

New Jewish Specialty Camps: **FROM IDEA TO REALITY**

Foundation for Jewish Camp | Specialty Camps Incubator Evaluation Report



Prepared for the:





Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to share *New Jewish Specialty Camps: From Idea to Reality*, a comprehensive report highlighting the achievements, key findings, and lessons learned from Foundation for Jewish Camp's first Specialty Camps Incubator.

This success story represents collaborative partnership and effective grantmaking. It is a story of calculated risk-taking, game-changing innovation, cohort-based learning, and shared resources. It is a story of field building.

Together, the Foundation for Jewish Camp and Jim Joseph Foundation have created the first five stand-alone Jewish overnight specialty camps—five new camps, five new approaches, five models of excellence in camping and Jewish experiential learning that attracted new families to Jewish camp.

To help achieve this, the Incubator provided the new directors with guidance, mentoring, training, and collaboration to develop camps based on the highest standards in the industry. We are especially grateful to Michele Friedman, project director for the Incubator, and to her entire team for their dedicated efforts.

Skip Vichness, immediate past Chair of the Foundation for Jewish Camp, and a veteran of the private camp industry, said it best: “The Specialty Camps Incubator has surpassed our expectations and has literally changed the way the field understands and addresses its current competitive set and its ability to meet the demands of today’s families.”

Based on the success of the first Incubator, we partnered with The AVI CHAI Foundation to establish the second Specialty Camps Incubator, introducing four new camps to the field that will be opening in summer 2014. They will attract even more families to experience the meaningful Jewish learning and engagement that camp offers.

We are proud of the outcome of the Incubator and we believe that this evaluation offers important insights for the field. We also look forward to sharing future achievements and lessons learned as the first cohort continues and the second cohort begins. These compelling and effective Jewish learning experiences—during formative years of development—help to shape Jewish journeys and ultimately create more individuals that choose to live vibrant Jewish lives.

Jeremy J. Fingerman

Chief Executive Officer
Foundation for Jewish Camp

Chip Edelsberg, Ph.D.

Executive Director
Jim Joseph Foundation



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Executive Summary

In 2008, with a \$10 million investment from the Jim Joseph Foundation, the Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC) launched the Specialty Camps Incubator (Incubator) to support the creation and development of five new Jewish specialty camps. A key purpose of establishing the new specialty camps was to attract Jewish teens who were not attending other Jewish camps.

In 2009, the Jim Joseph Foundation engaged Informing Change (formerly called BTW *informing change*) to design and implement a multi-year evaluation of the Incubator, assessing whether and how the Incubator was achieving its intended outcomes. This executive summary presents an overview of the evaluation's key findings. The full evaluation report contains more findings and more detail, as well as conclusions and lessons learned through the Incubator.



IN BRIEF: THE FJC SPECIALTY CAMPS INCUBATOR

The Incubator's five-year initiative started with a competitive application process for new specialty camps followed by provision of start-up capital and a range of supports to the five selected camps. Similar to for-profit business incubators, the Incubator utilized a cohort approach in which the camps learned together while

building innovative, high quality programs and attracting new customers. The Incubator provided six core program components to support the camps' development: workshops, mentors, customized technical assistance, networking opportunities, peer/cohort learning, and evaluation.

INCUBATOR CAMPS



92Y Passport NYC
New York, NY
(owned and operated by 92nd Street Y)



Adamah Adventures
Atlanta, GA



Eden Village Camp
Putnam Valley, NY



Ramah Outdoor Adventure
Denver, CO
(affiliated with Ramah)



URJ 6 Points Sports Academy
Greensboro, NC
(affiliated with Union for Reform Judaism)

EVALUATION APPROACH

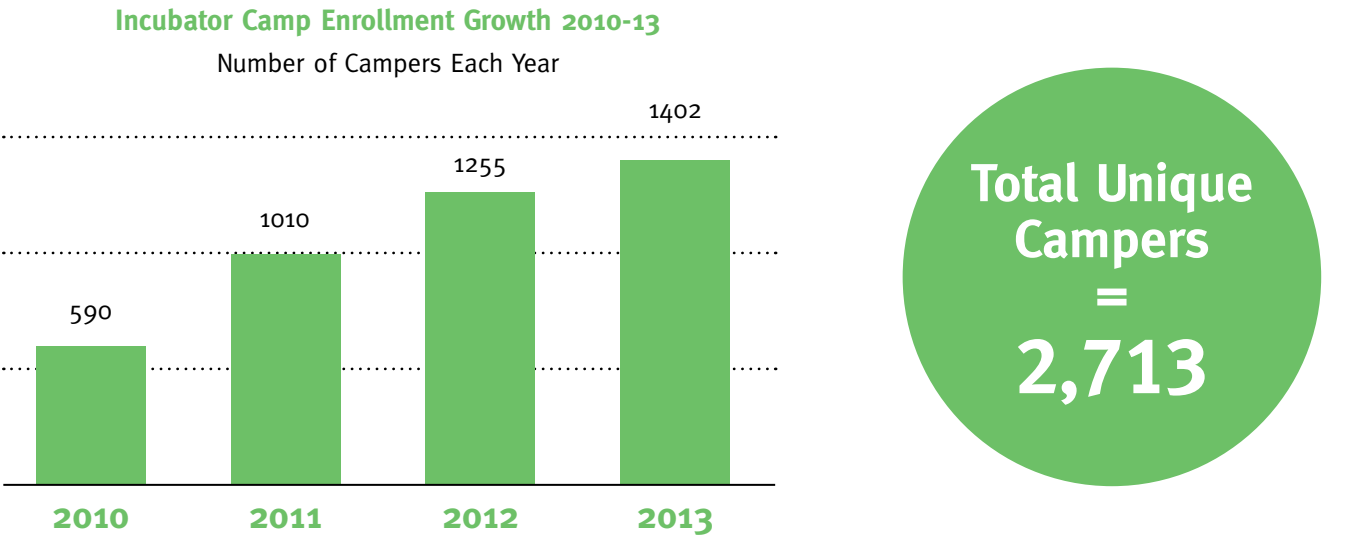
Informing Change's evaluation of the Incubator and its camps from 2009 to 2013 addressed five questions, which examined whether and how:

1. The new camps had **expanded available opportunities** for Jewish youth to attend camp
2. The new camps had **positively influenced camper attitudes and behaviors about living a Jewish life** and **broadened their networks of Jewish peers**
3. The new camps had developed into **sustainable and effective nonprofit camp organizations**
4. The **Incubator method was an effective strategy** for developing and supporting new nonprofit Jewish camps
5. The different specialty camp models **met the Jim Joseph Foundation's goals** for the Incubator

The evaluation focused on the cohort of camps as a whole and their aggregate results, rather than evaluating each camp individually. Informing Change provided annual results on camp growth and development to the individual camps as well as support to the camps when interpreting their results and comparing against the aggregate. Each year, the evaluation applied a mixed-methods approach to data collection, which included interviews, surveys, secondary data, observations and organizational capacity assessments. Evaluators surveyed campers both before and after camp; parent surveys were administered after campers had been home from camp for 9 to 11 months.

CAMPER ENROLLMENT & RETENTION

The new specialty camps successfully developed their unique brands and reputations for quality programs, which helped grow their enrollment. Data suggests that during their short time of operation, the Incubator camps also successfully created a sense of community for their campers.



Enrollment: Incubator camps served a total of 2,713 unique campers in their first four summers of operation, with enrollment growing 138% from the first summer. Despite initial concern that specialty camps might negatively impact camper enrollment in established camps, the additional bed spaces created by the Incubator camps helped to increase the overall number of youth served by residential Jewish camps.

Retention: While the rate of camper retention varies in the five camps, Incubator camps as a group are retaining more than 50% on average of their campers from year to year. This is considered a high retention rate for specialty camps. Responses from non-returning campers and their parents suggest that many campers do not return to camp because they and their families are juggling large numbers of interests and commitments, not because they had a negative experience or were dissatisfied with the camp.

Recommending Camp to Others: Parents are highly satisfied immediately after camp, and a year later 92% of parents and 81% of campers have recommended an Incubator camp to a friend. Almost one-third of campers (31%) have had a friend actually attend an Incubator camp after their recommendation. For camps, strong parent and camper endorsements have helped them establish positive reputations, and word-of-mouth recommendations boosted recruitment.



Satisfaction & Belonging: Campers say they want to return so they can be back in the camp community with the other campers and staff. 91% of campers felt like they belonged when they were at camp last summer and 92% of campers were very happy with their experiences at camp.

INCUBATOR CAMP MARKET

The Incubator camps, for the most part, found their market niches and built new but stable, satisfied customer bases. Both campers and parents were drawn by the high quality specialty programs provided in a Jewish community context.

New Campers: Incubator camps successfully attracted campers who had not been attending other Jewish camps. In the camps' first three summers, 38% of all campers were attending a Jewish camp for the very first time, a markedly higher proportion than the national averages of 26-29% in other Jewish camps over these same three years.¹ The Incubator camps also successfully attracted teens who were not likely to attend any camp, Jewish or non-Jewish.

770 campers were attending a Jewish camp for the first time

Teen Market: The Incubator camps designed programs that successfully attracted middle and high school age campers. In each of the first three summers, more than 70% of campers fell within the Incubator's target age range of 11 to 18 years old; the average age was 13 and the youngest campers were 7.

70% of all campers were middle school or high school teens

Diverse Jewish Backgrounds: The Incubator wanted to provide high quality Jewish education to campers who did not have this experience at home, and Incubator

camps have successfully attracted Jewish youth who could be considered in the low to moderate range of Jewishness.² The Incubator camps attract campers from a broader range of Jewish backgrounds than the average North American Jewish camp. The two movement-affiliated camps attract a large proportion of campers from those movements, although all Incubator camps are welcoming of all affiliations and aim to create an environment where youth from any Jewish background would feel comfortable.

Interest in the Specialties: The camp specialties have been the biggest attraction for new campers and families each year: 76% of 2012 campers said the specialty is the reason why they first chose to attend the Incubator camp and also among the top reasons why they chose to return for another summer.

¹ JData. www.jdata.com. This includes data from 88 to 119 Jewish overnight camps through the three years.

² Using camper data from surveys, evaluators calculated an aggregated Level of Jewishness score - low, moderate or high - based on camper responses to multiple survey items. The survey items and the calculation of this score are described in detail in the full evaluation report.



INFLUENCE ON CAMPERS’ LIVES

This evaluation assessed changes in campers’ Jewish attitudes, knowledge, behavior and connections as well as in their self-confidence and specialty skills. To assess longer-term change, data was collected up to a year following each camp season rather than immediately after camp ended. Furthermore, campers and parents offered large, long-term influences of camp without any prompts, followed by responses about particular types of potential changes.

Jewish & Other Changes: Overall, reports from campers and their parents suggest that the camps are helping shape youth in many ways.

- **Feeling Jewish:** The Incubator camps provide a platform for campers to explore, embrace and be excited about being Jewish. 52% of campers and 57% of parents agree or strongly agree that the camper feels more positive and enthusiastic about being Jewish because of going to camp.
- **Jewish Knowledge:** About half of the campers (46%) and their parents (50%) report that the campers know more about Judaism or being Jewish because of going to camp.
- **Jewish Connections:** Nearly half of campers and parents (46% and 48%, respectively) say that because of camp, campers feel closer to other kids their age who are Jewish. Most campers are staying in contact with people from camp.
- **Involvement in Jewish Life and Incorporating Jewish Values into their Life:** One in three campers report that they are making Jewish activities a more regular part of their lives (reported by 32% of campers and 35% of parents). A third of campers report that they are becoming more active in their synagogue and local Jewish community because of their camp experiences (reported by 33% of campers and 31% of parents). Furthermore, nearly half report that they are making decisions based on the camps’ Jewish values, which campers and their parents attribute to camp (as reported by 48% of campers and 51% of parents).
- **Improving in Specialty Skill:** The biggest direct influence of camp is improvements in campers’ specialty skills: 78% of campers and 69% of their parents agree or strongly agree that because of the Incubator camp, campers are better at the skills and activities that they did at camp. Since the specialties are the driving force in attracting campers, the camps are following through on providing high quality programs.
- **Self-Confidence:** Most campers (62%) say they are more self-confident and independent after camp. Of all the camp influences, parents give their highest rating to camp’s influence on making campers feel more confident about themselves overall (70% of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing).

