod*”—honor and respect. Rather than helping each other grow in scholarship, each student strove to justify his own opinions.

To this day, some Jews, commemorating the tragedy through mourning practices, do not celebrate weddings during the first 25 days following Passover.

**Lack of respect and Kavod for the Jewish disabled**

Too many individuals and organizations, even those who strive to improve our lives, nevertheless do not respect those of us with disabilities enough to acknowledge and respond to our unique voices. They don’t always perceive organizations led by the disabled as equal partners in integration initiatives. I personally have attempted to bring disability-related issues to the attention of major Jewish organizations and received either no response or the generalized reply that no funding was available.

The media, schools, congregations and camps have perhaps unintentionally diminished our *kavod* by labeling us as “special needs” individuals, even though some of us prefer simply “people with disabilities.”

Some organizations dishonor us by playing the pity card to maximize donations. They fail to realize that potential spouses and employers shy away from meaningful relationships with people whom they have been encouraged to pity.

Blacks and women can turn to successful role models, many educators and some of the conventional and social media to learn about respect and empowerment. They have the practical and spiritual tools to fight bigots.

If you are born with, or acquire a disability, you face many “people on the street” and organizations who treat you as a damaged patient rather than a minority member. You generally have less access to empowerment tools than do blacks and women, and can easily internalize many existing negative stereotypes. It takes only one unenlightened family member, clergyman, health professional or educator to perhaps unintentionally steer you towards an unfulfilling and segregated life.

**Drawing from Tradition to Strengthen Kavod**

Genesis 1, 27 portrays all humans, disabled and non-disabled alike, as created in the image of God. Dishonoring a person dishonors God.

Leviticus’s message (19, 18) “Love your fellow human being as yourself” guides us to treat others as we would like to be treated.

There are non-disabled individuals who claim to accurately convey to the public what it’s like to have a disability, without substantive input from actual people with disabilities. This diminishes our *Kavod*, like a man who lectures other men about what it’s like to be a woman without substantive input from women. Let us rather keep in mind the advice of Ethics of the Fathers 2, 4: “Do not judge your fellow human being until you have arrived in his place (i.e. stood in his shoes.)”

**“Systemic Kavod”—Learning from the ADA**

While we cannot emulate the Americans with Disabilities Act by forcing synagogues, schools and camps to eliminate architectural, communications and transportation barriers, we can work with high-ranking policy-makers towards ADA-like systemic change that promotes fuller integration of Jews with disabilities. A call for systemic change is evident in the [disability resolution](http://www.yadempowers.org/yh-news/disability-resolution-passed-by-the-rabbinical-council-of-america/) adopted by the Rabbinical Council of America in August 2014, with meaningful input from[Yad Hachazakah](http://www.yadempowers.org/)—the Jewish Disability Empowerment Center.

To underscore the importance of *kavod* in the disability community, funders might consider requiring grant applicants to submit their policies regarding disability-related barrier removal, as well as service to, employment of and input from people with disabilities.

**Respecting all Stakeholders**

Respecting others means listening to their opinions even if you don’t agree with them. During a meeting that preceded the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, a congressional staffer burst out that he didn’t want his children watching people with no arms eating with their feet. As James Weisman, a United Spinal advocate tells it, a shocked silence followed. A joke was made to diffuse the tension and the hearing proceeded. A non-judgmental atmosphere during the ADA’s development contributed to its strength and its sensitivity to all affected sectors of the community.

If ongoing non-judgmental dialogue was crucial in the development and implementation of the ADA, how much more crucial is it when we Jews must work together in the absence of an enforceable disability mandate? Only through mutual respect are all stakeholders effectively able to interact to “hammer out” what maximum integration entails in specific communities, each with a unique institutional structure and a finite amount of available resources.

