

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the first of a series of planned regular updates on InterfaithFamily.com's activities.

We want to keep our supporters and friends informed of our progress--and hope that our news will prompt you to provide advice and suggestions on how we can improve our efforts.

Please let us know what you think of this format!

Organizational Highlights

1. New Staff

With the addition of Susan Edni in January as our new administrative assistant, InterfaithFamily.com now has six dedicated staff. Susan has worked as a legal executive in England and a law firm administrator in the US--and taught English for a time in Israel.

2. Our Impact

We are often asked whether our work influences attitudes and behaviors. As an initial step to measure our impact, our first online User Survey attracted 554 responses between January 16 and February 16. Preliminary analysis shows that the following percentages of respondents in interfaith relationships said that their use of InterfaithFamily.com led to or improved their experiences of:

- celebrating Jewish holidays: 69%
- incorporating Jewish traditions into life-cycle events: 60%
- incorporating Jewish rituals into their life: 64%
- participating in an outreach program: 38%
- deciding to raise their children Jewish: 31%

We are very pleased with these results, will issue a detailed report on the survey soon, and are already considering follow-up evaluation.

Education Activities

1. Web Magazine

Our January 4 Web Magazine issue focused on the experiences of interfaith families at [Jewish preschools](#), which are enjoying increasing attention from policymakers and funders.

January 16 was a milestone for InterfaithFamily.com: [Our 200th issue and fifth anniversary](#). The special issue featured an [audio interview with Anita Diamant](#), a [retrospective look at our first five years](#), and [writer and staff picks](#) of some of our best articles. The January 30 issue concerned [Latino-Jewish Relationships and Hispanic Jews](#), and the February 13 issue, just in time for Valentine's Day, covered [Interdating](#).

2. New Features

In connection with our 200th Issue on January 16, we launched revamped, improved [Discussion Boards](#) using the vBulletin platform. The new discussion boards no longer require registration and are already attracting more frequent posts.

3. What Readers Want

Launched last July, our [Resource Pages](#)--centralized listings of popular articles and resources on our site and other websites, organized by topic--were the most popular pages on our website in January, particularly the [Weddings Resource Page](#) and the [Marriage and Relationships Resource Page](#). (In December, the [December Holidays Resource Page](#) was the most popular.) Our regular Interfaith Celebrities column, which started in December, is consistently the most popular single article in the Web Magazine. "[Interfaith Celebrities: Is Harry Potter Half-Jewish?](#)" was one of our most popular articles ever.

February 2007

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Connections Activities

1. Connections In Your Area (CIYA)

Seventeen organizations joined our [Connections In Your Area](#) system between January 1 and February 15, bringing the total number of listed organizations to 391, from 121 communities across North America.

Seven of the 17 new organizations are synagogues, which have been the mainstay of CIYA, but we are expanding the types of organizations we list and had four day schools, two preschools, two camps, and one cemetery list in this period. The new organizations are from California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Texas and Ontario.

2. Professionals Advisory Circle



The first in-person conference/retreat of our [Professionals Advisory Circle \(PAC\)](#), *Nurturing Outreach: Embracing the Other, Taking Care of Ourselves*, funded by the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, takes place May 8 to 10 at the Greater Washington JCC's retreat center. In the last six weeks we completed registration--42 members of the PAC, who represent most of the professionals in the country whose jobs include conducting outreach programs for interfaith families, are coming--and we finalized the program, which we'd be glad to email to you.

Program highlights include presentations by PAC members Kathy Kahn, the Reform movement's national director of outreach and membership, and Rabbi Charles Simon, executive director of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs (Conservative), on new approaches from the religious movements; *A Pioneer's Perspective* by Rosanne Levitt, PAC Planning Group co-chair; a presentation on demography by sociologist

Sherry Israel; and *A Funder's Perspective* by CJP's Associate Director of Planning, Judith Krell.

3. Rabbinic Officiation Referral Service

In the past we typically received no more than 10 requests a month for help finding a rabbi to officiate at an intermarriage. After adding an [Officiation Request Form](#) button on our home page in November, and starting a Google Adword campaign in January, the number of requests we received between January 1 and February 15 skyrocketed to 115! This is an important aspect of our direct service to interfaith couples that we have not heavily publicized.

