



THE TOPFER CENTER FOR JEWISH LIFE  
THE ABE & ANNIE SEIBEL BUILDING  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

# 2008 - 2009 Annual Report



## MESSAGES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND THE PRESIDENT

### From the Executive Director -

Dear Friends:

Researchers describe the college years as a period of “emerging adulthood” when young people are transitioning from adolescence to full maturity. They are figuring out not just what they want to be, but who they want to be; they are building habits and relationships that they will carry for the rest of their lives. Texas Hillel is here to help students emerge on their own terms into the kind of people they hope to become. We blend their interests with four-thousand years of tradition and try to enrich their lives so that they can enrich the Jewish people and the world.

It's a tall order, especially on a campus with four-thousand Jewish students. It's even more significant to note that our strategy is to engage each student one-at-a-time! That's why we're telling our collective story in this annual report through the eyes of a few people. Their stories are emblematic of the thousands of lives we touch. I hope that you enjoy reading about their experiences, and that you'll be our partner this year in recreating these enriching moments again and again.

Our organization's namesake, Rabbi Hillel, was famous for asking the question “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?” That question is appropriate in our context because Texas Hillel belongs to the entire Jewish people. We are pluralistic and our stakeholders come from all over the world and disperse just as widely when they graduate. We sponsor activities for people from all backgrounds. We are certainly not only for ourselves.

Our challenge this year is to inspire more stakeholders, particularly the families of current students and our recent alumni, to help Texas Hillel become more for itself. If all those whose lives are directly enriched by what we do will join our Friends of Texas Hillel campaign we will exceed our modest fundraising goals this year. If not now, when?

It is not all about the money, of course. We are about helping students find meaning. The stories in this report tell the tale much better than I can. So enjoy!

Warmly,



Rabbi David Komerofsky  
Executive Director



### From the President -

Dear Friends:

The Hebrew word for volunteer is nadav, the root meaning of which is “to give freely.” For thousands of years our institutions, from the tabernacle in the wilderness to the academies of Babylonia through to the present day, have relied on people's willingness to give freely of themselves.

That same nadav also presents itself in the words for “benefactor” and “generosity.” Our organization has been blessed by the generosity of so many benefactors over the last eighty years. The dreams of our founders were picked up a few years ago during our wildly successful capital campaign and continue with our ongoing endowment efforts (which you can read about in this annual report). On behalf of our board I thank you for your generosity over the past year... you are a link in an unbroken chain of volunteers!

Our engagement work with students depends on the active investment of young people in their own Jewish experiences, and on the generosity of the many supporters who believe in our mission. This organization belongs to everyone, and I hope that you will join me again this year in celebrating our achievements by committing to our future successes.

Warmest regards,



David N. Goldstein  
President

## Our Story

Texas Hillel is part of the international Hillel movement, dedicated to enriching the lives of Jewish undergraduate and graduate students so that they may enrich the Jewish people and the world. Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life is headquartered in Washington D.C. and provides invaluable resources to affiliates such as ours. We receive significant financial resources from Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, specifically for our engagement strategies.



Hillel

Texas Hillel is one-stop-shop for Jewish students combining the religious offerings of three synagogues (Conservative, Reform and Orthodox) with the communal functions of many local and national organizations. Texas Hillel has been described as the “farm team” for leaders of the social justice, Israel advocacy, communal activism and religious organizations across Texas. Our alumni are members of Jewish communities around the world and they are prepared for communal leadership because of their experiences here. We do not have a formal membership structure, and all students are welcome.

Even as we reach hundreds of Hillel regulars with the signature programming that people expect of an organization like ours, we also work to reach as many students as possible on a one-on-one basis. Our work is all about engagement, and the two senior professionals who carry out this work do so collaboratively to reach the already-involved and the not-yet-involved.



Margo Sack, Director of Jewish Student Life, oversees the many groups under the Texas Hillel umbrella that meet the needs of the already-involved student population. These include Texans for Israel, The White Rose Society, Crazy Science Extravaganza and the teams that coordinate Shabbat and holiday observances. Students who come to college eager to participate in Jewish life find in Margo and her team eager allies and mentors.

Devora Brustin, Senior Jewish Educator, is one of only five such people in Hillels across the United States in 2008-2009. She and Texas Hillel were selected to pilot an exciting new project to find and engage Jewish students who would not otherwise be involved in Jewish life on campus.