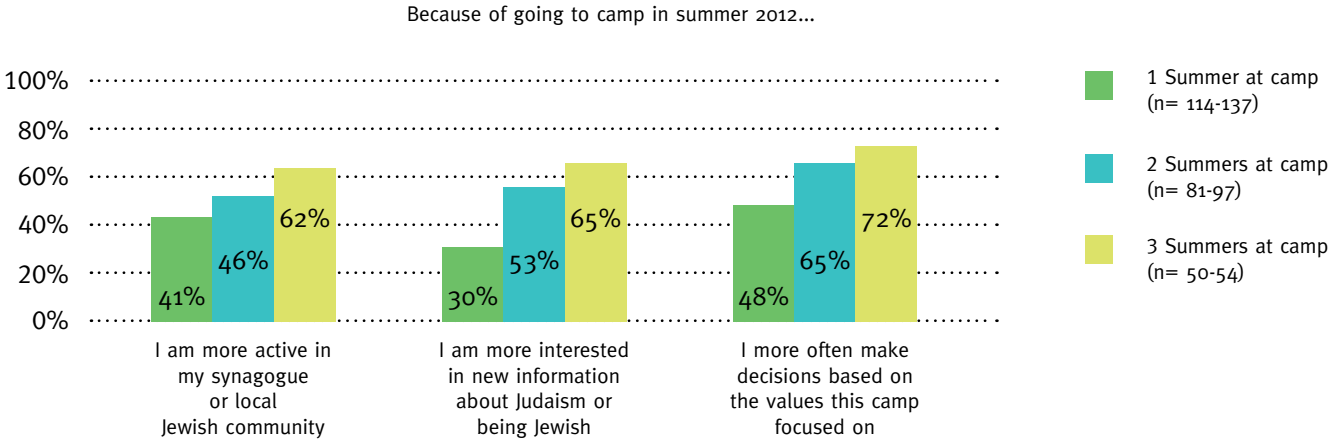


Positive Outcomes for Non-Returning Campers: The same positive camper outcomes were experienced by the campers from 2012 who did not return to camp in 2013. To just a slightly lesser degree than returning campers, they were satisfied with their summer at camp and felt like they belonged when they were with the campers and staff at camp. 86% of non-returning campers and 85% of parents of non-returning campers reported big changes in campers’ lives because of going to an Incubator camp in 2012 (vs. 92% of returning campers and 96% of parents of returning campers), and they described changes similar to those of the returning campers.

Comfortable Jewish Environment: The Incubator camps quickly created curricula and environments that foster positive Jewish outcomes. Camp staff have done this primarily by embedding Jewish education within programs that campers love, offering a Jewish environment with options, making meaning of Jewish traditions and teachings, and supporting and training seasonal staff to be strong Jewish role models for campers. Youth with diverse levels of Jewish observance are comfortable in each of the Incubator camps. Parents and camp directors say this approach to Jewish education is attractive to new camp families and helps retain campers for multiple summers.

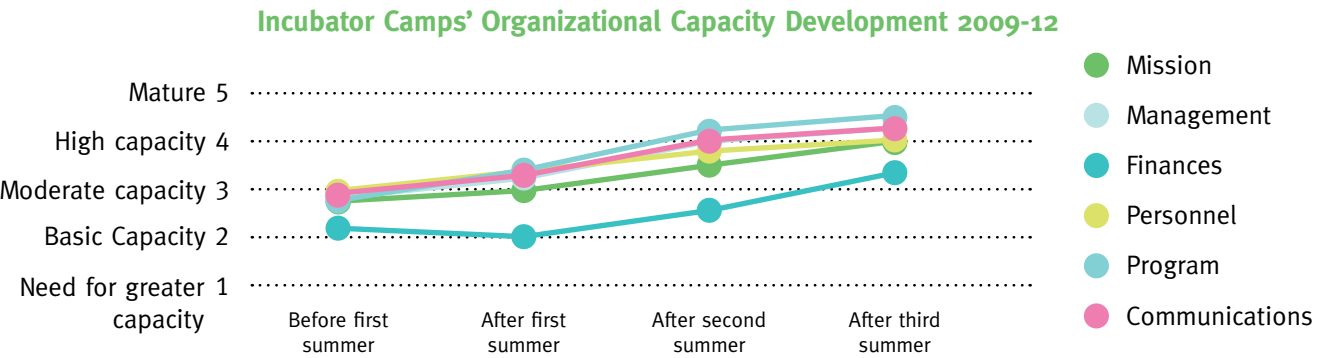
Lasting Influence of Camp: Campers who attended the most summers at an Incubator camp also report the highest levels of camp influence. This indicates the lasting influence of camp: the more summers campers attend the Incubator camps, the greater influence they and their parents notice from the camp.

Influence of Camp by Number of Summers at Camp (after attending camp summer 2012)



ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY & EFFECTIVENESS

After four and a half years, the work of the Incubator has resulted in five new Jewish specialty camps being launched, branded and guided through their start-up years. With support from the Incubator, camps have grown in size and developed organizational capacity in a wide range of areas. The five camps exhibit different rates of progress toward long-term sustainability. Three camps are demonstrating capacity development in several areas which, collectively, predicts likely sustainability into the future, while the two smaller camps have more challenges to overcome before claiming sustainability.



Incubator Supports: By being part of a structured Incubator, the fledgling camps had access to guidance and customized supports that helped them to navigate the early years and avoid common pitfalls of new businesses. The camp directors particularly valued the individualized/customized technical assistance provided by the Incubator and the support of experienced camp professionals, especially mentors and the Incubator staff. The Incubator staff offered experience, skills and a mix of coaching styles which matched the developmental needs—in both content and methodology—of the individual camp directors.

Access to Capital: Access to start-up capital was crucial to both starting the Incubator camps and planning for longer-term sustainability. Each camp was

eligible to receive start-up capital of up to \$1.16 million to cover operating deficits during the camps’ initial planning and first three years of camp operations, which allowed camp directors to concentrate on organizational components beyond fundraising.

Progress to Sustainability: As the Incubator ends, all five camps have completed the organizational start-up stage and are solidly in “organizational adolescence.” The camps have exhibited an accelerated pace of development in comparison to other new nonprofit organizations. The rate of growth in camper enrollment, the ability to benefit from economies of scale, the presence of a supporting network and the diversity of funding streams vary from camp to camp, and have affected the rates of progress to sustainability.

CONCLUSION & LESSONS LEARNED

At the conclusion of the evaluation, it is clear that the Incubator has met the goals of its funder and can offer some lessons learned that may be useful in supporting other new camps and designing new ventures.

Investment Goals Met: Overall, the Incubator has achieved the five goals set by the Jim Joseph Foundation at the beginning of this investment. The Specialty Camps Incubator has:

- ✓ Expanded camp opportunities for Jewish teens
- ✓ Created camps that are generating positive changes in campers’ attitudes, knowledge and behaviors about Jewish life
- ✓ Created camps that have broadened campers’ networks of Jewish peers
- ✓ Created several camps with high likelihood of lasting sustainability
- ✓ Modeled new approaches and captured learnings that are relevant to other camps and Jewish youth initiatives

Value of the Investment: Youth have had a total of 4,257 camper-summerers at the new Incubator camps, which tallies out to an investment of approximately \$2,349 per camper-summer to date. The summer experiences have been tailor-made to achieve the investment’s goals, and each of the 4,257 camper-summerers has exerted a positive and multi-faceted influence on the individual camper.



Lessons Learned: While the Incubator experience has yielded a number of lessons relevant to both new camps and other ventures, four camp-related lessons stand out as important overarching learnings:

- Time spent developing the mission, vision and goals of a new camp sets the foundation for all that is to follow.
- Camp directors need to be excellent sales people.
- Specialty camps can effectively deliver high quality Jewish education.
- A new camp needs to develop its board of directors simultaneously with developing the camp program and infrastructure, and not wait until after the camp is designed and operating.

The experiences of the Incubator and its five new camps have informed, and it appears inspired, the whole Jewish camp field, offering new information and insights about creating high quality Jewish camps to serve middle and high school-aged Jewish youth.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the early to mid-2000s, research estimated that only 10% of the Jewish youth population were being served by existing Jewish camps.^{1,2} There was concern that many Jewish youth were instead attending non-Jewish camps that offered more unique opportunities than a traditional Jewish camp experience.³ Developing competitive Jewish “specialty” camps that combined traditional Jewish camp values with activities such as sports, outdoor adventure and fashion became an innovative way to bring more youth into the Jewish camping world.

In 2008, with a \$10 million investment from the Jim Joseph Foundation, the Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC) launched the Specialty Camps Incubator (Incubator). The Incubator was a five-year initiative to develop five new Jewish specialty camps by providing start-up capital, technical assistance, mentoring and networking opportunities. In 2009, the Jim Joseph Foundation engaged Informing Change to design and implement a multi-year evaluation of the Incubator. This report presents key findings from the evaluation along with recommendations based on lessons learned for key stakeholders and others in the field.



THE FJC SPECIALTY CAMPS INCUBATOR

FJC believed that creating camps together in an Incubator, rather than individually, would be a significantly more efficient use of resources and the cohort approach would increase the likelihood of creating innovative, high quality programs. Through Incubator activities, new camp directors would have opportunities to learn best practices, openly discuss issues and network with other directors. They would receive guidance on all aspects of camp operations (e.g., curriculum development, marketing and recruitment) and referrals to professionals such as lawyers and accountants.

After publicizing the availability of the Incubator among FJC member camps, Jewish community organizations, Jewish media and the secular camp community, FJC

received 29 Letters of Intent (LOI) from a range of individuals and organizations to apply to be part of the Incubator. A Selection Committee that included directors of established Jewish camps, board leaders and FJC staff reviewed all of the LOIs and invited 13 to submit full proposals. The Selection Committee rated and discussed the proposals and chose nine finalists for further examination and in-person interviews.

Five camps were chosen for the Incubator. FJC selected proposed camp models that would target Jewish teens in middle and high school, particularly those who had never attended a Jewish camp or had aged out of other traditional Jewish camps. Exhibit 1 describes the key features of each camp.

Exhibit 1: Camp Features

	Location	Facility	Target Population	Specialty	Movement Affiliation/ Structural Elements
	New York City	92nd Street Y	9th–12th grade	Fashion, music industry, film, culinary arts, musical theater	Created by, and the only resident camp of, the 92nd Street Y
	Base camps near Atlanta & Seattle	14-18 day treks in the Blue Ridge Mountains, North Carolina and the Pacific Northwest	6th–12th grade	Outdoor adventure	Independently operated
	Putnam Valley, New York	Camp rented from UJA-Federation of New York jointly with Jewish Farm School	1st–11th grade	Environmental responsibility, organic farming	Independently operated
	Colorado Rocky Mountains	Ramah in the Rockies Property	3rd–12th grade	Outdoor adventure	Conservative Judaism; National Ramah Commission
	Greensboro, North Carolina	American Hebrew Academy	4th–11th grade	Sports	Union for Reform Judaism (URJ); one of 13 camps operating within the URJ

A sixth camp was also part of the Incubator for a short time. Specializing in the arts, BIMA is located on the campus of Brandeis University; its campers are selected for their artistic talents, which they further develop at camp through practice, mentoring and support from a peer community of teens seeking to merge their artistic efforts with Jewish life.⁴ At the time BIMA entered the

Incubator in 2008, it had been operating as a camp for a few seasons. With its goals, program design and operating structure already in place, BIMA gained fewer benefits from being part of Incubator workshops and the peer group of new camp directors. BIMA left the Incubator after 18 months.



EXHIBIT 2: THE CAMPS

92Y Passport NYC

New York City is the foundation of the overall experience at 92Y Passport NYC (PPNYC), a Jewish values-driven overnight summer camp located in the well-known 92nd Street Y on the city’s Upper East Side. Teens entering 9th to 12th grades choose one of five specialty areas—Film, Fashion, Culinary Arts, the Music Industry or Musical Theater—making this camp really five camps in one setting. Over a period of three weeks, the high school students receive expert guidance in their chosen specialty and travel around the city to meet professionals in that industry. For example, in the culinary program campers visit top NYC restaurants, cook with leading chefs and sample the range of flavors that make NYC a food destination. In the evenings and on weekends, the five specialty groups merge to create a camp-wide community. Through large group activities, small group activities in camp families (*mishpachot*) and a wide range of electives, the PPNYC program engages campers in the arts, personal reflections and intellectual engagement. Examples of electives include meditative walks, food tastings, visits to area synagogues and, of course, experiencing the best of NYC’s cultural attractions.