[Officiation Request Form](#)

Advocacy Activities

1. Surveys



Last November and December, we actively publicized the results of our [Third Annual December Holidays survey](#), which continued to show that interfaith couples who are raising their children Jewish participate in Christmas celebrations in a secular, non-religious way. Our survey was the subject of a [JTA story](#) by Sue Fishkoff, and we were featured in the [Detroit Free Press](#), the [Boston Sunday Globe Magazine](#), and many other publications.

We also are currently running a [Passover/Easter Survey](#), which was advertised on craigslist in 10 major cities and has attracted more than 600 respondents to date.

We have found that holding a drawing for a prize--a \$500 American Express giftcard for the December Holidays survey, an iPod for the User Survey and a \$250 American Express giftcard for the Passover/Easter Survey--has successfully incentivized participation in the surveys.

2. Advocacy Writing

Also in November and December, we publicized the results of the [2005 Boston Jewish Community Survey](#), and argued in a [Forward op-ed](#) co-signed by Kathy Kahn that the survey's key finding that 60% of interfaith families were raising their children as Jews could be attributed to the fact that CJP gives 1% of its total annual spending for outreach programs that target interfaith families--including the Boston pages on InterfaithFamily.com's CIYA system, which were accessed almost 22,000 times in 2006.

In the last six weeks we have been very busy responding to Steven Cohen's latest paper, *A Tale of Two Jewries: The "Inconvenient Truth" for American Jews*. Cohen calls intermarriage "the single greatest threat to Jewish continuity" and the logical conclusion of his flawed analysis--which is explicitly aimed at Jewish policymakers and funders--is that funding outreach programs is a waste of resources. We wrote a February [JTA op-ed](#) and were quoted in the [JTA](#) and [The \(New York\) Jewish Week](#) articles on the paper. If you would like to see our letter to the Steinhardt Foundation, which funded Cohen's study, and our email correspondence with Steven Cohen, please let us know.

We also had an op-ed, "Latest Surveys Are Responsible for Good News, Not Bad," in [j.](#), [the Jewish news weekly of northern California](#), and letters to the editor in several Jewish newspapers.

3. Speaking Engagements

On January 16 we spoke about the needs and concerns of interfaith families sending their children to Jewish day schools at the annual leadership conference of RAVSAK, the association of Jewish community day schools, in Los Angeles.

On February 9 we spoke at Conservative Congregation Shirat Hayam in Swampscott, Mass., to kick off its new Center for Jewish Interfaith and Outreach for the North Shore of Boston area. There was extensive coverage of the new initiative in the [Jewish Journal North of Boston](#).

We are pleased to have been invited to lead a session at the Jewish Outreach Institute's national conference in October in Washington, D.C.

We were featured on "Beyond the Pale," a Jewish-interest show on WBAI radio in New York, on February 11.



Marketing

All of our education, connections and advocacy activities serve in part to increase awareness of InterfaithFamily.com. In addition, we have developed and begun to implement a Marketing Plan, which includes the following specific efforts:

1. Search Engine Optimization and Marketing

In January we started a search engine marketing campaign to advertise our rabbinic officiation referral service, resulting in a dramatic increase in requests for help. More than 400 people clicked on the related ad and came to the officiation referral form.

In February we engaged a search engine marketing firm, SearchFit, to manage and monitor our search engine optimization and marketing and tracking of our website traffic.

2. Marketing Through "Partner" Organizations



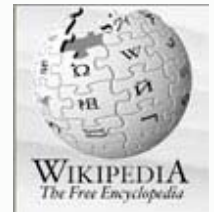
We started a link exchange campaign, starting with the members of our Professionals Advisory Circle and the rabbis on our referral list, asking them to put a link to InterfaithFamily.com on their websites. Next, we will ask all 391 organizations in our Connections system to do the same. We also worked with the Boston area Reform outreach staff to cross-link their website with ours.