In the short run, “splashy” events and accomplishments featured in the media focus attention on disability. In the long run, “unglamorous” *kavod* among stakeholders– people with disabilities, funders, health professionals, clergy, service providers, family members, educators and media is more meaningful and effective. May God bring mutual respect to Ferguson, Staten Island and Baltimore, and may He imbue the disability community with a sense of *kavod* on the journey towards maximum and meaningful integration.

About the Author

A native of Bradley Beach, New Jersey, Rabbi Michael Levy attributes his achievements to God’s beneficence and to his courageous parents. His parents supported him as he explored his small home town, visited Israel and later studied at Hebrew University, journeyed towards more observant Judaism, received rabbinic ordination, obtained a master’s degree in social work from Columbia University and lectured on Torah- and disability-related topics. As a founding member of Yad Hachazakah — the Jewish Disability Empowerment Center, Rabbi Levy strives to make the Jewish experience and Jewish texts accessible to Jews with disabilities. Rabbi Levy is currently director of Travel Training at MTA New York City Transit. He is an active member of Congregation Aish Kodesh in Woodmere, NY. He invites anyone who has disability-related questions to e-mail him at [info@yadempowers.org](mailto:info@yadempowers.org)

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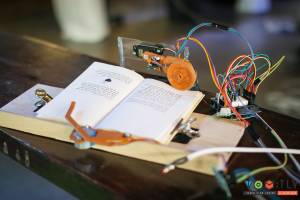
http://unitedwithisrael.org/wp-content/themes/uwi2013/images/logo.png UNITED WITH ISRAEL



Israeli Innovators Create High Tech Solutions for People with Disabilities

http://unitedwithisrael.org/http://unitedwithisrael.org/

***Tikkun Olam Makers is bringing together strategic thinkers, engineers, designers, and project managers to solve unmet social challenges in disadvantaged communities.***



This system allows people who are paralyzed to turn pages in a book. (ZOA Productions)

From cyber-security to medicine to agriculture, Israeli innovators are coming up with ideas that make our lives safer, easier, and more efficient. These creations, in turn, simultaneously fund the Jewish state and yield profits for their overseas investors. A new organization is taking this entrepreneurial ecosystem to a new level, merging technological savvy with tikkun olam (the Jewish value of repairing the world) to solve societal needs.

Tikkun Olam Makers (TOM), a project of the Reut Institute and ROI Community, is bringing together strategic thinkers, engineers, designers, and project managers to solve unmet social challenges in disadvantaged communities. TOM is built on six core values: scalability, community integration, collaborative competition, affordability, smart development, and innovation.

In March, TOM held its second “make-a-thon” in Tel Aviv (an event dubbed TOM: TLV), partnering with the Ruderman Family Foundation to harness cutting-edge technology to design affordable aids for people with disabilities. The goal was to create solutions that increase integration and inclusion.

“The event was a direct meeting ground for people with special needs and the people with the ability to help solve [their challenges],” TOM Founding Director Arnon Zamir says of the 72-hour program, which produced 25 technological prototypes.

Zamir explains that for-profit companies are often able only to invest in projects with strong demand that are marketable to the masses. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities often have unique needs. The solutions must be tailored to the individual, which takes time and money.

“We are not a technology company and we do not aim to be one. We are connectors,” Zamir says.



This prototype turns physical therapy into a game, allowing users to play while making significant progress in their rehabilitation. (ZOA Productions)

Eran Tamir, an employee at IBM Israel whose son Guy has cerebral palsy, took part in the recent make-a-thon and describes TOM as “a miracle.” When Tamir arrived at TOM: TLV, he was swept away by the powerful teams that stayed and worked until midnight, or even dawn. The next day, which happened to be Israeli Election Day, he brought Guy. The makers took time to get to know Guy and to understand him. One group, led by industrial designer Nurit Greenberg, invented a prototype specifically for Guy. They call it “GidiGuy.”

Greenberg says her team was charged with developing a game for children with special needs to be able to play and interact on an equal level with mainstream youths. Guy, for example, cannot use his hands, so the solution centered on his most easily-moved body part: his head.