Working with our Campus Entrepreneur Initiative interns and their broad social networks, Devora was able to connect with more than one-hundred-and-eighty previously uninvolved students in 2008-2009. The Senior Jewish Educator position is funded entirely in its first three years by a grant from the Jim Joseph Foundation, with Texas Hillel accepting funding responsibility gradually in years four and five of the project.



Margo, Devora and the other professionals at Texas Hillel meet students one-on-one to connect them with opportunities for personal growth and fulfillment, and to direct those students we meet in large groups towards our interns who can connect with them more deeply.

Relationship-based engagement is our strategy for delivering the Jewish future. The best chance that we have to meet the greatest number of Jews at the most critical point in their adult lives is on the college campus, and nowhere in this part of the country is there a population as large and diverse as that at The University of Texas at Austin. By finding students where they already are, connecting with them based on their own interests and exposing them to the richness of Jewish life we are exponentially increasing the chances that they will make an enduring commitment to Jewish life. That is why we are truly the “farm team” for every synagogue and communal organization in Texas and beyond.

# Student Involvement

## CARLY ALTER

Class of 2012

Major: Business

Hometown: Beaumont, Texas



Carly Alter, right,  
with roommate Elina Shtreyzman

Carly is the third of four siblings to attend The University of Texas at Austin and in her first year was more active and involved in Texas Hillel than either of the other two.

"The whole year was great. Texas Hillel is a fun place to be with Jewish people without having responsibilities, which was new for me. Being from a small Jewish community, it was nice to be able to have a large group of Jewish friends and several fun, creative activities."

Carly regularly comes to Texas Hillel for Friday night services, specifically enjoying the community aspects. Her favorite thing, she says, is Hamsa Yoga, one of Texas Hillel's new programs. Hamsa Yoga is a Jewish themed, professionally led yoga class available to all students.

"It's a great way to start the week and to try something new. I met people who I might not have otherwise. I love it!"

Carly also took part in this year's 11th Annual Israel Block Party, both as a volunteer and as an attendee. The Israel Block Party is a cultural celebration of all things Israel. The massive event features and exhibits many aspects of Israeli culture and society seldom seen in the media and specifically highlights Israel's contributions to the world. Due to rain, the usually on-campus event was held in house at Texas Hillel's beautiful new building.

"Israel Block Party was so much fun. Great food, great people, and great entertainment. I loved the concert by Israeli rock and roll legend Berry Sahkarof. I really hope we get to do it on campus next year."



## DANNY KORIN

Class of 2011

Major: Economics / Chemical Engineering

Hometown: Plano, TX

From his first day at The University of Texas at Austin, Danny began taking advantage of everything Texas Hillel has to offer. One of his favorite things, he says, is Israel Block Party.

"IBP is one of the highlights of my year. After a lot of hard work, we all get to party and dance to a free concert, all while celebrating Israel."

Danny is also a regular on Friday nights here at Texas Hillel.

"Shabbat at Texas Hillel is a wonderful thing, especially with the energy we have. Eat, talk with your friends, and relax with a great home cooked meal."

At Texas Hillel, students have taken over Shabbat. They lead services and volunteers even started cooking Kosher meals every Friday during the spring semester.

Among everything else he does, Danny was a member of our Campus Entrepreneurs Initiative (CEI) program in 2008-2009, a student-led program designed to reach out to the uninvolved Jewish students across the nation.

"I love meeting, engaging, and connecting with Jewish students, who until now, weren't really connected with Jewish life at UT. Texas Hillel has so much to offer and I love seeing their excitement when they discover their place in our community."

Danny also takes part in Texans for Israel (TFI), another student-led on-campus initiative that raises awareness and spreads knowledge about Israel (the Israel Block Party is TFI's biggest event of the year). He was also one of the students who founded Texas Hillel's Biblical Garden, an on-site vegetable garden where students "are growing herbs and vegetables that are mentioned in the bible, and we are following biblical farming procedures."

# Student Involvement

## MAX RABINOVICH

Class of 2010

Major: Psychology, Pre-Law

Hometown: San Antonio, TX



Max is a member of Texas Hillel's Student Executive Cabinet and has been a positive influence on everything we do since his first day on campus.

"It was a very interesting semester, but it was awesome! I had a great time learning about how Texas Hillel works and helping Jewish students further their Jewish experiences."