Jewish themes and values are integrated throughout the PPNYC experience and included in each specialty area. *Tikkun olam* is a key camp value, and each week the full camp participates in service-learning activities that connect the specialties to local and global issues. Campers receive community service certificates which they can use for school credit. As an intentionally pluralistic Jewish camp, PPNYC creates an atmosphere

in which participants learn about and have opportunities to practice a range of Jewish expressions. Shabbat celebration includes a choice of several worship options, and PPNYC intentionally hires staff from diverse Jewish backgrounds.

Adamah Adventures



Adamah Adventures (Adamah) was founded to challenge teenagers to increase their self-confidence, independence and sense of adventure, while building a strong Jewish community focused on environmental awareness and outdoor living. Adamah serves youth entering 6th to 12th grades; while the original program was designed for teens, in 2012 Adamah began offering shorter programs, closer to home, for younger campers.

Each Adamah adventure is a trek of 14 to 18 days that includes camping, high adventure and some travel, all with a group of 9 to 12 campers. Adamah offers six treks each summer in several locations across the United States. Treks have included hiking and caving in the Blue Ridge Mountains, rafting and kayaking in North Carolina, mountain climbing and whitewater rafting in the Pacific Northwest, and a backpacking trek with a service project for Habitat for Humanity in Oregon. On all treks, campers build a close-knit community as they learn, explore, challenge themselves and support one another.

Campers begin their experience at a base camp, learning skills and becoming a team with the others on their trek. While out on trek, Adamah campers use digital technology to support the community experience: they send other Adamah treks photos of the natural wonders they see, video messages documenting their accomplishments, and Shabbat-a-grams to wish each other Shabbat Shalom. The Jewish experience at Adamah Adventures is structured around a theme for each trek. The prepared curriculum tries to anticipate the locations and experiences which will mark each trek, but trek staff are trained to use the various settings and find unique teachable moments throughout the trek to make Jewish education unforgettable.

Eden Village Camp



Founded as a Jewish environmental overnight camp committed to sustainable living, Eden Village Camp (EVC) is perhaps best described as a set of values grounded in social responsibility and vibrant spiritual life. With an approach of “kindness is cool,” camp is an inclusive space where the community of campers and staff can care for the earth and understand how their actions are reflected in Jewish values, living and spirituality. Programs range from one to seven weeks and are offered to youth in 1st to 11th grades.

Campers build knowledge and skills through the specialty areas, such as gardening and farming, animal care, and wilderness treks. They explore sciences and the arts, both as individuals and in groups. Campers

also grow in their connection to Jewish life; EVC is an intentionally pluralistic Jewish camp and welcomes campers from a range of Jewish backgrounds. Jewish learning is integrated throughout the camp experience through the use of themes for each age group and in a dedicated time of study once a week. Jewish music is a powerful tool that EVC uses to teach its core Jewish values. The camp produced a compact disc of their music, both original and traditional, for campers to enjoy outside of camp.

Ramah Outdoor Adventure



Ramah Outdoor Adventure (ROA) is the first Ramah-inspired camping and adventure experience housed in the Rocky Mountain region. Over two or four weeks, campers—the majority of whom are in 5th to 12th grades—work on their outdoor adventure skills and increase their appreciation for nature, along with building a strong Jewish community. While grounded in the conservative, egalitarian traditions of a Ramah setting, ROA offers programs that use the powerful setting of the Rocky Mountains to inspire campers and staff to deepen their connections with Judaism and with the natural environment.

During rugged outdoor excursions known as *masaot*, campers focus on a program area of their choice; options include horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, rafting and rock climbing. At base camp, campers learn a variety of skills from highly experienced staff, from farming and campfire cooking to building wilderness shelters and preparing for a long backpacking trip. While out on *masaot*, campers practice their new skills and reflect on Jewish values and teachings from inspiring locations: mountain tops, river edges, in hay lofts or around a campfire under a midnight sky. Reflecting the Ramah camping model, ROA campers take part in and help lead daily *tefillot*. *Shabbatot* spent at base camp give campers and staff a break from rigorous adventures and provide time to build connections and share stories with friends from the different age groups.

URJ 6 Points Sports Academy



A blended Jewish and sports camp, housed at the American Hebrew Academy and operated by the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), URJ 6 Points Sports Academy (6 Points) offers athletes entering 4th to 11th grades high quality athletic instruction in a Reform Jewish setting. The two-week camp experience focuses on athletic skill development training and overall health; teamwork and sportsmanship; and Jewish values. Each day, campers receive four hours of intensive instruction

in their chosen sport major: basketball, soccer, tennis, swimming, baseball, lacrosse, cheerleading, dance, or softball. Campers also choose daily electives from options ranging from kayaking and rock climbing to flag football, music or *zumba* dance moves.

6 Points' Jewish educational program is based on six core Jewish values that align with sportsmanship: Community – *Kehilla*; Respect – *Kavod*; Courage – *Gevura*; Compassion – *Hemla*; Diligence – *Haritzut*; and Humility – *Anovah*. These values drive the design of the overall camp experience, especially the athletic program. Campers are introduced to these values during breakfast, discuss them during their sports major, and do an extension activity during their bedtime ritual. After being introduced to a value, campers can earn the “value bracelet” by exemplifying that value in their daily interactions. While 6 Points intentionally hires active Jewish athletes for their counseling staff, their coaches who are not Jewish also take part in Jewish teaching at camp. Jewish life and learning at camp includes a lively Shabbat service and campfire, and campers are offered special programs on Saturday, from worship to song sessions.



EVALUATION APPROACH

Informing Change’s evaluation of the Incubator and its camps extended from 2009 to 2013, starting first with the development of two Evaluation Frameworks—one at the Incubator level and one at the camp level—to guide the evaluation (Appendix A). The evaluation has focused on five key questions:

1. To what extent have the new Jewish specialty camps in the Incubator expanded opportunities for Jewish youth to attend camp?
2. To what extent have the Incubator camps been successful in strengthening Jewish identity and broadening campers’ networks of Jewish peers?
3. To what extent are the Incubator camps developing into sustainable and effective nonprofit camp organizations?
4. To what extent has the Incubator method been a successful strategy for developing and supporting new nonprofit Jewish camps?
5. To what extent are the five different models of the specialty camps more or less successful at meeting the Jim Joseph Foundation’s goals for the Incubator:
 - Attracting new segments of Jewish campers;
 - Strengthening campers’ knowledge and attitudes about Jewish values and living a Jewish life;
 - Building campers’ sense of belonging to a multiyear camp community;
 - Developing into sustainable and organizationally sound camps for the long term; and
 - Potentially scalable or replicable by other entrepreneurs or in other locations?

In general, this evaluation focused on the cohort of camps as a whole rather than evaluating each camp individually. Informing Change provided annual results on camp growth and development to the individual camps as well as support to the camps when interpreting their results and comparing against the aggregate. The fifth evaluation question (added in 2011) broke from the collective approach by examining each camp model against the Jim Joseph Foundation’s goals for the Incubator. Most data in this report are aggregates that represent the sum total for all Incubator camps. However, it is important to recognize that the Incubator camps have numerous differences. One of the Incubator’s successes has been its ability to work with the range of differences in the size, specialty, facilities, and legal and administrative structures of the camps. Therefore, this report also includes a few charts with camp-level data to illustrate some of these differences.



Throughout the evaluation, Informing Change applied a mixed-methods approach to data collection. The major data collection methods used were:

- **Interviews** with camp directors, camp staff, Incubator staff, Incubator mentors and Jim Joseph Foundation staff, to learn more about the camps’ successes, challenges and overall development.
- **Surveys** of campers and their parents to gather baseline and longer-term data about campers’ Jewish attitudes, knowledge and behaviors; demographics; satisfaction with camp; and the influence of camp.
- **Secondary data** from the Camper Satisfaction Insight (CSI) survey administered by Summation Research Group, Inc. for FJC at the end of camp each summer. This annual survey focuses on parents’ immediate reactions to the camp experience and initial plans for future summers.
- **Observations** of the Incubator workshops, camps and calls with camps to review their CSI results. These observations provided an insider’s perspective on camp and Incubator operations and growth.
- **Organizational capacity assessments** of each camp by camp directors, mentors and FJC Incubator staff. These semi-annual assessments helped camp directors track and communicate their organizational development needs and progress.

Appendix B provides more details on the methodology used each year and Informing Change’s analysis approach.

Chapter 2: New Camps, Satisfied Campers

After four and a half years, the work of the Incubator has resulted in five new Jewish specialty camps being launched, branded and coached through their start-up years. They are now moving toward sustainability. The new camps have, for the most part, found their market niches and built a young, but stable, satisfied customer base of campers and parents who are drawn by the high-quality specialty programs provided in a Jewish community context.



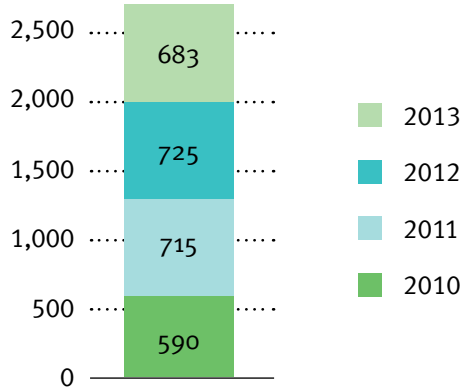
CAMPER ENROLLMENT

The five Incubator camps have **served a total of 2,713 unique campers over their four summers in operation**, with many of those campers also returning for one or more subsequent summers (Exhibit 3).⁵ From the first summer of operations, the aggregate **Incubator camp enrollment grew 138%**, from 590 campers the inaugural season to 1,402 enrolled campers in the fourth season. The high rate of growth in just four summers is a result of the intense investment of resources—time, money and expertise—made possible by Incubator services and start-up funding.

Exhibit 4 illustrates that the five specialty camps are of different sizes and have experienced different rates of growth, ranging from 47% to 178%. The Incubator had anticipated a range of enrollment and growth across the camps but not to such a great degree. Differences in Incubator camp size is affected not just by success with camper recruitment and retention but also by the design of the specialty program and the capacity of the available facilities.

In 2011, FJC CEO Jeremy Fingerman shared recent trends in Jewish camp enrollment with the Jim Joseph Foundation board. Since 2006 enrollment figures among FJC member camps had trended upward but dropped in 2009 following the economic crisis and the H1N1 epidemic. At that time, leaders in the Jewish camp community were concerned that the new specialty camps in the Incubator might negatively impact camper enrollment in established camps. However, FJC’s data proves otherwise: enrollment

Exhibit 3
New Campers Attending
Incubator Camps



bounced back starting in 2010, and the increased number of campers exceeded the number enrolled in the five Incubator camps. Thus, it was clear that the additional bed spaces created by the Incubator helped to increase the overall number of youth served by residential Jewish camps. “Look at the uptick in overall enrollment in Jewish camps,” says one FJC leader “and you’ll see that the Incubator camps did not steal market share [from the existing camps]. They found the kids who were not already going to Jewish camp.”

Exhibit 4: Incubator Camp Enrollment & Growth, 2010–13⁶

	Season 1: Total Campers 2010	Season 2: Total Campers 2011	Season 3: Total Campers 2012	Season 4: Total Campers 2013	Change 2010–13
92Y Passport NYC	88	116	134	129	47%
Adamah Adventures	43	64	93	102	137%
Eden Village Camp	133	233	295	343	158%
Ramah Outdoor Adventure	117	203	273	325	178%
URJ 6 Points Sports Academy	209	394	460	503	141%
Total	590	1,010	1,255	1,402	138%

CAMPER RETENTION

The Incubator camps have differing rates of camper retention, as well. At the beginning of summer 2013, the Incubator camps reported retention rates ranging from 20% to 77% (Exhibit 5). **On average, Incubator camps are retaining over 50% of their campers from year to year**, which is considered high for specialty camps according to camp industry professionals interviewed by evaluators.