Greenberg’s team, which consisted of a mechanical engineer, economic consultant, architect, and others, designed a game similar to “Simon Says,” using sensors and colored lights. The system recognizes the direction in which Player 1 turns his head. If the player moves right, a red light turns on, while a yellow light is activated by a move to the left, and so on. Player 2 must mimic Player 1. As the players engage, the color sequences get longer and more difficult. Now, Greenberg is in touch with one of Israel’s major hospitals for youths with disabilities to determine if this is something that could be further developed and brought to market.

Tomer Daniel works in the Wi-Fi division at Intel Israel. At night, “I build stuff,” Daniel says.

Daniel got involved in the maker community a few years ago, entering make-a-thon/hack-a-thon contests on weekends and evenings. He says he created several gimmicks, including a PAC-MAN® helmet that players wear to direct the joystick, using their heads.

“You nod left, down, up, right, and the PAC-MAN moves,” Daniel says. “It is so funny, it only moves when you open and close your mouth, too. But this is something that is smart but useless.” But TOM, says Daniel, is “smart and useful. It is helping people.”

Daniel and his team created another helmet during the TOM competition. This one assists a blind person in navigating his home. Using sensors like the ones in a cell phone, it gauges the distance between a person and walls or other objects, keeping the blind person safer from harm.

“We tested it on ourselves. That was really neat,” Daniel says.

Daniel says that when it comes to using technology for tikkun olam, expertise is not a barrier to entry.

“You don’t have to be an engineer, you don’t have to build stuff,” he says. “Some people are good with their hands, some with their minds. The greatest teams are those composed of people with golden hands, golden minds, and golden eyes.”

TOM’s Zamir notes that the organization has already held a competition in Brazil, and that he is in contact with 11 other countries about running these programs. TOM: NY is planned for New York in March 2016. Even Kosovo has expressed interest in the initiative. In this way, says Zamir, TOM can help Israel be “a light unto the nations.”

Zamir says he sees the TOM model, much like the TEDxTalks, as something that can be replicated elsewhere without the direct involvement of TOM’s Israel-based team. TOM is in the process of building a website, which will house information about the organizational concept, but also images and assembly directions for the prototypes the competitions have produced. This way, companies might see solutions they want to explore taking from prototype to market. Alternatively, a visitor to the website might consider replicating one of the innovations for a family member or friend in need.

TOM is considering focusing its next make-a-thon on solutions for the elderly, according to Zamir.

“I always say that if each person could give one minute to another person, our world would be a better place,” says IBM’s Tamir. “I don’t think this is something that could have started in any other country but Israel.”

By: Maayan Jaffe/JNS.org

Denver, CO

 Jewish Disabilities Advocates (JDA) provides a single-point-of-entry to case management, information and referral, recreational activities, and Jewish cultural and educational opportunities for Jewish individuals with disabilities, and provides associated services to their families. JDA supports Jewish agencies in their work to include people with disabilities at their own facilities by providing resources, information, and educational workshops.

Read a [***Story of Hope***](http://www.jewishfamilyservice.org/about-jfs/jdn-story-david)about someone helped by JDA!

[***Denver Community Resources for Youth with Disabilities***](http://jewishfamilyservice.org/_literature_145580/Resource_Book_for_Youth_Disability_2011) is a very helpful resource guide. Please contact us if you need additional assistance accessing resources for young people with disabilities.   
  
The [***JDA Online Resource Guide***](http://jewishfamilyservice.org/resources/files/JDNGuideRev%282%29.pdf) will help you navigate the disabilities services available in your community. Please contact us if you need additional help accessing resources in our community.

(The links to the above resources are in PDF file format and require Adobe Acrobat Reader to access. To download the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader, please click [***here***](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html).)

**PROGRAMS  
  
Jewish Disabilities Advocates Inclusion Committee  
*Striving to include people of all abilities in Jewish communal life.***Established in 2011, the Jewish Disabilities Advocates Inclusion Committee was created to raise awareness and accommodation of people with disabilities within Jewish community agencies and institutions through education, mentoring, and advisement.   
  
