



from the Center

2010–2011



Touching Lives | Teaching Leaders | Transforming Community



From the Rabbi: A New Look at Jewish Campus Life

For many years, we have spoken about Hillel as the foundation for Jewish life on campus. It's been wonderful to see the growth of a vibrant Jewish community at Tufts over the years: warm Shabbat and holiday celebrations, innovative opportunities for *tikkun olam*, social justice, hundreds of students on our Birthright trips to Israel, important opportunities to learn from the lessons of the Holocaust — and every week, hundreds of students engaged in Jewish study, music, service and culture.

But now, I'm beginning to think differently about our work. While we care deeply about the Jewish experience students have, and can have, at Tufts, we care even more about what happens after they leave campus. We increasingly understand our work as empowering the next generation of committed Jews in North America. We want our students to see the Jewish tradition as valuable and relevant to the

We are coming to see Hillel not as “the foundation for Jewish campus life,” but rather as “the campus foundation for Jewish life...”

most important questions in their lives as they create families, decide where to live after college, and shape a life of meaning. In this way, we are coming to see Hillel not as “the foundation for Jewish campus life,” but rather as “the campus foundation for Jewish life” providing

students with the experiences, inspiration, and tools to build a vibrant, committed Jewish life, after they leave college. As we work to achieve our ambitious goal of doubling the number of students meaningfully involved in Jewish life on campus, we focus not only on their experience at Tufts, but also on how they will shape the Jewish future after they graduate.

Cover: Birthright Students in the Negev. Left to Right: Catherine Schwartz, A12, Alex Masurovsky, A10, Will Ehrenfeld, A10, Sarah Gutkind, A12, Adam Aronow, A11.

REPAIR THE WORLD

We are thrilled that Tufts Hillel has joined in partnership with *Repair the World*, an organization committed to inspiring American Jews and their communities to give their time and effort to serve those in need. By working together, Hillel and *Repair the World* will make volunteer service a defining component of Jewish life on campus. Our aim is to increase the number of students making ongoing service commitments through Hillel by 50 percent.

Watch for new service opportunities being offered through our special initiatives — Moral Voices, Read by the River, Vitality, Taglit-Birthright Israel post trip programming, and immersion service trips to countries across the globe.

IDF Tour Stops at Tufts Hillel



In April, Tufts had the honor of hosting the IDF singers, the top musicians in the Israeli Defense Forces. More than one hundred students came out to hear these incredibly talented young Israelis, and Hillel's own Shir Appeal had the opportunity to join the soldiers on stage for an emotional singing of Hinei Ma Tov.



Moral Voices and Education

Lauren Katims, University Advancement Communications

A recent college graduate, Erin Gruwell didn't expect her new job to include high school students who belonged to gangs and spent time in and out of juvenile detention. But that's exactly what she faced when she moved from her well-to-do lifestyle in La Verne, CA to teach at Woodrow Wilson High School in East Los Angeles. Gruwell soon learned that if she wanted to save these kids from a lifestyle of crime and violence, she'd have to find a unique way to reach her students. Gruwell's innovative teaching style and passion

Tufts Hillel's Moral Voices program ... was designed to provoke thought in students about how their actions can have a significant impact on global issues.

for educational reform changed the lives of these kids who had been written off by the education system. "I walked into a classroom of kids who were supposed to be invisible. Then four years later, I watched them walk across the stage and get their diplomas," said Gruwell, this year's Merrin Distinguished Lecturer for Hillel's Moral Voices Program. Gruwell, whose inspirational story of how she gave 150 students a second chance, was the subject of the 2007 movie *Freedom Writers*. On February 24, she spoke to a packed Cohen Auditorium of students, parents, alumni, and friends about the importance of educational justice, the theme of the 5th annual Moral Voices Program at Tufts.

"We are all students here — issues of education hit close to home," said Alex Freedman, A12, chair of the Moral Voices committee. "Education is one of the strongest forces which shape our globe, whether it is teaching job skills, religious doctrine, or methods of peace."

