Jewish Foundation Announces Reflect Cincy Grant Recipients

Seven grants totaling $288,500 will fund new ideas to spark Jewish connection in Cincinnati

CINCINNATI (July 12, 2022) – The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati is awarding seven grants totaling $288,500 for its inaugural Reflect Cincy initiative aimed at funding new and emerging ideas to spark meaning and connection to Jewish life.

The Creative Team—the leading force behind Reflect Cincy—is a collection of individuals who aren’t traditional members of the current Jewish donor population, and who have varying connections to their Jewishness. For most of these individuals, Reflect Cincy was their first grantmaking experience and for several, it was their first compelling encounter with a local Jewish institution in recent years. The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati earmarked money for grants to seven organizations/entrepreneurs. The goal is to foster Jewish connections for underrepresented segments in the Cincinnati Jewish community, specifically young adults without children, interfaith families with children and families with young children.

“Reflect Cincy is a new way of thinking about philanthropy,” said Kim Newstadt, Director of Research & Learning at the Jewish Foundation. “It flips the model to give influence to those affected, allows voices to be heard without money attached and offers a confluence of fresh ideas. It’s a human-centered design approach that is based on research, and is consistent with the takeaways from Cincinnati 2030, our Jewish community’s long-term strategic plan convened by the Jewish Federation. We intend to positively move the needle on engaging Jews who feel disconnected from current Jewish institutions and measure shifts in their sense of belonging in partnership with our grantees. The participatory grantmaking model is replicated in the participatory project design that was a criterion for grant funding.”

The grant recipients and their plans include:

- **Action Tank City Council Night Class** will design and implement civic training night classes curated to the Jewish community with a focus on interfaith families. The goal is to increase civic engagement in the Jewish community and foster connections. Action Tank is a think tank that partners with artists to research and promote new public policy solutions at the local government level.

- **Birds of a Feather, led by entrepreneur Cindy Loon**, will co-create circle gatherings for young adults that foster curiosity, human connection and self-expression through nature, mysticism, drumming, art and other modalities. The goal is for participants to develop a stronger sense of belonging to the Jewish community and greater self-worth.
• **Cincy Jewfolk** will establish a media hub in Cincinnati that leverages a news platform with online micro-communities to increase connectivity and engagement among underrepresented segments in the Jewish community, especially families with young children, young adults and interfaith families. Cincy Jewfolk will build upon the successful TC Jewfolk model in Minneapolis and St. Paul through its first expansion site in Cincinnati.

• **Division of Adulting**, led by Rockwern Academy, will connect underrepresented segments, especially young adults, through creative, low-barrier learning opportunities that provide socialization and community building in person and virtually. Rockwern Academy serves 224 students from 15 months through sixth grade, their families, and the broader community.

• **elech, led by entrepreneurs Zak and Elliot Draznin**, will build an urban and adjacent, independent, Queer-specific space for spirituality, vulnerability and identity exploration supporting Queer Jews and their families. The goal is to nurture a sense of belonging and deepen connections to Jewishness, Jewish identity or Queer Jewish identity.

• **Our Year of Firsts: Parenting Edition** will launch a new parenting program targeting interfaith couples in their first year of being parents as a partnership between a national leader in interfaith engagement, 18Doors, and Rabbi Meredith Kahan of Rockdale Temple. The goal is to provide low barrier settings for participants to build community, connections and confidence in participating in Jewish life and raising Jewish children.

• **Young Adult Ambassadorship, led by entrepreneur Kayla Soroka**, will empower a cohort of young adult Jews to be confident and knowledgeable ambassadors to other young adults and explore the significance of Jewish life through monthly meetings, an immersive retreat, confidence building and data gathering about community needs.

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**About The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati**
The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati was established in 1995 with assets from the Jewish Hospital of Cincinnati. In 2010, the Foundation sold Jewish Hospital to Mercy Health, and the proceeds increased the Foundation’s asset base.

The Foundation invests in the Cincinnati Jewish community to strengthen Jewish identity, Jewish education and engagement, and to ensure that the basic needs of vulnerable community members are met. The Foundation also provides capacity building grants enabling the community’s institutions to meet individual needs efficiently and effectively.