Max participates in nearly everything we do, including Shabbat services and dinner and the Israel Block Party.

"I love spending Friday nights together as a community. It's definitely a highlight of my week."

Max took part in another Texas Hillel event, 10,000 Roses by The White Rose Society, a group dedicated to Holocaust remembrance and genocide awareness.

"We hand out 10,000 white roses on the UT campus each year to symbolize the number of people killed in just a day at Auschwitz. It was great to see students care about Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Memorial Day, and promote Holocaust Remembrance on campus."

Max also participated in Texas Hillel's newest student program, JOBS, the Jewish Organization at the Business School, when we brought guest speaker Jim Sud, Executive Vice President of Whole Foods.

"Texas Hillel is a great resource to have, where I can feel comfortable being Jewish away from home."



## BEVERLY MINDLE

Class of 2009

Major: Psychology, Economics

Hometown: Dallas, TX

Beverly was another Texas Hillel regular. She was one of the leaders of KOACH, the conservation minyan at Texas Hillel. Beverly was highly involved in every aspect of the religious and cultural side of Texas Hillel. She planned and led Shabbat Services, was instrumental in making Shabbat meals, and took leading roles in other religious events like High Holidays and Passover services, building the Sukkah, and KOACH Shabbat.

Moreover, Beverly was a regular at other Texas Hillel events, such as the Chanukah and Israel Independence parties and Israel Block Party. She also attended a few KESHER Community Services events.

Kesher is a community of Reform students who engage in worship, do activities to help better our community, and come together in a social atmosphere to form bonds between other Jewish students.

"Texas Hillel is wonderful in that it provides young people with a place to celebrate and explore their Judaism. The diversity of practices and beliefs in the community and Texas Hillel's general acceptance of these beliefs is most remarkable and unique. Many of my favorite experiences are connected with Texas Hillel, and I will always feel a strong sense of loyalty and gratitude toward them."

Since graduating in May, Beverly has moved to Chicago, where she remains committed to Judaism and the Jewish people.

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Sam Shapiro  
Kay and Michael Shapiro  
Elad Sharon  
Mark Sheldon  
Marc Sherman  
Benjamin Shiomi  
Scott Shtofman  
Boris Shtreyzman  
David Shulder  
Frankie Shulkin  
Josh Silberman  
Bob Silver  
Robert Silver  
Deborah Simon  
Alexander Simon  
Iris and Charles Smith  
Marion and Richard Smith  
J. Donnie Snyder  
Alexander Sole  
BJ and Allen Sonstein  
Judy and Robert Sorin  
Adam Sowsky  
Justin Sperling  
Mindy and Barry Spigel  
Louis Stahl  
Arlene and Joseph Staller  
Gesse Stark-Smith  
Amanda Stein  
Albert Stein  
Lee Steinfeld  
Sarah and Robert Steinfeld  
Alex Stern  
Marion Stoutner  
Blake Sunshine  
Arielle Swartz  
Abraham Taicher  
Leah Ticker  
Josh Tillis  
Jess Tillis  
Susan and Rabbi Joseph Topek  
Linda and David Tugentman  
Douglas Ulman  
Lisa Vine  
Susannah Volpe  
Madelaine Waggoner  
Perry Wallach  
Diane Weber  
Daniel Weinbaum  
Hana Weinberg  
Norman Weiner  
Daniel Weingarten  
Rebecca Weiser  
Casey Weiss  
Marcia and Elliot Weser  
Amelia Whitman  
Nancy Wolf  
Neila Wolff  
Naomi Worob z'l  
Alan Yancelson  
Shawn Yanklowitz  
Sandra Yaskin  
Adam Yourist  
Chad Zidow  
Heather Zidow  
Jodi Zick  
Maxene Zion  
Natalie Ziskind

# TEXAS HILLEL ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION

The Texas Hillel Endowment Foundation supports the work of the Texas Hillel Foundation by managing its endowment funds. These funds, solicited originally as part of our capital campaign, continue to be raised with the help of our senior consultant Hans Mayer in Houston.

Endowment gifts can be specified for particular programs and may be funded in multiple ways. We are fortunate to have a number of long-time supporters who have signed letters of intent for this campaign and look forward to growing this impressive list over the coming year.

As of June 30, 2009, the value of the endowment was just under \$1.4 million. Our spending policy is 5% annually of the total value of the funds spread over twelve financial quarters. The growth of the endowment means long-term income for Texas Hillel's activities.

