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Dear Friends,

Ki hinei kachomer b'yad hayotzair, like the clay in the hand of the potter...

These are the words that echo on the night of Yom Kippur as part of the stirring liturgy. Notwithstanding all of the trials and tribulations that swirl around us at this time, we still sense from a place deep inside of us, that it is the Almighty to whom we must turn to for our salvation. He is always there, patiently awaiting our repentance, our return.

With the tragic onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we all realize that this last year has been unlike any in memory. No community has escaped unscathed. Virtually every business, including NJOP, has been severely challenged during these trying times. Hopefully, we have learned to approach life with greater humility, with a clearer appreciation that it is not we who are in control, but, rather, the Al-mighty.

That is not to say that we are powerless. To the contrary, we have each been blessed with the freedom to choose and the freedom to grow. It is this freedom and inner creativity that has allowed NJOP to flourish over the past 32, almost 33, years.

As a result, NJOP has received a constant flow of wonderful and uplifting feedback letting us know how our NJOP programs have given people the opportunity to grow Jewishly. NJOP's High Holidays Beginners Services have attracted an eclectic mix of tens of thousands of Jews searching for more meaningful High Holiday experiences by attending NJOP sponsored High Holiday Beginners Services offered at hundreds of locations across North America.

One such participant was Jeff R. who grew up with a bit of formal Jewish education in Brooklyn before moving to the suburbs to attend Talmud Torah, two days a week. Although he had joined Beit Chaverim, a synagogue in Connecticut as an adult, he did not especially look forward to the long, seemingly drawn out, High Holiday liturgy that he did not really understand. Given the opportunity to attend the High Holiday Beginners Service at his synagogue, he found new meaning in those previously "archaic" prayers.

Shortly thereafter, at the rabbi's behest, Jeff agreed to commit to attending morning services one day a week. Before he knew it, he had accepted the rabbi's invitation to start learning Talmud, even though he had limited time each week due to his long daily commute.

Then there are the "Aha" moments that NJOP's programs have made into reality. Take the story of Michael P. who, growing up in Tempe, Arizona, attended Hebrew school twice a week as a child and concluded his Jewish education when he celebrated his Bar Mitzvah. Years passed without any serious Jewish involvement until a friend urged him to attend some classes at a local synagogue. Michael agreed to attend, and the classes led him to the Hebrew Reading Crash Course offered by Rabbi Baruch Lederman of Congregation Kehillas Torah in San Diego.

It was during that class that Michael read the word "Dayeinu" in Hebrew, for the first time, and, according to Rabbi Lederman, he yelled out "Wow, that's Dayeinu!" It was like a light bulb went on!" It was a throwback to the seder of his childhood. Today, Michael is the Gabbai (coordinator of the prayer services) in his Shul and has even taught NJOP's Hebrew

*National Jewish Outreach Program
 is now NJOP.



Reading Crash Course several times himself, helping others to have their own "Aha" moments, and connect more meaningfully to Jewish life.

Helping Jews to grow as Jews is what NJOP is all about. Some of NJOP's greatest successes have come from thinking out of the box, and approaching every challenge as a new opportunity. While in recent years we have seen a wonderful surge in interest in our holiday programs, with over 100,000 attending our joyous PASSOVER, SUKKOT and CHANUKAH ACROSS AMERICA programs, due to the shuttering of synagogues and the need to social distance, NJOP was forced to cancel this year's PASSOVER ACROSS AMERICA and pivot to virtual programming online via Zoom. Despite the challenges, that shift has, thank G-d, met with great success.

Whether it is encouraging our partners across North America to offer NJOP's acclaimed Crash Courses via Zoom, running our own Crash Courses in Basic Judaism, Jewish History and Crash Courses in Hebrew Reading, NJOP is bringing growth opportunities to Jews across North America, wherever they may be. We were overwhelmed by the number of applications to attend our Zoom classes and were actually forced to cap registrations! Requests to join poured in from 21 U.S. states and from locations around the world, including Switzerland and Hong Kong.

As synagogues grapple with how they will be able to accommodate community members who will want to attend services on the High Holidays, as well as those who will be unable to do so, I will be conducting NJOP Prayer Workshops for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur via Zoom, to be followed by NJOP's acclaimed Sukkot Workshop to help our brothers and sisters prepare to celebrate the holidays at home. We will also be engaging our hundreds of partners across North America to offer these very same programs in their communities, so that they too can find the "Jeffs" and "Michaels" in their own communities.

You, our dear supporters, have been there for NJOP through thick and thin. Without you, people like Jeff R. and Michael P. might never have found their way back or their way in. Without you, we might never have taught 250,000 to read Hebrew and welcomed over 1.1 million to SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA programs.

With your continued partnership and most generous support now to help NJOP move forward, we trust that despite these difficult and challenging times, we will together succeed, to awaken even more Jews across North America and inspire them to explore and experience Jewish living, and become more actively engaged in Jewish life.

Wishing you a healthy and happy New Year. Shanah Tova.

With best wishes,



Ephraim Z. Buchwald

PS: None of NJOP's successes would have been possible without your steadfast and exceptionally generous support throughout the years. We trust that you will continue to support NJOP's vital work going forward.