Tufts Hillel's Moral Voices program, sponsored by Seth Merrin, A82, and his wife Anne Heyman (who co-developed the program), was designed to provoke thought in students about how their actions can have a significant impact on global issues. Programs coinciding with the annual theme, which have in the past included environmental justice, economic justice, and genocide, are presented throughout the year. Last fall, academics from Harvard and Tufts, including Dr. Steven Cohen, conducted a panel discussion "Is Education Just?" with Tufts students. This spring, the Moral Voices Student Board welcomed filmmaker Cevin Soling, who showed his film, *The War on Kids*, which deals with the timely issues of safety and security in our schools.

"Bringing someone like Erin Gruwell to Tufts has a dual benefit. It raises the issue of education, what it means in our society, how accessible — or not accessible — it is to all, and what the ramifications of that are for all of us," said Heyman. "But it also shows young people just beginning to make their way in the world that one person can have a significant impact and be the impetus for huge change. Each Tufts student is potentially another Erin Gruwell," said Heyman. In 2007, Heyman founded the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village in Rwanda, which provides a home and education for orphans of the Rwandan genocide. (See page 6).

Gruwell encouraged the audience to engage with students in Rwanda and stressed that they have a voice in this world. She used the same approach with her high school students as she gave them the chance to tell their stories of murder, hunger, poverty, and desperation. She eventually helped them publish a book.

Gruwell showed her students how to find their voices from the inspiration of others. As the class read *The Diary of Anne Frank*, learning about the Holocaust for the first time, they raised money to



Author of *The Freedom Writers Diary*, Erin Gruwell, Guest Speaker Moral Voices 2010.

take a class trip to Auschwitz. They also flew Miep Gies, the woman who hid Anne Frank in her attic for two years, to California to speak to them in person.

During her speech, Gies said, "I'm not a hero. I did the right thing because it was the right thing to do." Rabbi Jeffrey Summit echoed her by reminding the audience we all have a responsibility to be active citizens and raise a moral voice in society; to turn

"Erin Gruwell's story is an example of the potential each Tufts student has to make a difference in the world," Rabbi Summit said. "By hearing others' stories of impact, students are encouraged to raise their own moral voice."

our beliefs into actions. "Erin Gruwell's story is an example of the potential each Tufts student has to make a difference in the world," Rabbi Summit said. "By hearing others' stories of impact, students are encouraged to raise their own moral voice." Heyman added, "The courage to do the right thing, because it is the right thing to do, resides within all of us. It is my hope that through Moral Voices we are able to demonstrate that. As Margaret Mead said, 'A small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has.'"

Living Healthy, Living Well

Laura Hoguet, A10



Emma Gaines, A11, Samantha Tye, A13, Laura Hoguet, A10, Elana Davidowitz, A11, Samantha Frank, A11, members of Hillel's Vitality Program, supporting young Jewish women with breast cancer and teaching them to take ownership over their own health.

The Jewish tradition teaches that life and health are of utmost importance. In 2004, Tufts Hillel created a new program, Vitality: Health and Wellness, to encourage students to think about their bodies, as well as their minds. For the past six years, Hillel's Vitality Board has been promoting health and wellness all across campus. Each year, board members plan the calendar based on Tufts students' needs. Nutrition, sexual health, body image, stress, and

tolerance building are only a few of the areas explored. We draw from Jewish sources to learn what Judaism teaches on these issues.

This past October, Vitality hosted the second annual "Pump It! For the Cure," an all-day breast cancer fundraiser. Hillel was transformed into a spa-esque lounge where, for a charitable contribution, Tufts students could participate in exercise classes and receive massages from area professionals. Participants left with

goody bags full of fun freebies and pamphlets about breast cancer prevention. This event raised more than \$2,000 for *Sharsheret*, a

non-profit organization of young Jewish women living with breast cancer.

Vitality offers Tufts students a comfortable forum in which to discuss and acquire information about issues of sexual health. Last October, Vitality sponsored Dr. Paul Joannides, the author of *The Guide to Getting It On*, who spent a day on campus meeting with various student groups as well as with the Vitality Board. Not only did he discuss the future of sex education and how the Vitality Board can best work within the Tufts community, he also engaged the Varsity captains and the Student Athletic Advisory Committee members in a discussion about sexual health and athletes. All this, and he still found time to meet with sororities, attend a dinner, and deliver a large lecture to the Tufts community. Rabbi Summit and Rabbi Ruttenberg also conducted workshops on Jewish approaches to sexuality.

Tufts Hillel understands that these issues are important to college students and our tradition has much to teach about living a healthy, balanced life. The Vitality program is an integral part of both Hillel and the larger Tufts community as a whole. I hope we'll see you at a future event!