One of the outcomes of this venture is the development of pilot programs that will be run through local religious institutions. The committee is in the process of developing a roadmap for the metro Denver area to address our community’s unique needs. Three area synagogues have agreed to participate as pilot sites for the development of an inclusion program that can be utilized by other agencies that would like to offer inclusive programming.  
  
**Contact**[***Lynn Rubenstein***](mailto:lrubenstein@jewishfamilyservice.org)**at 303.623.0251.**

# Slingshot Fund About Us

## Slingshot has grown to become an important funding source, a closely watched seal of approval, and a leading voice advocating for innovation in Jewish life.

### History of Slingshot

The idea for Slingshot developed organically following a weekend retreat for a dozen young Jews in 2004, who were preparing to become involved in their family foundations. Participants were hoping to learn how to navigate the alphabet soup of the Jewish community and sort out which organizations resonated for themselves and their peers. They imagined a Zagat-style guidebook and with the help of staff from the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies they worked to produce Slingshot: A Resource Guide to Jewish Innovation to highlight the 50 most innovative nonprofits in North American Jewish life for themselves and their peers.

In 2007, the next-generation funders responsible for Slingshot took their concept a step further, and created the Slingshot Fund, a peer-giving network, to support Jewish organizations that resonated with their generation. The Slingshot Fund exposes its next generation funders to a professional grant-making process. While many come from family’s involved in philanthropy, most have yet to review grant proposals, conduct site visits, and make allocation decisions. In conjunction with a group of their peers, Slingshot offers them the opportunity to develop those skills and learn from experts in the field while leveraging their small gifts into a significant grant pool.

### ****Slingshot Today****

Slingshot’s mission is to inspire the Jewish community—and grow its capacity—to innovate, focusing on the role of philanthropy in supporting that innovation. We believe that continuous innovation in Jewish life fulfills the current and future needs of the Jewish community.:

1. Next generation funders
2. Innovative organizations
3. Funders of Jewish innovation

Since its inception, Slingshot has grown to become an important funding source, a closely watched seal of approval, and a leading voice advocating for innovation in Jewish life.

# Disabilities and Inclusion

### We asked each organization to put together a video message explaining their work – browse through the gallery to stumble on something new, or take a look at the full list of organizations below.

**Alphabetical**

* [Camp Dream Street Mississippi](http://player.vimeo.com/video/74300276)
* [Friendship Circle International](http://player.vimeo.com/video/73796109)
* [Gateways: Access to Jewish Education](http://player.vimeo.com/video/74301808)
* [Hidden Sparks](http://player.vimeo.com/video/73796653)
* [INCLUDE North Peninsula](http://player.vimeo.com/video/74302852)
* [JCC Maccabi Camp Kingswood Zohar Program](http://player.vimeo.com/video/73796108)
* [JCHAI at Home](http://player.vimeo.com/video/73797669)
* [Jewish Community Center of Greater Baltimore](http://player.vimeo.com/video/73797671)
* [Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit’s Opening the Doors Program](http://player.vimeo.com/video/73797670)
* [Keshet Avodah at Camp Chi](http://player.vimeo.com/video/73796658)
* [Matan](http://player.vimeo.com/video/74304432)
* [Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters Community Mikveh and Education Center](http://player.vimeo.com/video/74304633)
* MetroWest ABLE
* [The Miracle Project Judaica](http://player.vimeo.com/video/73796656)
* [Ramah Tikvah Network](http://player.vimeo.com/video/73796652)
* [Sabes JCC Inclusion Department](http://player.vimeo.com/video/73796655)
* [Sunflower Bakery](http://player.vimeo.com/video/74314255)
* Yad HaChazakah – The Jewish Disability Empowerment Center, Inc.

