

If You Let Them Build It, THEY WILL COME



Stepping
Back and
Empowering
Peer-Led
Programming

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IN 2012, MOISHE HOUSE HAD A REALLY GREAT PROBLEM.

We had an ever-growing number of young adults who had spent a few years as residents in Moishe Houses (shared houses where young Jewish adults live and host weekly programming for their peers) and had incredible leadership and community organizing skills. But, when these residents moved out and became alumni, there was nothing formal for them to continue to drive this momentum.

These people were smart and inspired and loved creating and participating in Jewish community with their friends.

So we created Moishe House Without Walls (MHWOW) and in 2017, 660 inspired emerging Jewish community leaders (we call them hosts) created more than 3,000 programs in 27 countries around the world. All because we gave them the training, gave them the funding, and got out of the way, shifting from the traditional institutional role of a program provider to a program enabler.

Over the past five years, MHWOW has evolved to include not just Moishe House resident alumni, but alumni of our learning retreats and of other Jewish organizations, including Urban Adamah and Pardes. And along the way, we've identified a few key elements that contribute to the success and rapid growth of this independent, peer-led approach.

The first is that we work with vetted leaders, and we provide ongoing resources to support them. We have a very engaging newsletter, an active Facebook group, and a team of staff and educators to help leaders work out kinks in programming and come up with ideas.



The second is that we make it as easy as possible for someone to be a community builder and channel his or her passion into creating unique and engaging programming. We have a mobile app where hosts get their programming approved ahead of time, then submit their program information for reimbursement.

And the third, most important element: They want to create their dream Jewish communities, and we have and continue to create new ways to help them do that. Like PJ Library, many of the people we work with are

PJ Library's Get Together incentives offer families Jewish resources, financial incentives, and the impetus to create Jewish experiences for their own family and two or more additional families.

The incentives are just one of the many engagement opportunities offered by PJ Library to help deepen and expand the connections between PJ Library families and their peers, and between families and the Jewish community. Nearly 9,000 families have participated in Get Together gatherings – that's more than 25,000 parents and kids connecting Jewishly.

part of niche communities that don't necessarily fit into mainstream groups, like Rosh Chodesh women's circles and LGBTQ inclusion groups, among others. These leaders know we support them in that effort, both financially and philosophically.

The same principles are being put to work through PJ Library's Get Together incentives. Find families who want to get together with other families and give them the means to do just that. Offer more opportunities that enable the connections that are being made between parents, children, and Jewish content.

The world is full of incredible Jewish people who want to share their love of Judaism with their friends, in whatever form that takes. And if organizations like Moishe House and PJ Library have the structure, financial resources, and staff relationships out there, it is possible for us to find ways to help them do it.

92% of PJ Library Get Together hosts are extremely likely to host again in the future