Tufts Hillel's amazing programs are made possible through the continued generosity of parents, alumni, and friends. Please consider becoming a program sponsor by joining Chai: The Circle of Life with a gift of \$1,000. To find out more, contact judith.canter@tufts.edu or (617) 627-2863



Read by the River

More than 1000 Medford and Somerville school children visited Gantcher Gym on March 14, 2010 and scurried from booth to booth at Tufts Hillel's 11th annual Read By The River literacy carnival. This year's theme, Reading Around the World enabled students to experience folklore, arts, culture, sports, and more from countries across the globe, without ever leaving Medford. And when New England Patriots running back Sammy Morris read a book to the crowd, the kids were spellbound!



Top: Anya Gelernt, A13, Seth Teleky, A13, Kira Hessekiel, A13, sing along with Jon Levinson, A13, on guitar.

Bottom left: Eugene Rabina, A12, studies Torah portion of the week.

Bottom right: Carolyn Pace, E12, Ariella Charny, A12, enjoy back to school BBQ.



Moving Beyond the Center

Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg,
Tufts Hillel Senior Jewish Educator

Jewish life on campus, like Judaism itself, is, can, and should be a great many things. As Hillel's new Senior Jewish Educator, I work with students to expand the range of possibilities of what Jewish life can look like and where it can take place. It's about developing exciting, transformative experiences that speak to who students are, wherever they happen to be on their Jewish journey.

Together, the students and I create micro-communities all over campus, setting up groups that offer substantial connection to Judaism and Jewishness — whether about having one Jewish parent or exploring spirituality, engaging in text study and planning Shabbat dinners in off-campus apartments, having salon discussions and learning how to build a Sukkah or lead a Passover Seder. I've worked with a group of sorority women to facilitate conversations about whether to only date Jews, and helped students launch a "Metaphysical Feast," pot-luck and Torah discussion. Programs like these offer the chance for students to build community and explore some of life's big questions through a Jewish lens.

In this way, Hillel and Jewish campus life become vibrant and expansive, offering students an infinite number of ways to connect, create community, draw meaning, deepen their Jewish lives, and to meet them wherever they happen to be.

Every dollar contributed to our Annual Fund makes a Difference. Please consider making a gift to Tufts Hillel in the enclosed envelope or online at www.tuftshillel.org (Go to Support Us)

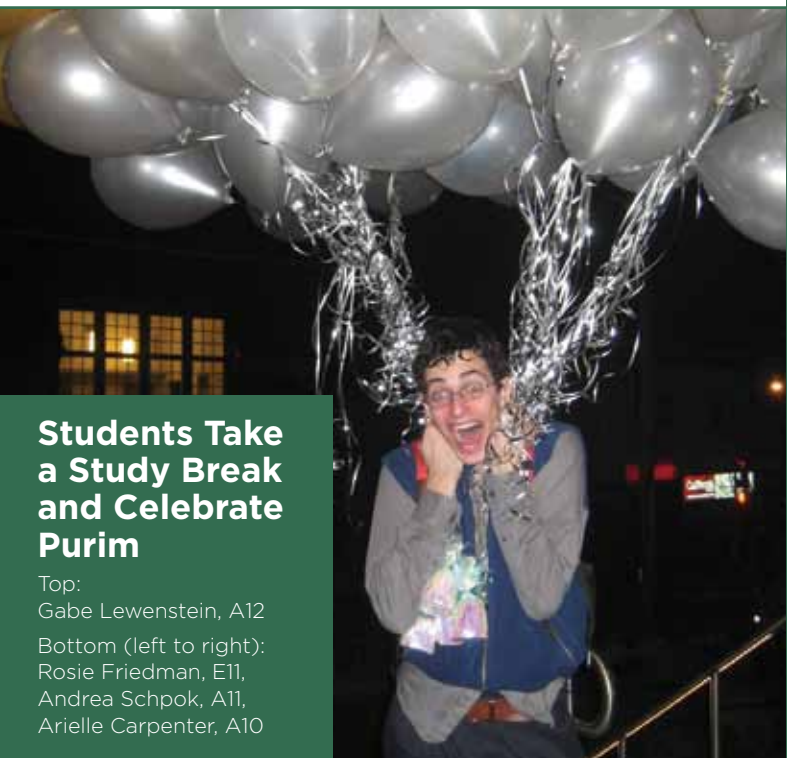


Striking a Pose on Ben Yehuda Street, Jerusalem

Larissa Gibbs, A11, Courtney Pittenger, A11, Jon Bornstein, A10, Anya Shari, Israeli soldier, Alex Masurovsky, A10, Kate de Klerk, A12



Ariella Charny, A12, enjoys hummus, falafel, and Israeli salad at Hillel's campus wide Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration in the new library roof garden.