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# [Home](https://www.cjebaltimore.org/) Special Needs

## You are here

[Home](https://www.cjebaltimore.org/) › [Community Connections](https://www.cjebaltimore.org/community-connections) › Special Needs

The Macks Center for Jewish Education is committed to enhancing the connection to life and learning of individuals with special needs, so that they can more fully participate in the Jewish community. Through CJE’s work, these individuals develop their Jewish educational, spiritual, cultural, social and religious lives. CJE works with local school systems, Federal programs and other area non-profit organizations to help parents of students with special needs find the resources and connections they need to assist their children.

JEWISH DISABILITY AWARENESS AND INCLUSION

CJE wants to help you jump start a conversation about special needs, disability awareness, inclusion and diversity that can last all year long.

* Use our [**DISABILITY AWARENESS GUIDE FOR TEACHERS**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=001i2TknMZxc-L51CeriKyWzPlVWny2YIqmwpfAgO4aIi6KYol0Os4qGJ9WUdFRujOJdemQ-yfBwe3juZB3ZR4_l5Kc3j5Y3D8taGL2RaTk8lukckPl-o4blty0pOb-jfQQqNcGFOwIOg81ukMBXZPpaSH8WZUQXNUA5JRV2JvLL0J06ukP3GOoyw==) to help you incorporate these Jewish values into your existing lessons with sensitivity and ease.
* Invite us to your school to brainstorm with your staff and/or your students in order to foster a culture of inclusion.

Please share your thoughts, successes or challenges with us.

Let us know if you use these ideas by emailing [**Yael Zelinger**](mailto:yzelinger@cjeb.org)  or share photos on [**CJE's Facebook page**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=001i2TknMZxc-L51CeriKyWzPlVWny2YIqmwpfAgO4aIi6KYol0Os4qGJ9WUdFRujOJdemQ-yfBwe2CNue_yzVw3PvScrvVgDm7zR8aVj747gMil1lZpPFA_83nYHHmA_Rt).

Feel free to [**SHARE the guide**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=001i2TknMZxc-L51CeriKyWzPlVWny2YIqmwpfAgO4aIi6KYol0Os4qGJ9WUdFRujOJdemQ-yfBwe3juZB3ZR4_l5Kc3j5Y3D8taGL2RaTk8lukckPl-o4blty0pOb-jfQQqNcGFOwIOg81ukMBXZPpaSH8WZUQXNUA5JRV2JvLL0J06ukP3GOoyw==) with others who can benefit.

[**Gesher LaTorah**](https://www.cjebaltimore.org/gesherlatorah) literally means, “A bridge to the Torah,” and is the CJE’s dynamic community-based Jewish special education program serving students with significant special needs between the ages of four and 21. Students are usually enrolled in a self-contained classroom and have special needs including autism, developmental disabilities, language disabilities or physical challenges.

[**TAG: Torah, Avoda and Gmilut Chassadim**](https://www.cjebaltimore.org/tag) CJE’s adult learning program for people with disabilities is TAG. TAG stands for Torah, Avodah and Gimilut Chasadim, which means Bible study; prayer and work; and acts of kindness and goodwill. The young adults in this program meet weekly to connect to their Jewish heritage and community.

[**MDSNAP: Maryland Special Needs Advocacy Project**](https://www.cjebaltimore.org/mdsnap)  provides free educational advocacy and information to families of children with special needs. Assistance with Individualized Education Plan & Individualized Family Services Plan. Parent advisors will share information, help find community resources, and attend IEP/IFSP meetings. Child Find referral form available on the web page. All calls are confidential.

[**JADE**](https://www.cjebaltimore.org/jade) strives to raise the level of awareness in the community about the needs of Jewish people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Here are services available through JADE:

Workshops on deaf awareness help educate and sensitize people who interact with deaf people.  One popular workshop is "How to Best Communicate with People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Including some fun signs!)" This is a special workshop tailored to your organization's needs and is available at no charge for school staff, students, organizations and agency staff professional development.