We started a campaign to have organizations and professionals distribute our postcard to their constituents, starting with PAC members and referral list rabbis, with CIYA organizations coming next.

With the Interfaith Collaborative, the group of Boston outreach organizations funded by CJP, we are co-sponsoring a showing of a film, *Rashevski's Tango*, in March. We created an [event web page and ticket reservation system](#), and are sending special email newsletter notices about the film to our Boston area subscribers. We also recently sent an email promoting Project Welcome's "A Jewish Wedding Fair" to subscribers in the San Francisco Bay Area. We plan to increase use of our capability to send email newsletters targeted to subscribers in local areas.

3. Links on High Traffic Websites

We recently created a "Listmania" list of recommended books on www.amazon.com, and added a link to InterfaithFamily.com on the "Who is a Jew" listing on www.wikipedia.org. We have also begun putting postings that mention InterfaithFamily.com on discussion boards on such sites as www.ivillage.com, Yahoo and MSN discussion boards, www.weddingchannel.com, and www.babycenter.com.



4. Content Distribution

The Jewish Journal North of Boston has started reprinting one of our articles in every one of its bi-weekly issues. An email newsletter sent by an outreach program in Kansas City will also periodically reprint our content.

We started campaigns to alert organizations about particular issues of our Web Magazine that would be of interest to their constituents. We emailed several national organizations about our preschools issue, including the JCC Association, CAJE, and the Jewish Early Childhood Education Initiative, as well as all of the synagogues and JCCs on Connections In Your Area. For our Latino-Jewish Relationships issue, we emailed 47 synagogues located in southern California, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and southern Florida. For our Interdating issue, we emailed several Hillels and other relevant program providers.

5. Press Mentions

In addition to the coverage of our advocacy work, our 200th issue and fifth anniversary were the subject of a wonderful column, "Where Internet Meets Intermarriage," by Julie Wiener in *The (New York) Jewish Week*, and we were also featured in the *Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles*.

We were also mentioned in a story on children of interfaith marriages in *JVibe, The Magazine for Jewish Teens*, and mentioned in a JTA article on interfaith burial and a *Cleveland Jewish News* piece on interfaith divorce.



Key Metrics

- **Website traffic** : In January we had 20,359 unique visitors and 28,017 visitor sessions.*
- **Bi-weekly email newsletter** : Our February 13 email newsletter went to 7,461 subscribers. From January 1 to February 15, we added 331 new subscribers.
- **Organizations listed on Connections In Your Area**: 391 as of February 15.
- **Requests for rabbinic officiation referrals**: 115 from January 1 to February 15.

* We are in the process of transitioning all of our website traffic reporting from NetTracker and WebTrends to Google Analytics. The January figures do not include traffic on our discussion boards or surveys, and include figures from WebTrends for our Connections In Your Area system.

If you don't receive our biweekly email newsletter highlighting articles from the newest issue of our Web Magazine and would like to, click [here](#).

Finances and Development

Finances and Development



We have experienced rapid income growth averaging 35% per year over the last several years. For 2006, we raised \$538,000 from a diversified funding base, with 55% from Foundations, 27% from Board Members, 11% from Individual Major Gifts (>\$500), and 7% from Federations and other sources. We are projecting income of over \$700,000 in 2007.

We spent \$532,000 in 2006 and currently project to spend \$728,000 in 2007, but we have a number of proposals for additional funding pending, and had some positive initial discussions with prospective funders since January 1.

Between January 1 and February 15 we received renewed and increased funding of \$75,000 from the Samuel Bronfman Foundation; a new grant of \$7,500 from the Lippman Kanfer Family Foundation; and a renewed grant of \$10,000 from the Newton and Rochelle Becker Family Foundation.

Thank You for Your Interest!

If you've read this far, you know that our small staff is extremely productive!

Please let us know what you think about the format and contents of this update--we appreciate your support and interest very much and welcome your input and advice.

And please help us by forwarding this update to anyone who might be interested in our work.

[Send to a Friend](#)

With best regards,



Edmund C. Case, President and Publisher