

Dear Friend,

We have much to tell our supporters and friends in this tri-annual update. In the last four months we received a Slingshot Fund grant, redesigned our website, got our new rabbi off to a very busy start--and grew all of our ongoing activities!

As always we welcome your feedback, comments and advice.

Organizational Highlights

1. Slingshot



Ed Case, our president and publisher, and our Advisory Board member Rabbi Rachel Cowan, at the 2007-08 *Slingshot* launch event on October 9

Three years ago, an affiliate of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies began to publish *Slingshot*, an annual guidebook of fifty of the most innovative and impactful Jewish organizations. This year for the first time, the fifty organizations were invited to apply for funding.

InterfaithFamily.com is honored to be not just one of only twenty-one organizations to be included in the guidebook for three consecutive years, but also one of only eight recipients of inaugural Slingshot Fund grants!

2. New Website

We hope you like the look of our redesigned [website](#), launched on October 26. Before the end of the year, we'll be announcing numerous new features that will make it easier for users to find what they need and to interact with us and other users.

After publishing 218 biweekly issues of a Web Magazine organized around a single topic, we are changing the way we deliver content. New articles will be published on a daily basis on the full range of topics of interest to people in interfaith families, and those who care about them. We will still send a biweekly email newsletter announcing the newest content on the site.

3. Staff Changes



Ronnie Friedland

Ronnie Friedland has moved on to a new position at www.care.com, a website addressing relationships issues including care of children, elders and pets. The founding editor of InterfaithFamily.com, Ronnie created an unparalleled content resource that has helped countless people in interfaith relationships explore Jewish life in many ways. We will greatly miss her talents but wish her only the best in her new endeavor. Ronnie can continue to be reached at editor@interfaithfamily.com. We're searching now to fill a new full-time position for an online editor.

We also wish the best to Amy Rovin, who has taken a new position at the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island.

We're pleased to welcome Victoria Leikin as InterfaithFamily.com's new community connections coordinator. Victoria has a wealth of experience working at the JCC's of Greater Boston and will be responsible for maintaining and growing our Connections In Your Area system.



Victoria Leikin

4. Board Activity



Amy Morgenstern

On October 26 our Board of Directors and staff held a full-day strategic visioning retreat facilitated by Amy Morgenstern of [Main Stream Enterprises](#). We began to clarify our mission, vision, values and guiding principles, as well as our theory of change, and to prioritize expansion opportunities.

We are pleased to welcome Dana Levenson, a managing director at The Royal Bank of Scotland in Chicago, to our Board.



Dana Levenson

October 2007

What's in this Update

- [Organizational Highlights](#)
- [Education Activities](#)
- [Connections Activities](#)
- [Advocacy Activities](#)
- [Marketing](#)
- [Key Metrics](#)
- [Finances and Development](#)

Education Activities

1. Content Resources

We redesigned our email newsletter in July to make it more appealing, user-friendly and sticky, leading to an increase in opening and click-through-to-links rates.



Our articles covered a wide range of topics in the past four months--weddings and divorce, growing up in interfaith families, parenting and grandparenting, conversion, and the High Holidays, among others.

We revised our *Guide to Weddings for Interfaith Couples*, making it easier for couples to include material from the *Guide* in their own ceremony. To access the revised *Guide*, [click here](#). We also issued our second content package, addressing the High Holidays, designed for program providers to give to interested individuals, or to use in group discussions.

Connections Activities

1. Jewish Clergy Officiation Referral Service

Rabbi Lev Baesh joined our staff in July. Through September, he responded to an average of 64 requests a month from interfaith couples for help finding Jewish clergy to officiate or co-officiate at their weddings. In October the number of requests increased to 82!

Rabbi Baesh is responsible for vetting the rabbis and cantors to whom we refer couples. He has developed a process that includes a survey clergy fill out describing their ordination, organizational affiliation, officiation practices, and fees. He has added 20 to our list, which now includes 142 who we are comfortable recommending, and he is currently reviewing 9 more. He also regularly solicits feedback in a six-month follow up with couples.

2. Professionals Advisory Circle

In September the quarterly telephone conference call of our [Professionals Advisory Circle](#) included a presentation by Dr. David Arnow on different psychological ways of understanding Jewish identity and how they may be used by outreach professionals working with interfaith couples and families. We added two papers by Dr. Arnow to the materials available to PAC members, as well as materials for training Jewish organizational "gatekeepers from Karen Kushner at San Francisco's [Project Welcome](#).

3. Connections In Your Area

Twenty-two organizations joined our [Connections In Your Area](#) system between July 1 and October 31, bringing the total to 441, from over 120 communities across North America.