Students Take a Study Break and Celebrate Purim

Top: Gabe Lewenstein, A12

Bottom (left to right): Rosie Friedman, E11, Andrea Schpok, A11, Arielle Carpenter, A10



Rosh Hashanah, 2009~5770

Top: Elizabeth Schrott, A12
Bottom: Julie Kalt, A12





Anne Heyman meets with students, Matt Davis, A12, Meri Roy, A11, Howie Levine, A13, as they prepare for Hillel's Summer 2010 inter-faith service trip to Rwanda. Trustee Emeritus Bill Cummings, A58, H06, M97P, J97P, and his wife, Joyce, M97P, J97P, and Anne Heyman and Seth Merrin, A82, supported this service trip.

Race for Rwanda

Ever since Paul Rusesabagina, the inspiration for the film "Hotel Rwanda," spoke at Tufts Hillel in 2005, helping victims of the Rwandan genocide has been at the forefront of Hillel's mission. Upon returning from the Summer 2009 service trip to Rwanda, Rachel Lieber, A10, Heather Blonsky, A11, Ben Gittelsohn, A11, Eugene Rabina, A12, Gabe Lewenstein, A12, Hilary Sieber, A12, Hannah Gogel, A12, and Miki Vizner, E12, organized a campus wide 5K Race4Rwanda to benefit the orphaned Rwandan teenagers living at the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village. More than 200 students and faculty, including President Lawrence S. Bacow, participated, raising more than \$3,000 for the village.



President Bacow with Oliver Snider, A10, preparing for the race.

Got Falafel?

Left to right: Ari Plaut, A12, Esti Bernstein, A13, Charlee Corra, A13, Brett Fischer, A10, Katie Weiller, A10



Students "paint the cannon" in honor of IFest 2010.





Left: 2009 Hillel JDC Trip to Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village, Rwanda.

Top: Kira Mikityanskaya, A11.

From Vision to Village

Reflections on Rwanda

Kira Mikityanskaya, A11

As we bumped and rattled along on an unpaved road full of potholes, I strained my neck for a first glimpse of Rwanda. The headlights from our bus shed the only light for miles and I would have to wait until the following morning for a first impression of the “country of a thousand hills.” I was finally in Africa.

Our group of 18 Tufts Hillel students participated in a Hillel-Joint Distribution Committee service trip to Rwanda. Last April, as the Jewish community commemorated those lost in the Holocaust, the citizens of Rwanda remembered those lost in the 1994 genocide. In just 100 days, close to 1 million people were murdered in a country of just 9 million. As the Western world turned a blind eye to the genocide, 1.2 million children were orphaned.

Hearing about Rwanda’s orphans at Hillel’s Merrin Moral Voices Program, Anne Heyman, dedicated Hillel supporter and philanthropist, took action. Using Israel’s Yemin Orde village as a model, Heyman founded the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village (ASYV) to house, educate, and nourish 500 orphans. In *Kinyarwanda*, the language of Rwanda, *agahozo* means “a place where tears are dried,” and in Hebrew, *shalom* means “peace.” The village is a place the orphans call home, dry their tears, and begin to heal. This peaceful environment inspires hope in this promising group of kids. Most of them aspire to attend university in Rwanda and some even hope to study in America.

On any given day, a visitor will find kids surfing the web in the Learning Center, playing basketball or soccer, learning traditional African dance, playing guitar, painting a mural, or working on the village farm. Yet even these typical activities do not mask their haunted pasts. One young man shared two songs that he wrote before coming to the village. They reflect on the immense sadness he feels every day and the irreparable hole in his heart.

ASYV is not an instrument of mass aid. Instead, much like programming at Hillel, the goal is to create a ripple effect of change. The village employs many locals, shares recycled water with nearby villages, and is a community service model for its inhabitants. With each graduating class, the village hopes to send leaders back to develop their own communities.