The endowment is invested equally between the Dallas Jewish Community Foundation and the Houston Jewish Community Foundation and is overseen by the Texas Hillel Endowment Foundation board and advisors.

## Texas Hillel Endowment Foundation Board of Directors

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Esther S. Polland (Houston)  
Carol G. Silverberg (Austin)  
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## Advisors

Leonard R. Krasnow (Dallas)  
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# LEADERSHIP

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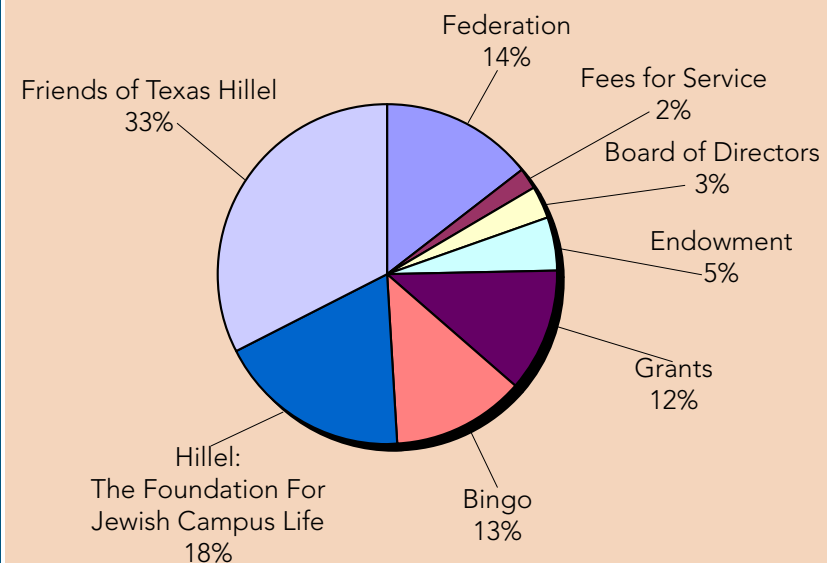
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Ronny Spolane (Houston)  
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Suzanne Winkelman (Austin)

## Student Executive Cabinet

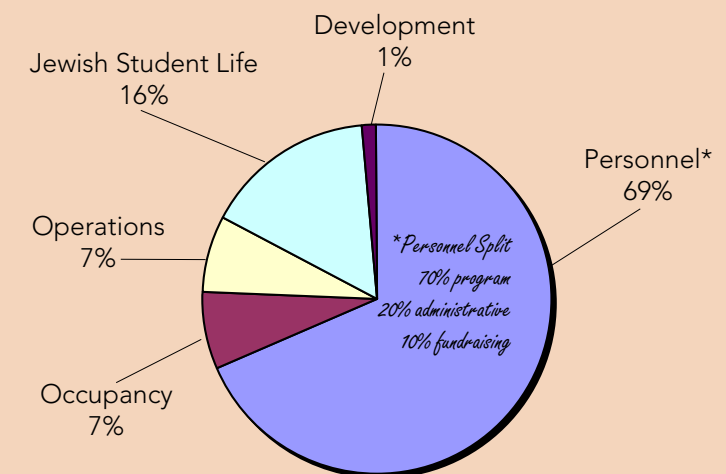
Jared Cohen  
Ilana Diamond  
Ashlyn Higie  
Laureen Izygon  
Brian Milman  
Sara Ostrosky  
Lori Otto  
Max Rabinovich  
Jacob Sager  
Caitlin Smith

# 2009 FINANCIALS

## INCOME



## EXPENSES



# CREATE A JEWISH LEGACY

Texas Hillel is participating in the Create a Jewish Legacy initiative of the Dallas Jewish Community Foundation (DJCF). This exciting program is a collaboration between the DJCF and twenty organizations and congregations, working together to build a strong future through planned giving.

The CJL is chaired by Stuart Prescott, who is also a member of the Texas Hillel Board of Directors. You can read more about this program at [www.djcf.org](http://www.djcf.org).



*Texas Hillel creates opportunities for all Jewish students at The University of Texas at Austin to develop their own Jewish interests and to participate in a welcoming campus-based community that respects the value of pluralism and promotes ongoing involvement in Jewish life.*

David N. Goldstein  
*President*

Rabbi David Komerofsky  
*Executive Director*



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