Advocacy Activities

1. Rabbinic Officiation Initiative

We changed the name of our Rabbinic Circle to the [Resource Center for Jewish Clergy](#) to acknowledge the important role cantors play with interfaith couples. In early 2008 we plan to launch a password protected section of our website accessible by clergy only, where rabbis and cantors can share their thoughts and concerns with regard to officiation at intermarriages in a confidential forum. Rabbi Baesh is in the process of gathering inaugural articles from leading rabbis on all sides of the officiation issue.

2. Writing, Speaking Engagements, Appearances and Partnerships



Ed Case and JOI Board member Mitchell Shames presenting at JOIs October conference

Ed Case, Heather Martin and Rabbi Lev Baesh participated in the Jewish Outreach Institutes annual conference in October in Washington DC. Ed led a presentation on outreach lessons from the Boston experience with JOI Board member Mitchell Shames.

Ed Case spoke at Conservative synagogues Bnai Torah in Trumbull CT (July) and Bnai Amoona in St. Louis (August), at Reform synagogues Washington Hebrew Congregation in Washington DC and Kol Haverim in Glastonbury CT (October), and at the diversity symposium sponsored by [Ayecha](#) at the CAJE conference in August. We have become a resource for the Calling Synagogue Home project of [STAR](#) (Synagogue Transformation and Renewal) and participated at trainings in Atlanta and Philadelphia in September.

We will be exhibiting at the United Jewish Communities General Assembly in Nashville in November, and at the biennial conventions of the Conservative and Reform movements in December. If you are attending any of these events, please come see us at our booth.

We were honored to contribute an essay on interfaith families and the future of Jewish day schools for a [special report](#) on the tenth anniversary of the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education.

InterfaithFamily.com is honored to be a national partner of [Pathways: The Interfaith Family Network of Greater Atlanta](#), a substantial new program housed at the Marcus JCC. We want to congratulate our Professionals Advisory Circle Planning Group member Debbie Antonoff who is leading the program, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta, which is following the lead of the Boston and San Francisco Jewish communities in providing substantial funding for outreach programs that target interfaith families.

Marketing

1. Search Engine Optimization and Marketing



It is important to us to direct traffic to our Resource Pages, which organize all of our content by topic. Since we began a set of subject-specific adwords campaigns in February 2007, we have seen huge increases in that traffic. For the six months prior to February 2007, for example, our Death and Mourning Resource page was visited 671 times; from March through August 2007 it was visited 11,278 times, an increase of 1,681%.

2. Content Distribution

At the American Jewish Press Association conference in San Francisco in June we announced a new article syndication service. Several papers, including in Seattle, Phoenix, Minneapolis and Nashville, now regularly reprint pre-selected articles from our site. In addition, [Darim Online](#), a provider of content for synagogue websites, the [Bridges](#) email newsletter for interfaith families distributed by the San Francisco federation, and the interfaith outreach program email newsletter of the [Genesis](#) program at the Kansas City JCC, all regularly republish our articles.

3. Press Mentions

Our hiring of Rabbi Baesh was the subject of a story in the Boston Jewish Advocate and was mentioned in Julie Wieners column in the [New York Jewish Week](#). The [Slingshot](#) grant was mentioned in the [New York Jewish Week](#).

We were the subject of an interview in the Connecticut [Jewish Ledger](#), and were quoted in a major story on intermarriage by Shmuel Rosner of [Haaretz](#).

The winter issue of [Reform Judaism](#) magazine features outreach and links to InterfaithFamily.com for more first-person stories.

Key Metrics

- **Website traffic** : We had 171,000 unique visitors to our website during the year ended October 31, 2007. Our monthly website traffic is trending 22%-31% higher than in 2006.
- **Bi-weekly email newsletter**: Our October 9 email newsletter went to 7,252 recipients. From July 1 through October 31 we added 295 new subscribers.
- **Organizations listed on Connections In Your Area**: Twenty-two organizations joined our [Connections In Your Area](#) system between July 1 and October 31, bringing the total to 441 from over 120 communities across North America.
- **Requests for Jewish clergy officiation referrals**: 275 from July 1 through October 31.

If you dont receive our biweekly email newsletter highlighting our newest content and would like to do so, [click here](#) .

Finances and Development

Since July 1 we received grants of: \$25,000 from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Foundation for our rabbinic officiation initiative; \$25,000 from the Joseph and Harvey Meyerhoff Family Charitable Funds; \$95,000 from the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund; \$2,500 from the Toleo Foundation; and \$5,000 from the Naomi and Nehemiah Cohen Foundation. In late June Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Boston increased its allocation to IFF to \$27,500.



Thank You for Your Interest!

We appreciate your support and interest very much. We welcome your input and advice--please let us know what you think of our progress. And please help us by forwarding this update to anyone who might be interested in our work.

With best regards,



Edmund C. Case, President and Publisher