As I met survivors of all ages and walked through several memorials, one closely modeled after Yad Vashem, I struggled to comprehend the inhumanity witnessed here just 15 years ago. Every single person on the street is either a survivor or a perpetrator. Yet I marvel at their ability to move on, to bear witness in the *gacaca* courts (a system of community justice), to live next to those who murdered their families, and to coexist in peace for the greater good.

Standing on the village’s highest hill overlooking a breathtaking view of green pastures, I reflected on the meaning of “Never Again” and our responsibility as Jews in the face and the aftermath of genocide. Although the smell of blood is no longer in the air, Rwanda has a long road ahead. ASYV is a glimmer of hope and an instrument to repair not only a country destroyed by genocide, but also individual souls — orphans with no control over their past, but a strong hold on their future.

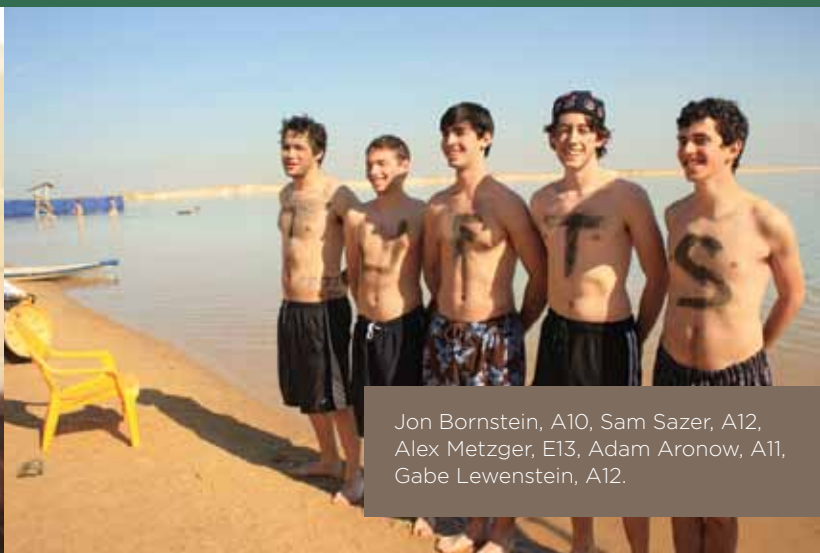
This Hillel opportunity reinforced and deepened my commitment to Social Justice. Months later, and physically removed from the orphans of Rwanda, I feel more connected than ever — a hug and conversation speak much louder than pages of a history book.

Hillel Birthright 2009

100 percent of students who participate in a Tufts Hillel Taglit-Birthright Israel trip become engaged in Jewish life upon returning to campus.



Top: Sarah Gutkind, A12, Rotem Ezra, IDF.
Bottom: Jenna Katz, A12, Elizabeth Iuppa, E12, Mor Pinto, IDF, Sarah Gutkind, A12, Elizabeth Langer, A12.



Jon Bornstein, A10, Sam Sazer, A12, Alex Metzger, E13, Adam Aronow, A11, Gabe Lewenstein, A12.

“My Birthright experience surpassed all expectations. I fostered friendships that will last a lifetime, became completely immersed and enamored with a country whose people were as excited to have me there as I was to be there, and developed an even more genuine pride in being Jewish.”

—Tess Guttadauro, A11

“Everyone I knew who went on Birthright before me said it would be the best 10 days of my life. I didn’t believe them until I actually experienced it.”

—Howie Wilamowski, A11



Hillel Alumni Stay Involved

Alumni in Boston and New York participated in Hillel events, which included Shabbat dinners and evening gatherings with Rabbi Ruttenberg to discuss her new book, *The Passionate Torah: Sex and Judaism*. More than 100 young alumni braved a fierce winter storm to attend Hillel's annual Miracle Martini Night. This year's Chanukah cocktail party (below) was held at Boston's historic Vilna Shul.



Rabbi Summit celebrates with local alumni at the Vilna Shul.



Student Board Development Chairs Give Back

Corey Briskin, A10, and Annie Jacob, A10, Tufts Hillel Student Board Development chairs, pass the torch to Noa Naftali, A13, and Jon Danzig, A12, incoming Development chairs. This past year Corey and Annie gathered 25 students to participate in our annual "Super Sunday." Brunch was served while students reached out to parents and alumni, telling them about Tufts Hillel's new initiatives and inviting them to support our meaningful programs.