Exhibit 5: Incubator Camper Retention, 2010–13⁷

	% of 2010 Campers Who Returned in 2011	% of 2011 Campers Who Returned in 2012	% of 2012 Campers Who Returned in 2013
Camp A	55%	64%	77%
Camp B	55%	67%	66%
Camp C	60%	53%	52%
Camp D	42%	33%	52%
Camp E	8%	12%	20%
Overall % Across the Five Incubator Camps	49%	52%	57%

NEW CAMP COMMUNITIES

"I went to [another camp] for four years, and I never really felt like I fit in with the people there. Coming to this camp has really changed me as a person. I felt like THESE were the people I belonged with. The staff was incredible, and the overall experience has left me with a better understanding of who I am as a person and as a performer."
– Camper

During their short time of operation, the **Incubator camps have successfully created a sense of community for their campers**. Campers say they want to return so they can be back in the camp community with the other campers and staff. In the spring following the 2012 camp season, **91% of campers said they felt like they belonged when they were at camp last summer**.⁸

Immediately after the 2012 camp season, 78% of parents reported that the relationships between their child(ren), fellow campers and staff created a sense of belonging that was “excellent.”⁹ As a comparison, 78% of parents from other North American Jewish camps also gave “excellent” ratings to their camps.



OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH CAMP

"Our son went to Jewish day school, so he was fairly Jewishly knowledgeable, but this was perhaps his first time having FUN in a Jewish context!"
- Parent

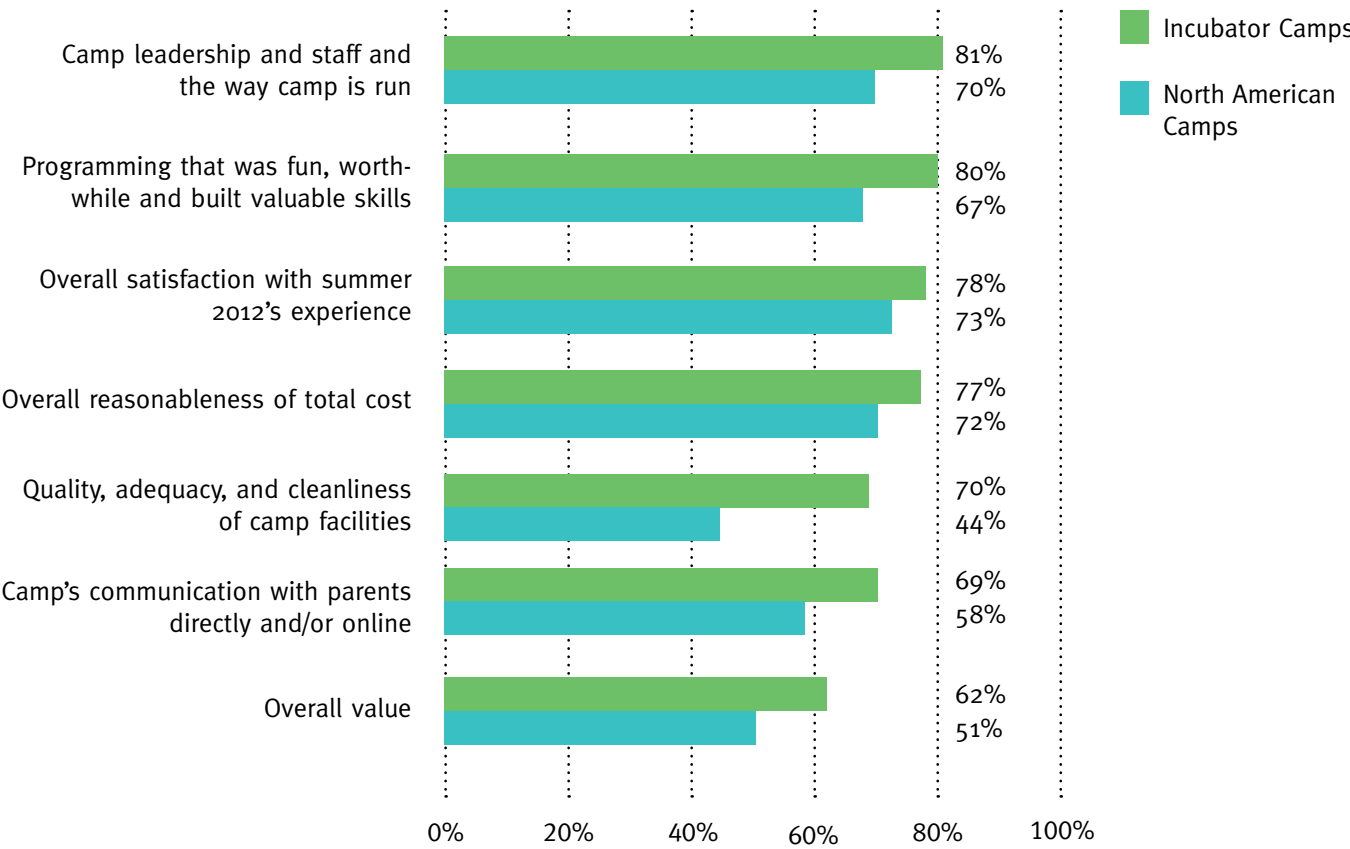
In the spring following the 2012 camp season, **92% of campers¹⁰ were very happy with their experiences at camp last summer.** This is similar to results after the 2010 and 2011 camp seasons, reflecting a consistent approach by Incubator camps to providing high-quality experiences. The top reason cited by most campers who returned to camp about their decision to do so was how much they enjoyed camp the previous summer.

Parents were also highly satisfied immediately after camp and a year later. Right after the 2012 camp season, parents rated their overall satisfaction with the summer's experience as "excellent," as well as the camp's facilities, culture and environment (Exhibit 6). These ratings were similar to those by parents of campers at other North American Jewish camps, suggesting that after only three years of operation, the Incubator camps were on par with other camps in

providing high-quality Jewish camp experiences. In 2012 surveys immediately following camp, parents rated the quality of Incubator staff and camp leadership as "excellent" (Exhibit 6) more frequently than parents of campers at North American Jewish camps overall.

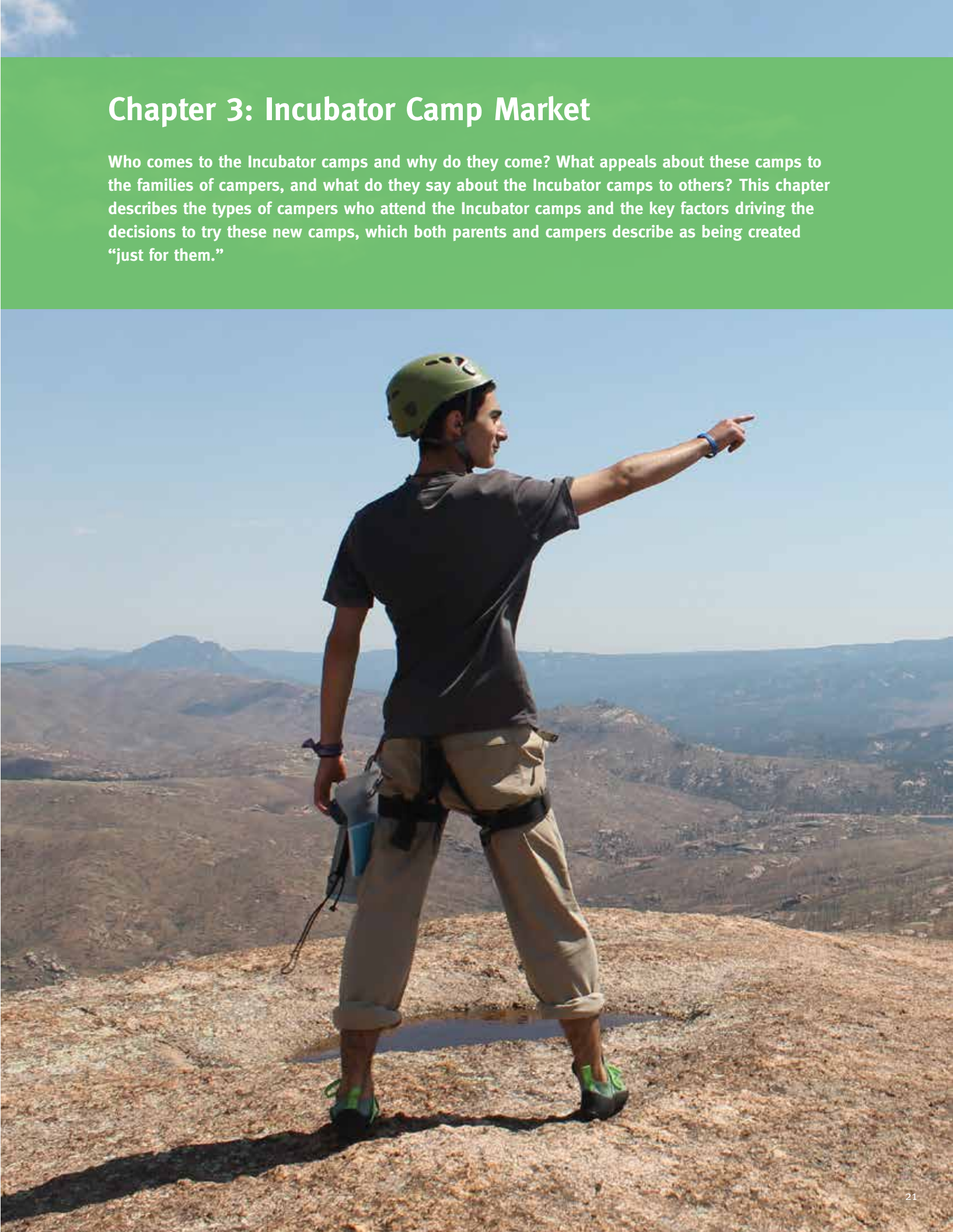
The majority of parents were also satisfied with the reasonableness of what it cost to send their children to the Incubator camps and the overall value (i.e., the cost in relation to the overall experience). Their satisfaction ratings were a little higher than the average at other North American Jewish camps (Exhibit 6). This is noteworthy, knowing that specialty camps may have higher fees than traditional Jewish camps. Families seemed willing to pay the fees, at least for one summer. For families not sure if their children would return to an Incubator camp in summer 2013, the cost of camp was the most frequently cited reason for their uncertainty.

Exhibit 6: Percentage of Parents Providing "Excellent" Ratings



Chapter 3: Incubator Camp Market

Who comes to the Incubator camps and why do they come? What appeals about these camps to the families of campers, and what do they say about the Incubator camps to others? This chapter describes the types of campers who attend the Incubator camps and the key factors driving the decisions to try these new camps, which both parents and campers describe as being created "just for them."



WHO COMES TO THE INCUBATOR CAMPS

"It was the first overnight camp or Jewish camp that he was interested in. [He had never been to a Jewish camp before], but he had not wanted to go before either. Then he saw the [Web site] link to this camp, took a look at it and said 'I want to go.' "

- Parent

The Incubator camps not only got campers to come—they got the specific target markets that the Incubator and funders felt would best add to the overall Jewish camping landscape. Specifically, this includes Jewish youth not being well served by existing camps:

- Youth who had never attended a Jewish camp
- Youth who had attended non-Jewish camps, particularly non-Jewish specialty camps
- Middle school and high school age youth

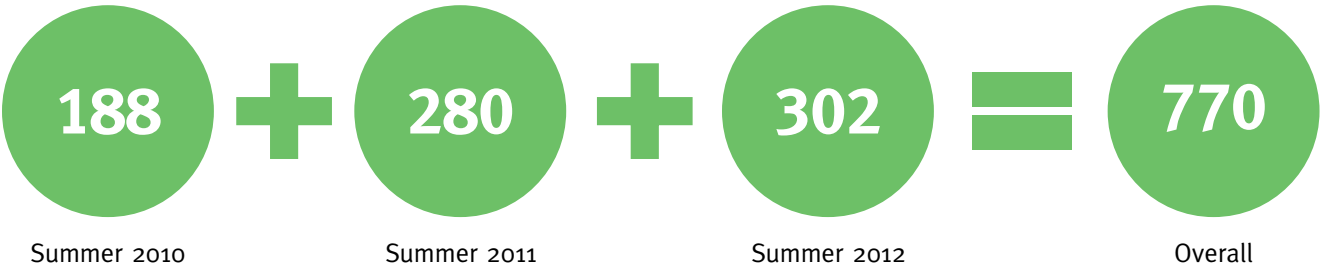
New to Jewish Camp

One of the key purposes of establishing the new specialty camps was to attract Jewish youth who had not been attending other Jewish camps. Over their first three summers, Incubator camps successfully attracted 770 campers who were attending a Jewish camp for the very first time (Exhibit 7). This represents 38% of all

campers across the three summers, which is markedly higher than the national averages of 26%–29% for Jewish camps over these three years.¹¹

The Incubator camps also successfully attracted youth who were not likely to attend any camp, let alone another Jewish camp. Reflecting on their family's plans for the 2012 camp season, 22% of Incubator camp parents were not planning to send their kids to any other camp, Jewish or non-Jewish. Only 27% of parents reported their children would have attended another Jewish overnight camp if they had not attended an Incubator camp; 25% were not sure what their plans would have been.¹² The Incubator camps are providing Jewish camp experiences and memories to hundreds of Jewish youth who had never and may never have had them.