JADE advocates for the inclusion of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing by encouraging anyone running a Jewish community event to offer an interpreter by adding this line to promotional materials:  
"A sign language or oral interpreter is available upon request one week prior to the event".

[STARS](https://www.cjebaltimore.org/student-testing-assistance-referrals-support) Student Testing Assistance Referrals & Support program (STARS) provides subsidized testing for children with special needs.

Read more from out Special Education Team:

[**https://www.cjebaltimore.org/blog/special-needs-and-education**](https://www.cjebaltimore.org/blog/special-needs-and-education)

[**http://www.associated.org/ourstories/tanenholz**](http://www.associated.org/ourstories/tanenholz)?

CJE is a proud member of the [**Baltimore Jewish Abilities Alliance**](http://www.jewishabilities.org/).  The BJAA assists families in finding the programs and services they need for their loved ones with different abilities, strengthening their connection and enabling them to more fully participate in their communities.

# Special Needs

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888-902-4673

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# Opening the Doors Program (Special Education)

The Opening the Doors Program is nationally recognized by Slingshot Foundation 13/14 in their Supplement Disabilities & Inclusion, for its innovation as an inclusive program. Slingshot evaluators were impressed by the large number of families served as well as its comprehensive, community-wide focus that allows children with disabilities to participate in a wide range of Jewish learning settings. One impressed evaluator said, “Beyond the importance of the services, Opening the Doors is leading the effort to raise awareness about disability issues in the Detroit area.”

The Opening the Doors collaborates with Jewish schools to provide an array of services to enable all Jewish children to be included and participate in a quality Jewish education.

Opening the Doors**(OTD) –**  A nationally recognized inclusion program that enables over **1,000** diverse learners to be included and engaged in Jewish education with their peers at no cost to families. OTD is the only program of its kind that places master level special educators and para educators in Jewish early childhood, congregational and day schools.

In addition, we provide a teen leadership program, professional development for educators and mental health professionals, support for families, and community-wide disability awareness and advocacy.

Through all of its programs, Opening the Doors serves over **2,500** students, teachers and adults.

**Doors to the Future Program** In early childhood programs– Para Educators provide short term individualized support for students with learning, social, or behavioral differences in early childhood congregation and day school programs. This program is generously funded by The Mandell L. and Madeleine H. Berman Foundation.

**Efshar Circle Sunday School –** Opening the Doors and Friendship Circle provides a multi-sensory, individualized Jewish education to children with learning differences according to their needs and abilities.

**Harold Wade Madrichim Leadership Institute –** is an innovative training program that empowers congregational school teens with background knowledge and strategies to work one-to-one with children with learning and behavioral differences.

The Special Education Department has crafted an **Anti-Bullying Policy** that has been used by [Jewish preschools](http://jewishdetroit.org/programs/jewish-education/special-education/#fancyboxID-1), [congregational](http://jewishdetroit.org/programs/jewish-education/special-education/#fancyboxID-2) and [day schools](http://jewishdetroit.org/programs/jewish-education/special-education/#fancyboxID-3).

**February Jewish Disability Awareness Month**, **Anita Naftaly Family Circle Conference** and **the Day School Conference** provide annual community wide educational seminars, movie events and book clubs for teachers, parents, teens and mental health professionals.

**SELC (Specialized Enhanced Learning Collaboration) –** JARC and Opening the Doors Program provide Jewish day schools with professional development, special educators, para educators, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists and educational testing to maximize students’ success. SELC is funded by a generous grant from The Jewish Fund.

**School Inclusion Program (SIP) –** Opening the Doors and JARC provide full-time classroom assistants and consultative services to Jewish day school students with diverse learning differences.

[](http://jewishdetroit.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/profile-maiseloff-ellen.jpg)

## Questions About Our Special Education Program?

Ellen Maiseloff, M.A.  
Associate Director, Special Education  
248-205-2533  
[maiseloff@jfmd.org](mailto:maiseloff@jfmd.org)