Especially For Freshmen

Hillary Sieber, A12, and Jenna Katz, A12, Co-Chairs Freshman Programs

The Tufts campus is great, but when 40 freshmen head off campus for the Freshman Retreat, special things happen. This past fall, we spent 24 hours at Camp Ramah. Late-night discussions, speed dating, and a *tikkun olam* project (making challah covers for a nursing home) were only a few of the activities that kept us up all night. By exploring the challenges Jewish freshmen experience in college, we built new friendships.

Advice to incoming freshmen — this is a weekend not to miss!

Miriam Ross-Hirsch, A13, Liz McGarry, A13, Meredith Goldberg, A13, and Kayla Glick, A13.



Challenge gift to launch new program in Holocaust and Genocide Education

It has been said that the shortest distance between two people is a story. Stories build meaningful connections; they help illuminate what it means to be human. That is certainly true for Trustee Emeritus Bill Cummings, A58, H06, M97P, J97P, and Joyce Cummings, M97P, J97P.

Bill and Joyce Cummings were moved by Eliezer Ayalon's stories of his experiences during and after the Holocaust when they met him on their first trip to Israel last fall. A native of Poland, Ayalon was imprisoned in five different camps before being liberated, near death, in May 1945. His personal accounts inspired Joyce and Bill to think broadly about how education could help prevent such a horrific tragedy from ever happening again.

The couple has generously committed to a gift of \$1 million to endow a new program in Holocaust and Genocide Education at Tufts Hillel, provided the same amount can be raised from other friends.

"Our Tufts Travel-Learn trip to Israel gave us a new understanding of history, and how injustice corrodes the most cherished values of society," says Bill, a self-made entrepreneurial success story in real estate development and construction. "We wanted to channel our experience into something positive, and Tufts Hillel was certainly a very natural choice for educating others. Tufts students share a profound curiosity and concern about the world, and many are already on their way to being catalysts for social change."

It is not the first time the Cummings have enriched Tufts with their philanthropy. Bill and Joyce endowed the Cummings Family Chair in Entrepreneurship and Business Economics in 1998 to help students develop the skills necessary to run successful businesses. In 2005, their generous support led to the dedication of the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine. Bill has also been a valued contributor to his alma mater through service as an overseer to Tufts Medical School, and as a trustee of the University.

"We believe in giving back," says Bill, co-founder with Joyce of Cummings Foundation, Inc., which has grown to become one of the largest charitable foundations in Massachusetts. "I was fortunate that Tufts recognized my potential before I saw it myself. I graduated with a wider sense of the world and of what I could achieve. I hope our philanthropy fosters an attitude in students that they can shape the future — that while we face enormous problems in our world today, they are part of the solution, they can and should be active citizens."

This new initiative will create a vibrant program intended to equip students with the knowledge and skills to aide in the cause of preventing future acts of genocide. In the next few months, readers will be hearing more about this fund raising effort. In the meantime, Bill and Joyce have agreed to underwrite two separate programs for students and the Tufts community at large.

On Tuesday, October 19, Eliezer Ayalon will travel from Israel to Medford to speak with students and faculty about his experiences surviving five different camps during the Holocaust. In addition, with support from the Cummings Foundation, Hillel last May brought an interfaith group of 20 to the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village in Rwanda, where orphaned children can "dry their tears" (*Agahozo*) and "live in peace" (*Shalom*). This village was founded by Anne Heyman (wife of Tufts Trustee Seth Merrin, A82), who was inspired by her work with Hillel's Merrin Moral Voices program.



"We are tremendously grateful to the Cummings family for supporting Tufts' mission of active citizenship and Tufts Hillel's commitment to *tikkun olam*, repairing the world," says Rabbi Summit. "We welcome assistance in launching this important endeavor. Whether as a patron or a participant — we encourage involvement in establishing a program that will make an impact at Tufts for generations to come."

For more information, contact Judi Canter, director, Hillel Development, at judith.canter@tufts.edu or (617) 627-2863; or Jo Wellins, deputy director of development for University Advancement, at jo.wellins@tufts.edu or (617) 627-5906.



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