Exhibit 7: Campers Attending Jewish Camp for the First Time



Middle School & High School Teens

Another key purpose of the Incubator was to reach the very challenging teen market. Previous studies of the Jewish camping landscape found that high school teens (age 14 and older) tend to fall out of the camping market.^{13,14} One study compared this trend with the pattern of declining engagement in Jewish life post *b’nai mitzvah* age. Teens age out of camps either because the camps no longer serve their age range or teens find the programming and environment too young for them. High school teens also have competing summer interests with work and college preparation.

The Incubator camps, however, were designed specifically for this age; they tailored the programming and atmosphere of camp to fit the interests of teens. In each of their first three summers, **over 70% of campers fell within the Incubator’s target age range of 11 to 18 years old**; the average age was 13 and the youngest campers were 7.¹⁵ All of the Incubator camps initially focused on this older age range; however three of the five camps have since expanded into the elementary grades. This approach gives them the potential to develop long-term campers, helping to create a strong camp community and sense of belonging among campers.

Diverse Jewish Backgrounds

The Incubator camps attract campers from a range of different Jewish backgrounds and with different levels of Jewish engagement at home. Parents commented positively about this, saying how it benefits their children by introducing them to the full spectrum of Jewish life beyond what they may encounter at home. Of the 2012 campers, 90% indicated that their families are “Jewish” and 10% said that “some of us are Jewish and some aren’t.”¹⁶ This reflects other studies of Jewish camp which also have camper data showing relatively few children from interfaith families attend camp.¹⁷

In terms of Jewish denominational affiliation, most parents of 2012 campers reported that their families are either Conservative (38%) or Reform (35%), but the camps also attract families identifying as Orthodox (4%), Reconstructionist (5%), Just Jewish (4%), Culturally Jewish (2%) and Secular Jewish (1%).¹⁸

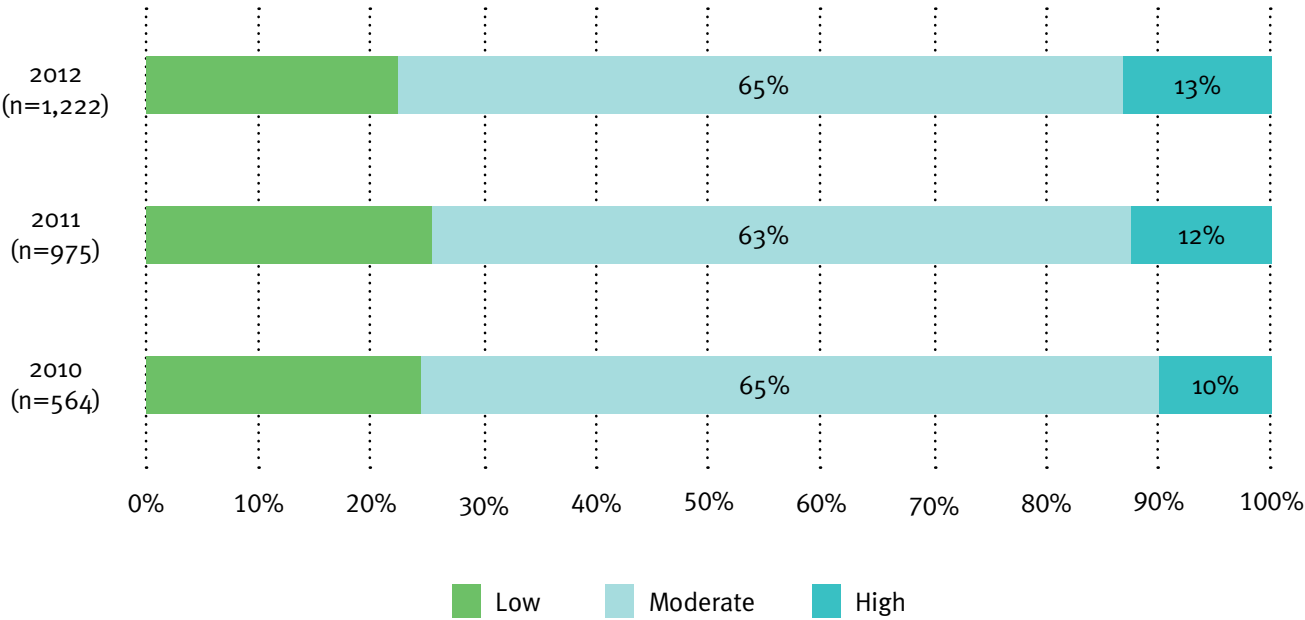
It is not surprising that the two movement-affiliated camps attract a significantly large proportion of campers from those movements (more than 70% of all campers in both cases). However, all Incubator camps—movement-affiliated and independent—are welcoming of all youth and strive to create an environment where youth from any Jewish background would feel comfortable. On the

whole, the Incubator has been successful by creating new bed spaces for all Jewish youth.

Regarding campers’ Jewish engagement outside of camp (i.e., their “Jewishness”), the Incubator camps attract youth with different levels of Jewishness and provide programming and Jewish experiences that meet campers at their unique levels. About two-thirds of Incubator campers fall in the “moderate” level of Jewishness, with a smaller proportion in the “low” level and the fewest in the “high” level (Exhibit 8). Appendix B provides details about how evaluators defined and calculated camper Jewishness.

The Incubator wanted to provide high-quality Jewish education to campers who did not have this experience at home. Previous studies of Jewish camps found most campers come from families that are highly engaged in Jewish life.¹⁹ The Incubator camps, in comparison, have successfully attracted Jewish youth who could be considered in the low to moderate range of Jewishness. Many parents of campers with high levels of Jewishness were also satisfied, saying the Incubator camps’ programs helped their children to maintain (and sometimes even expand) their Jewish involvement and connections while living away from home.

Exhibit 8: Camper Level of Jewishness



CAMPERS WITH LOW LEVELS OF JEWISHNESS...	CAMPERS WITH MODERATE LEVELS OF JEWISHNESS...	CAMPERS WITH HIGH LEVELS OF JEWISHNESS...
• have mostly non-Jewish friends • participate in a Jewish youth group once or twice a year • attend services at their synagogue or temple a few times a year • attend a Jewish educational program once a week or informally • rarely participate in online Jewish communities	• have some Jewish friends • participate in a couple youth groups a few times a year • attend services at their synagogue or temple at least monthly • attend a Jewish educational program a couple days a week • sometimes participate in online Jewish communities	• have mostly Jewish friends • participate in several youth groups monthly • attend services at their synagogue or temple weekly • attend a Jewish educational program several days a week • frequently participate in online Jewish communities

WHY CAMPERS GO TO CAMP

"My son had gone to adventure camps before and that's kind of what I was looking for. I [thought] 'Maybe there's a Jewish adventure trip.' I never even thought it existed, and then I searched for it and up came Adamah."
 – Parent

Interest in the Specialties

The camp specialties have been the biggest attraction to new families each year: **76% of 2012 campers²⁰ said the specialty is the reason why they first attended the Incubator camp**, which is similar to data from previous summers. The specialty is also among the top reasons why campers say they chose to return (68% of 2012 returning campers²¹). Parents also cite the specialty as the leading reason why their child returned to camp (88% of 2012 returning campers' parents²²). The camps offer opportunities for Jewish youth that are rare to find at other camps, particularly other Jewish camps.

Many of these campers who were new to Jewish camp had been attending non-Jewish specialty camps. In 2012, **71% of Incubator campers who were attending a Jewish camp for the first time had previously attended a camp with a theme or specialty**. The Incubator camps are now successfully providing families with a specialty option interwoven with Jewish elements.



Interest in Trying Something New

Parents commented in their interviews that they and their children are also attracted by the “new-ness” of the Incubator camps. These camps have been smaller than many other Jewish camps and did not have existing “cliques” that children would have to deal with. These features made it easier for youth who had not previously attended a Jewish camp to feel comfortable entering a new camp. For campers who had attended other Jewish camps, the Incubator camps sounded like more fun than their old camp (45% of 2010 campers).

It is important to note that, by definition, the Incubator camps become less “new” with each passing year, and their camp cultures and communities continue to grow. This creates an interesting paradox of offering a welcoming camp that embraces new faces while developing a tight-knit culture in which campers feel as though it is their home. To date, the Incubator camps have successfully navigated this situation.

Recommendations from Other Families

Camps are quickly establishing positive reputations and using word-of-mouth recommendations from campers and their parents to boost recruitment. Following their children's experience in summer 2012, **92% of parents said they have recommended the camp to a friend.²³** This is a very strong endorsement from parents. In addition, it is slightly higher than other North American Jewish camps, for which 81% of parents say their likelihood to recommend the camp to family members, members of their congregation or other friends is “excellent.”²⁴ Campers are also telling their friends about camp—**81% of 2012 campers have recommended the Incubator camp to a friend,²⁵ and 31% have had a friend actually go to the camp after their recommendation.²⁶**

Chapter 4: Influence on Campers' Lives

How do the Incubator camps influence campers' lives Jewishly and non-Jewishly? What do the campers ultimately gain from the camp experience? Providing campers with both an immediately gratifying experience and one that has a lasting effect is an important aim of the Incubator camps. This chapter describes the key outcomes reported by campers and parents, and how they continue to affect the campers' daily lives. The data presented are from campers from the 2012 camp season, but the results are very similar for campers in the 2010 and 2011 camp seasons as well.



BIG CHANGES IN CAMPERS' LIVES

Campers and their parents have noticed big changes in campers' lives as a result of going to the Incubator camps.²⁷ Close to a year following the 2012 camp season, **the majority of campers (68%) and parents (80%) say they have noticed a big change in campers' lives** (Exhibit 9).²⁸ Most campers commented on positive Jewish-related changes in their lives, such as having more Jewish friends, feeling more comfortable being Jewish and engaging in more Jewish activities. Their parents also noticed these changes along with emotional changes, such as increased self-confidence and independence. These findings are all consistent with trends following the 2010 and 2011 camp seasons.



Exhibit 9: Did Something Big Change in Campers' Lives Because of Going to an Incubator Camp?



68% of campers say camp has positively changed them

- 57% report stronger Jewish attitudes and behaviors and more Jewish connections (e.g., friends, participation in organizations)
- 41% report increases in self-confidence and self-esteem
- 39% report improvements in skills in the camp's specialty area



80% of parents say camp has positively changed their children

- 52% report stronger Jewish attitudes and behaviors and more Jewish connections (e.g., friends, participation in organizations)
- 52% report increases in self-confidence and self-esteem
- 31% report improvements in skills in the camp's specialty area

EVALUATION NOTE

For this evaluation, Informing Change surveyed campers and their parents to gather information about longer-term outcomes from the Incubator camps. Following the 2010 and 2011 camp seasons, parents of returning campers completed surveys in May, 9 to 11 months after their children returned from an Incubator camp. Returning campers completed surveys between June and August, prior to being influenced by another summer at an Incubator camp. Following the 2012 camp season, all campers—whether they were returning or not—and their parents were surveyed in March and April 2013, 7 to 10 months after their camp experiences.

By surveying campers and parents nearly a year after camp, the evaluation captures lasting impressions of

camp, not just immediate reactions in the weeks after campers return home. Immediately following camp, campers and their families tend to focus on either the really great aspects of camp if they liked it or the really negative aspects if they did not. They have not yet seen the lasting influences of camp once the camper settles back into his or her “regular” life.

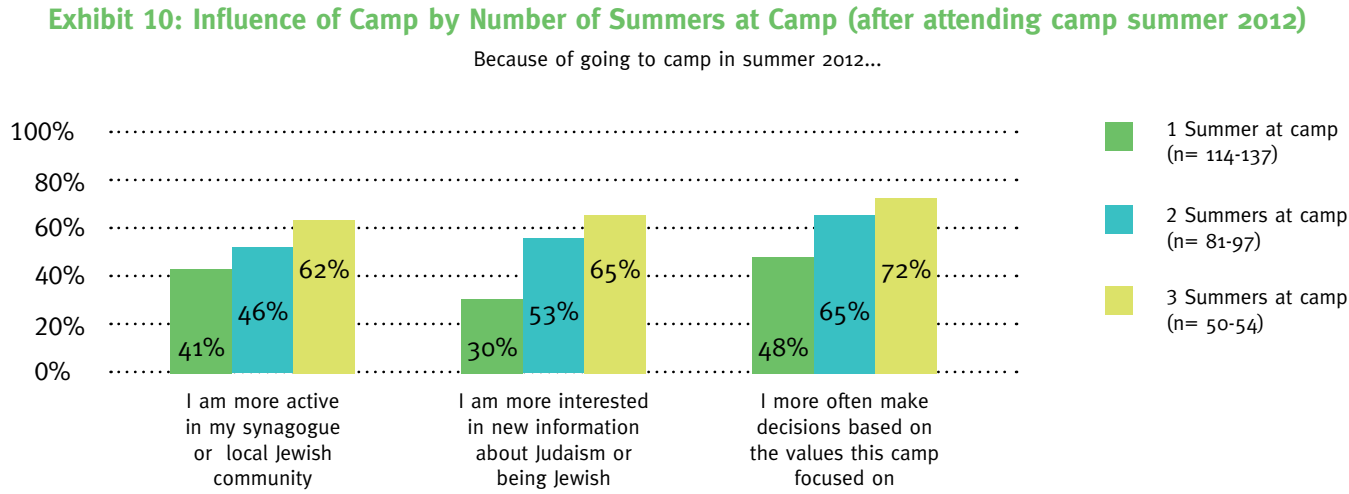
This longer-term data is complemented by the data in the CSI survey, collected by the Summation Research Group, Inc., each autumn shortly after campers return home. The CSI survey is also administered to other North American Jewish camps, providing a comparison group.



CUMULATIVE INFLUENCE OF SPECIFIC TYPES OF CHANGES

In addition to asking about the one big change in campers' lives, the evaluation asked campers and their parents about 10 specific, possible changes and how much a change was due to going to camp. These are aligned with the key camper outcome areas identified by the Incubator. In general, campers and their parents agreed that campers had positively changed in each of these ways and that it was because of their experiences at camp. Parents tended to give slightly higher ratings than campers. It is interesting to note that for the campers, there were no differences in results based on gender or age and no consistent trend in differences by level of Jewishness. The results that follow represent the ratings for the 2012 camp season but mirror trends in the 2010 and 2011 camp seasons. This similarity across years suggests that the camps are helping shape youth Jewishly and non-Jewishly.

Campers who attended an Incubator camp for three summers (i.e., they attended in 2010, 2011 and 2012) report the highest levels of camp influence for all 10 items (Exhibit 10 provides data for three of the items), followed by those who attended for two summers (i.e., they attended in 2011 and 2012) and then one summer (i.e., they attended in 2012). The more summers campers attended the Incubator camps, the greater the influence they and their parents notice of the camp. This highlights the importance of retaining campers for multiple summers because Incubator camps are having greater effects the longer campers attend.



INFLUENCE ON JEWISH ASPECTS OF CAMPERS' LIVES

"Before camp I didn't really care at all about Judaism. After camp all I ever wanted to be is Jewish. I've met friends that are like sisters to me... It's the place where I want to be most of the time. It not only changed me physically, but also spiritually."

- Camper

Of the ten specific camper changes examined in this evaluation, seven are Jewish-related changes (Exhibit 11), covering feelings about being Jewish; Jewish knowledge and interest in learning more about Judaism; relationship with other Jewish youth; involvement in Jewish activities and organizations; and incorporation of Jewish values in decision making.

Becoming More Comfortable About Being Jewish

The Incubator camps provide a platform for campers to explore, embrace and be excited about being Jewish. Because of going to camp in 2012, **52% of campers and 57% of parents agree or strongly agree that the camper feels more positive and enthusiastic about being Jewish.**²⁹

knowledge that campers encounter (e.g., day school, synagogue), the Incubator camps are increasing campers' Jewish knowledge. They are also increasing campers' interest in learning more about Judaism (38% of campers and 39% for parents).³¹

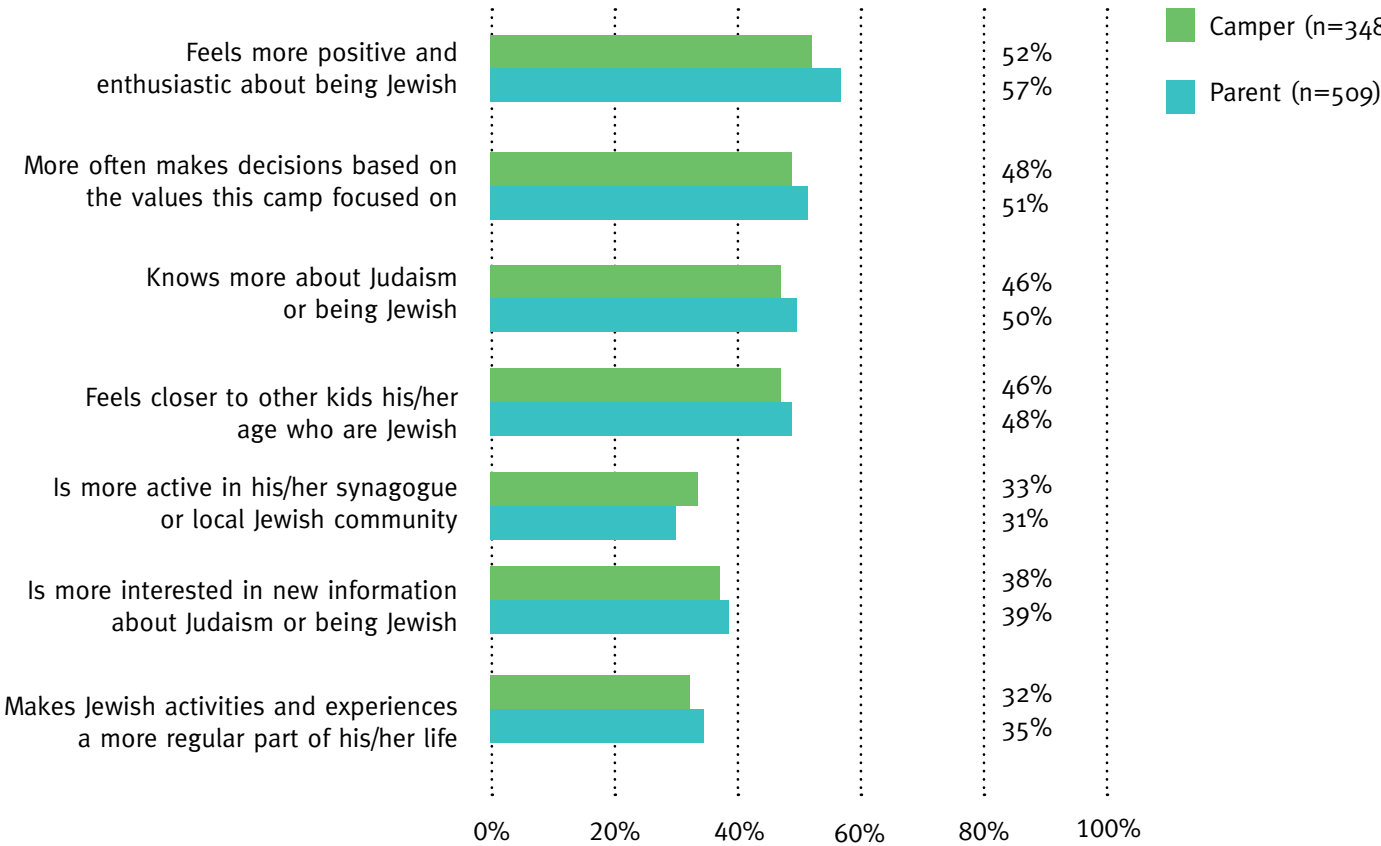
Learning about Judaism

About half of the campers (46%) and their parents (50%) report that the campers know more about Judaism or being Jewish because of going to camp in 2012.³⁰ This says that even with all of the other sources for Jewish

Making Jewish Friends

Two top reasons why campers come to an Incubator camp are to make new friends and meet other Jewish kids their age. **Campers and parents report that this is happening, with nearly half (46% of campers and 48% of parents) saying that campers feel closer to other kids their age who are Jewish because of camp.**³²

Exhibit 11: Because of Going to Camp in Summer 2012, Camper...



The Incubator camps are also supporting youth in building strong friendships that last beyond the camp season. Most campers are actively maintaining connections with people from camp. Of the 2012 campers, **87% report they have stayed in contact with people from camp** either through electronic methods (e.g., Skype, Facebook, e-mail, phone) or in-person meetings (e.g., reunions, sleepovers, spending time with people who live in their area).³³ There is a slight gender difference, with 96% of girls reporting they have maintained a connection versus 85% of boys. The camp directors have also noticed how girls tend to stay in touch with each other more outside of camp than boys, especially at middle school age. One director notes that the friendships between boys pick right back up when they return to camp as though there had been no break from the prior summer, while the girls seem to need a few days to intentionally reconnect and reestablish their friendships.

Integrating Judaism into Everyday Life

Arguably, the hardest outcome area for the Incubator camps is increasing the extent to which campers integrate Judaism into their everyday lives. Camps can teach about Judaism and provide opportunities to make Jewish friends, but it is harder for the camps to influence a camper to then go home and incorporate more Jewish-based decisions and activities into his or her life. To do that, campers must leave camp feeling a deeper connection to their Judaism and a strong commitment to keep it a central component of their lives.

Despite these obstacles, **one in three campers report that they are making Jewish activities a more regular part of their life** (reported by 32% of campers and 35% of parents).³⁴ Also, **a third of campers report that they are becoming more active in their**

INFLUENCE ON OTHER ASPECTS OF CAMPERS’ LIVES

While parents and campers most frequently described Jewish-related changes as the big changes in campers’ lives due to camp, when asked about particular types of possible changes three non-Jewish items received the highest ratings as lasting effects on campers:

- Improvement in skills and activities done at camp
- Interest in learning or trying new skills or activities in the future
- More overall confidence

Camper and parent ratings suggest that **the biggest direct influence of camp is improvements in camper specialty skills**. Reflecting on the 2012 camp season, 78% of campers and 69% of their parents agree or strongly agree that because of the Incubator camp, campers are better at the skills and activities that they



synagogue and local Jewish community because of their camp experiences (reported by 33% of campers and 31% of parents).³⁵ **Furthermore, nearly half report that they are making decisions based on the camps’ Jewish values**, which campers and their parents (48% and 51%, respectively) attribute to attending an Incubator camp in summer 2012.³⁶

did at camp.³⁷ In addition, 74% of campers and 66% of parents agree or strongly agree that, because of camp, campers are more interested in trying or learning new skills or activities in the future.³⁸ Since the specialties are the driving force in attracting campers, the camps are following through on providing high-quality programs.

Campers are markedly more self-confident and independent after camp. Overnight camps provide many youth with one of their first sleep-away experiences, one in which they become more independent and have more opportunities to explore their individuality. Parents rate camp’s influence the highest on making campers feel more confident about themselves overall (70% of parents and 62% of campers agree or strongly agree).³⁹



2012 CAMPERS NOT RETURNING IN SUMMER 2013

“He loved [camp] and had absolute fun. He had a wonderful time and recommended it to his friends. The decision not to go back has nothing to do with the camp. He decided that he would like to work for the summer.”
– Parent

The evaluation’s spring 2013 survey responses included campers and parents from summer 2012 who are not returning to camp in 2013. Of the survey responses, 26% of campers were not returning to camp in 2013 (7% were not sure yet) and 23% of parents reported their child was not returning to camp (6% were not sure yet). The campers who were not returning tended to be older (15 years old) than the campers planning to return (13 years old).

When asked why they were not returning, 48% of campers said they wanted to try something new or different (also selected by 27% of parents) and 24% that they would be working instead (selected by 20% of parents). Only 11% of campers and 9% of parents said it was because they did not have fun in 2012. Parents also mentioned a variety of other summer commitments as the reason why their children were not returning such as summer school, family vacations, Maccabi games and commitments to their sports teams. For parents who were undecided if their children would be returning, the highest reason was the cost of camp. In follow-up interviews with parents, many of these same points were mentioned again. **Overall, their children generally enjoyed their time at camp, but other factors went into the decision not to return.**

While these responses do not reflect all families who chose not to return to the camps, they do suggest that the decision to return is less due to negative experiences or dissatisfaction with the camp. Rather, it seems more likely due to the large number of interests and commitments of today’s youth, particularly for the middle to high school age range these camps target.

This is further supported by the trends of non-returner responses about their satisfaction with camp and how it influenced them. While their results are slightly lower than the returning campers, they are still very high, reflecting very positive reactions to their camp.

92% of non-returning campers were happy with their experiences at camp last summer (98% for returning campers)

90% of non-returning campers felt like they belonged when they were with the campers and staff at camp in 2012 (96% for returning campers)

86% of non-returning campers and 85% of parents of non-returning campers report that there have been big changes in campers lives because of going to an Incubator camp in 2012 (92% of returning campers and 96% of parents of returning campers). The types of changes described for non-returning campers follow trends similar to those of returning campers.

Chapter 5: Organizational Capacity & Effectiveness

"It was the Jewish and the sports [that made us choose the camp], because without the sports I don't know that he would have been as comfortable."
- Parent

How did the Incubator camps arrive so quickly at being able to deliver high-quality programs and achieve strong camper outcomes? What helped to launch them on a faster path to sustainability than most nonprofit start-ups? For the Incubator to be truly effective, it needed to be able to support the development of new specialty camps that would be sustainable into the future—to serve more and more youth over time. This chapter describes how the camps moved forward—in program development and infrastructure development, keeping an eye on sustainability—and how Incubator services supported their growth.

CAMP DEVELOPMENT: PROGRAM

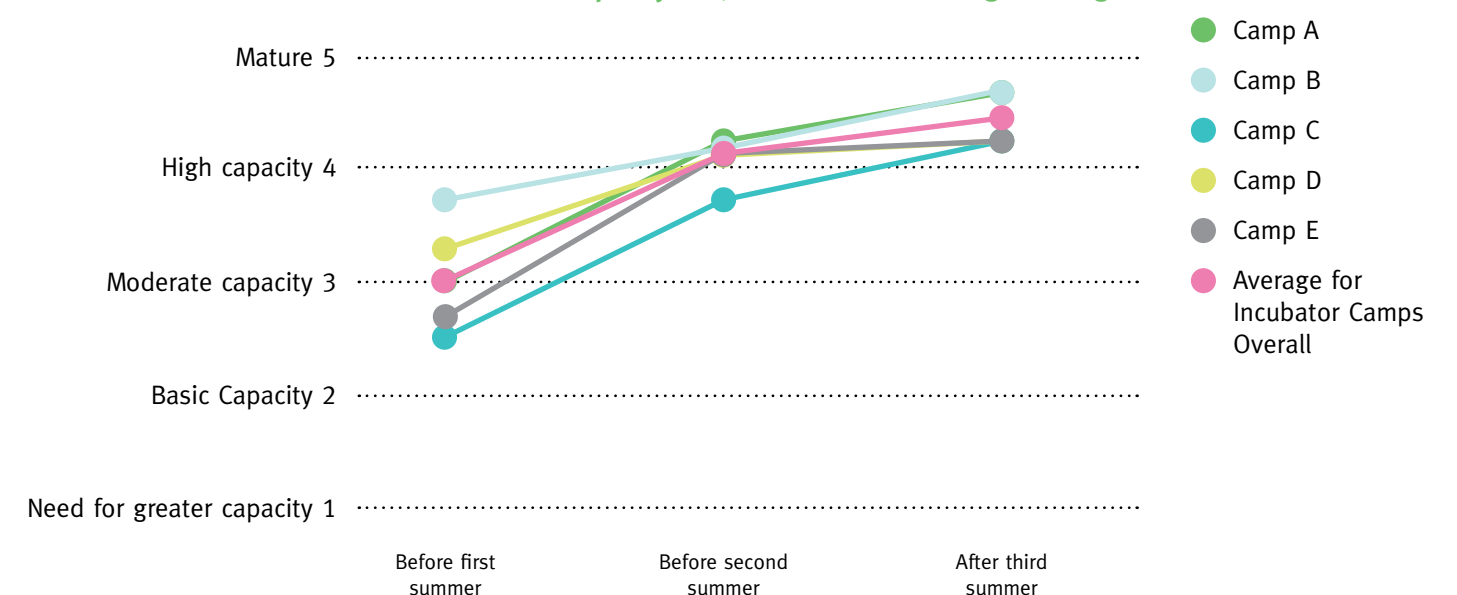
"She wanted some very specific items from camp, and she's not the type to sleep in the woods. So, literally, I just got on my iPad and Googled 'Jew theater urban camp' and I found Passport! 'Wow,' I said."
- Parent

The high quality specialty programs are the key component of the Incubator camps' enrollment growth. The specialties opened the doors to and secured the initial participation of new campers. Camps created specialty programs that were interesting, exciting and matched what campers and their parents wanted. Camp promotional materials, directed to the audience of teens more so than to their parents, made it clear that the camp was designed around the specialty and that campers would spend lots of time engaged in those activities. Parent and camper data about why they decided to first attend an Incubator camp confirms that the specialty is a major driver of first-year camper enrollment.

A second program factor has played a significant role in the Incubator camps' success: **integration of Jewish experiential education** in a wide array of camp

programming, frequently unstructured and informal, rather than in formal lessons or workshops.⁴⁰ The Incubator curriculum was a strong support for this, helping the camps select key Jewish values that meshed with their specialties and overall camp vision and determining how those values could manifest in their campers, both immediately and in the youths' future. With guidance from Incubator consultants and staff, the camps designed their programs with an eye on these values and desired outcomes. In subsequent years the directors and the camp staff regularly paid attention to whether or not the desired outcomes and key Jewish values were present in their camp. As illustrated in Exhibit 12, all of the Incubator camps strengthened their capacity around Jewish educational programming over time to reach the current high levels.

Exhibit 12: Capacity for Jewish Education Programming





"I think it opened her eyes that she can be Jewish and still be herself, whatever that means. I don't think she knows yet what 'herself' is going to be, but whatever it turns out to be, camp let her know that there are many different kinds of Jews and you can be committed and active and still be who you are."

- Parent

The Incubator camps spent time and resources on developing high quality Jewish environments in which teens with diverse levels of observance can be comfortable, interested and actively explore what it means to be Jewish. This has attracted new campers and has helped retain campers for multiple summers. The Incubator camps are achieving this formative environment through the following program components:

- **Embedding Jewish education within the programs that campers love**, including general camp (e.g. singing, games, meals and bunk times) as well as the specialties. This creates a learning environment in which campers can comfortably advance in their Judaic knowledge and understanding of what makes a Jewish life. Camp directors report that the embedded approach appeals to less observant families, who seem to be more comfortable with this rather than structured lessons.
- **Offering a Jewish environment with options**, thus giving campers opportunities to choose among ways to do things Jewishly, for example by offering a choice of ways to spend Shabbat or welcoming many approaches to prayer during Morning

Circle. Campers saw and heard about the many ways to be Jewish, usually through conversations among campers and staff, but sometimes through presentations and guest speakers.

- **Making meaning** of Jewish traditions and teachings. Incubator camps work at getting to the "why" behind a Jewish ritual or teaching in an age-appropriate way and having conversations about this that resonate with a teen's life today. Camp directors and parents both identify this as what creates the special Jewish environment at camp that fosters a camper's individual Jewish development.
- **Hiring staff who are strong Jewish role models** and training them in the camp's approach to Jewish education. Camp directors recruit staff who can deliver "embedded" Jewish education and talk with campers about their own Jewish journeys. Directors train their staff to be comfortable invoking Jewish values in a natural, easy way during daily camp activities and answer camper questions about how to live a Jewish life.

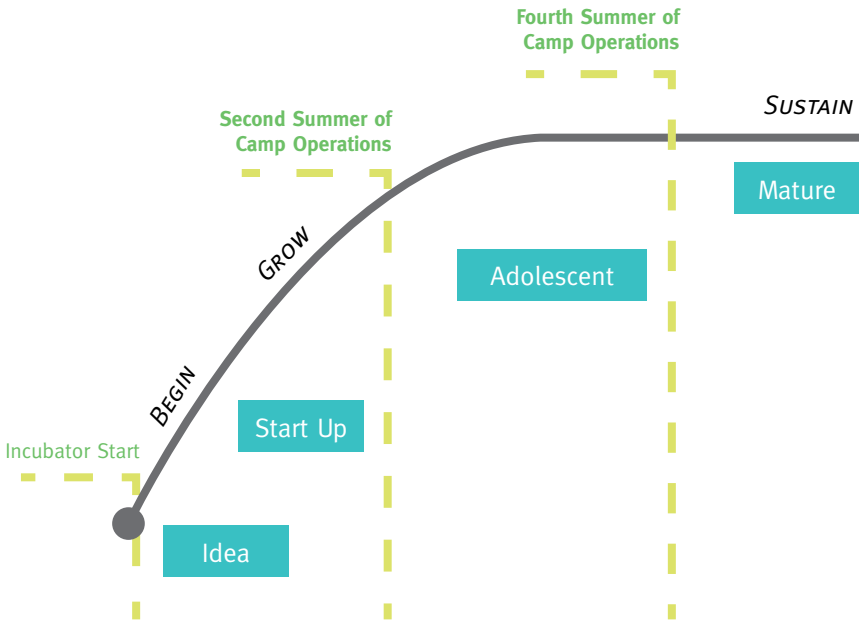
CAMP DEVELOPMENT: INFRASTRUCTURE & ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The Incubator was designed to launch camps that would be sustainable for the long term. The Incubator's role was to guide the new camps from the idea stage, through planning and start-up operations, into a period of stable growth. The expectation was that as the camps left the Incubator, they would be well on their way to maturing into lasting organizations that would serve many Jewish families and campers for years to come.

As the Incubator ends, all five camps have completed the organizational start-up stage. They are solidly in what some organizational development experts term

"organizational adolescence" (Exhibit 13). The three larger camps are quickly moving beyond adolescence, showing a pattern of improved balance sheets and fundraising results as well as continuing enrollment growth, all of which predict sustainability into the future. The two smaller camps, with lower enrollment and lower retention rates, have been slower in reducing their operating deficits. Fundraising and board development have been less successful in these two camps, in part because of the absence of a staff team to support the camp director throughout the year.

Exhibit 13: Camps' Organizational Capacity Development



The Incubator camps and their year-round operations, only four and a half years old, exhibit an accelerated pace of development when compared to other new nonprofit organizations. Bikkurim, an incubator for Jewish nonprofit start-ups, states that in most cases it takes approximately seven years for a new nonprofit organization to emerge from start-up into adolescence.⁴¹ No longer a start-up, but not yet an adult organization prepared for the long term, an adolescent organization has:

- Pilot tested its organizational ideas
- Documented outcomes

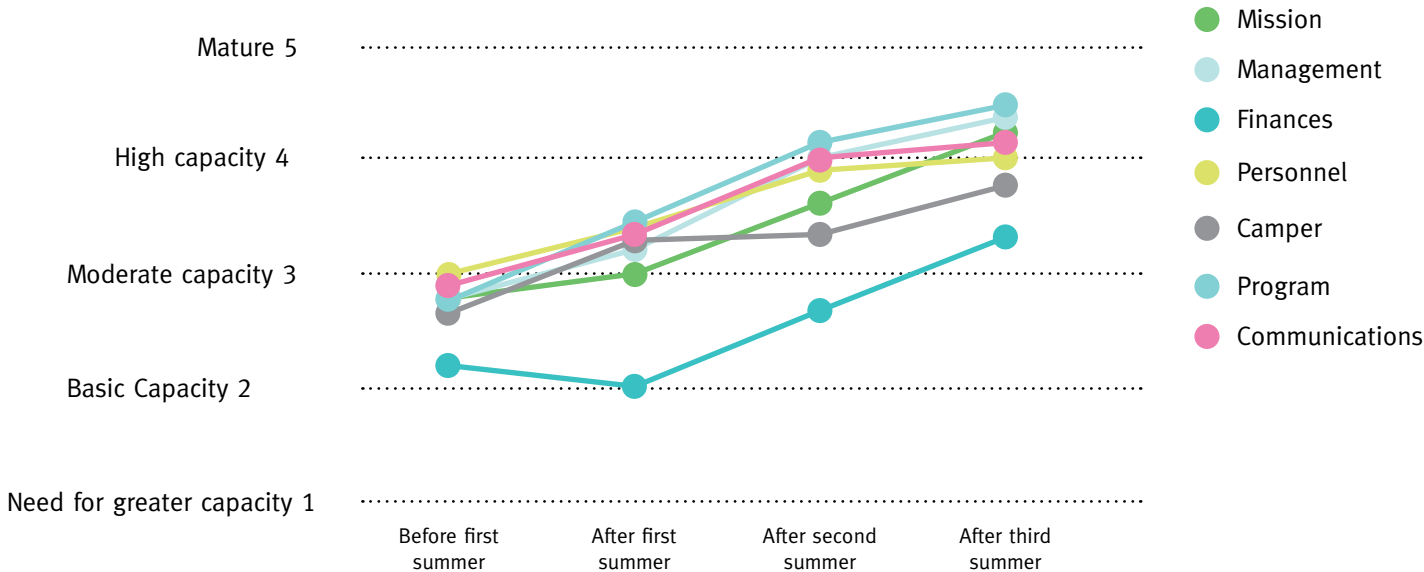
- Developed a written plan for growth
- Established a track record of funding
- Engaged a set of people in defined roles
- Formed a board
- Written a set of policies
- Defined its business model

The comparatively accelerated pace of development among Incubator camps is due to the intensive support and start-up funding that the Incubator made available to the camps and the camp directors.

Incubator camps worked systematically to develop infrastructure required for effective nonprofit organizations. This process was aided by regular review and documentation of progress across the full range of competencies needed by a successful nonprofit organization. The camp organizations and their mentors tracked organizational progress through semi-

annual organizational capacity assessments using an assessment tool designed specifically for the Incubator camps. More details about the organizational capacity assessment process are in Appendix C. Exhibit 14 is an overview of the pace of capacity development in different organizational areas.

Exhibit 14: Incubator Camps’ Organizational Capacity Development 2009–12



By the fall of 2012, all camps received ratings of “high capacity” in 11 of the 26 organizational capacity areas that evaluators tracked. The following 11 areas are the common “high capacity” areas across the five camps (in order of aggregate scores):

1. Mission Focus
2. Legal Structure
3. General Camp Program
4. Specialty Program
5. Jewish Experimental Education
6. Staff Training
7. Program Improvement
8. Customer Service & Communications
9. Performance Management–Camp Season
10. Management Systems & Practices Year Round
11. Information Systems

Six of these areas are program-related. This is not surprising, given the skills and prior experience of the Incubator camp directors and assistant camp directors. This pattern may not repeat in future Incubators or with other new, start-up camps if founding camp directors

and leadership teams bring different skill sets to the start-up phase.

In comparison to the rate of development in camp program, **Incubator camps were much slower to develop their boards and build their fund development capacity.** In the organizational capacity assessments, board development and fund development capacity ratings began at a low point and remained lower than ratings in any other capacity area.

Facilities development began to present challenges to most of the Incubator camps by their third summer. Because average enrollment increased 138% since the first summer, facilities-related challenges are not surprising. The only camp that has not had to address outgrowing available space is the travel and trekking specialty camp that sets up short-term (three to six day) temporary base camps each summer at rented locations. Examples of facility-related challenges that Incubator camps have addressed or are still addressing include:

- Constructing temporary facilities (e.g., canvas dining tent) to be able to serve the growing number of campers.

- Facing facility limitations for the most popular specialties (i.e., soccer fields, basketball courts, professional kitchen used for culinary classes), which means that campers wanting some specialties are turned away while spaces in other specialties remain empty.
- Lacking indoor, multi-purpose space large enough to accommodate the full camp—an issue in rainy or cold weather.
- Reaching capacity of available dorm rooms in the residence halls on the camp site.

The five Incubator camps are progressing toward long-term sustainability at different rates. Multiple factors are affecting each camp’s development and no one factor influences all of them the same. However, four factors stand out as having had the greatest influence in affecting camps’ rates of progress to sustainability:

1. **Rate of growth in camper enrollment.** Increasing revenue from camper fees is critical for reaching the break-even point for all camps. Incubator camps with an average census of 80 or more campers per week are reducing their budget deficits more quickly than camps with a lower average weekly census.
2. **A supporting network.** The larger and more developed Incubator camps regularly benefitted from being in active networks of organizational allies and supporters, and their camp directors credit these networks with helping build enrollment. Networks amplify the camp messages to potential customers and supporters, which helps with both immediate needs (e.g., camper recruitment, donor solicitation) and longer term positioning (e.g., ongoing visibility, options for potential partnerships, multiplicity of connections).
3. **Diversity of funding streams.** To different degrees, camps are expanding their funding streams beyond summer camper fees, including raising scholarship funding from donors and foundations and offering fee-for-service programs throughout the year. The diversity of income sources as well as the amounts raised varies greatly across the five Incubator camps.
4. **Specialty program’s ability to benefit from economies of scale.** Increasing the number of campers in a specialty group or unit (within the safe camper: staff ratio) should reduce the per-camper program costs enough to create financial flexibility and allow additional program or administrative support. The designs of some specialty programs are better able to accomplish this than others.

The capacity to measure outcomes, which researchers consistently find to be important to nonprofit sustainability, is also in place at the camps. The Incubator ensured that the new camps would develop this capacity right from their first camp season, through participation in the FJC-sponsored CSI end-of-summer

parent satisfaction survey and through Informing Change’s ongoing evaluation of the Incubator project. Through both types of data collection and analysis, Incubator camp directors built their understanding of which types of data are most useful for their purposes and how to collect them. Further, Incubator staff and the evaluation team members helped each camp director understand the findings from annual surveys and apply the information to program improvements and camp communications.





INCUBATOR ROLE IN CAMP DEVELOPMENT

"If you really want to start these camps, you need to want to go on a journey with them, flagging obstacles that they themselves aren't going to see and ensuring you have a team of people to help them solve problems as they come up. If the Incubator wants to make successful organizations, that seems to be its core function."

- Incubator Staff, 2010

The Incubator approach as formulated and delivered by FJC has been a successful strategy for developing and supporting new nonprofit Jewish camps. As originally envisioned by FJC, the Incubator strategy would “capture the untapped market of Jewish children who do not currently choose traditional Jewish summer camp but appear to be attracted to non-sectarian options in the specialty summer program arena. With the creation of new Jewish specialty camps, FJC will capitalize on the growing interest of teens in developing specific skills (be they academic, artistic or athletic), integrating Jewish learning, encountering compelling Jewish role models, and building vibrant Jewish friendships.”⁴²

Although the Incubator was in many ways an experiment, FJC was determined to identify new camp concepts with a high likelihood of success, coupled with the leadership of experienced entrepreneurs. The pool of applicants for the Incubator included many bright, talented, hard-working Jewish educators with visions of how to make Jewish camp meaningful to teens, but fewer experienced entrepreneurs than FJC had expected. Despite this initial setback, FJC found five applicants with the kinds of concepts and leadership it was seeking.

In hindsight, it is easy to see that a large part of the Incubator success is because Incubator leaders selected applicants who (1) proposed specialties that appealed to the target market and (2) had emerging leaders as

directors with talent, personal vision, drive and passion appropriate for Jewish camp, and a willingness to learn what they did not know. To address the lack of business experience and entrepreneurial *chutzpah* in the group, the Incubator brought in a strong team of experienced private camp owners to serve as mentors to the new directors, and augment the many years of experience already present in the Incubator staff and trainers.

The Incubator design included six important components that prepared the camp directors for the entrepreneurial work of opening a new camp: workshops, mentors, customized technical assistance, peer/cohort learning, networking and evaluation/reflection. See Exhibit 15 for details.

The various components of the Incubator were combined in differing proportions each year. Workshops were more prevalent in the early years; individual consultations became more valuable as the camps’ individual features emerged and strengthened. Similarly, directors appreciated different Incubator components to different degrees as they were acquiring knowledge and skill. For example, in the early years, the directors drew heavily from the timelines, sample materials, examples and anecdotes provided by the mentors and Incubator staff; in later years, they appreciated the peer support and peer learning with the directors of the other Incubator camps.

Exhibit 15: Program Components of the Specialty Camp Incubator

Workshops	The Incubator presented four to six workshops each year, ranging from three to five days in length, which camp directors were required to attend. At workshops, the camp directors received information, met with experts, spent time with their mentors and other consultants, visited camps, and worked as a cohort to explore and reflect on each camp's successes and challenges. Through the workshops, directors honed their camps’ mission and goals, marketing messages, Jewish education approach and staff training. In the early years the directors sometimes resisted the amount of time required by the workshops, but as the Incubator closed, in hindsight, they expressed deep appreciation for the content and format of the workshops as well as Incubator staff's flexibility in adjusting content to match the needs of the camps and the directors as they evolved and grew.
Customized TA	In addition to help from mentors and Incubator staff, the camp directors had access to other consultants with specialized knowledge of Jewish camp and the camp industry. The support from these consultants, as well as specific help from the mentors, was especially important after the first summer as the directors became more aware of re-negotiating leases, reducing food costs, structuring summer staff for growing enrollment, strengthening Jewish education, training in budgeting and dealing with camper behavior issues.
Networking Opportunities	As part of their annual requirements, Incubator camp directors attended a regional conference of the American Camp Association (which features training and resources about camp program, leadership, facilities and administration); FJC's Leaders Assembly (a convening of Jewish camp leaders); and the Grinspoon Institute for Jewish Philanthropy's camp conference (fundraising training tailored for Jewish camps). This aspect of the Incubator has built the Incubator directors' sense of comfort within the Jewish camp industry and given them access to a broad range of experienced camp professionals.
Mentors	The Incubator assembled a team of six experienced camp professionals to serve as mentors to the new directors; four were veteran camp directors who had started one or more of their own private Jewish camps. The wealth of experience in this group was a key support for the fledgling directors. At first, each mentor had an assigned camp to work with, but after two years the Incubator adjusted their responsibilities to work as needed with all camps, thus making a greater range of expertise available to all the Incubator camps. Directors say they value the mentors' advice because it is framed by an understanding of their camp's business model, the context of the camp's operations and the current issues affecting the broader camp industry. Mentors also understood the talents of each individual director as well as their gaps as novices in this position.
Peer/Cohort Learning	The directors attributed more value to this aspect of the program after several years in the Incubator. Despite the differences in their camps, they gained knowledge and insight by hearing other directors discuss their challenges and solutions. Directors consider their cohort to be broader than just the other new directors; they include the Incubator staff and mentors and other camps’ assistant directors, thus reflecting their sense that they were part of a larger community of supporters and co-learners.
Evaluation & Reflection	Incubator camps actively participated in the evaluation by Informing Change, which examined camper outcomes, camp development progress and the Incubator approach overall, as well as the annual CSI survey conducted by Summation Research Group, Inc. By the close of the second summer, directors understood the value of evaluation data collected by CSI and Informing Change and appreciated this support provided by the Incubator. Directors are using evaluation findings to improve program, raise funds and market their camps to parents. As the Incubator closes, it is unclear how each Incubator camp will continue to collect, analyze and use camper outcome and market data.

Overall, across the years of the Incubator, the camp directors consistently named three supports as most valuable: (1) the availability of individualized/customized technical assistance; (2) the opportunity to learn from experienced camp directors, in particular the mentors but also the Incubator staff and workshop speakers; and (3) the way the Incubator guided them to anticipate and plan for the near future as their camps were just starting.

1. Customized technical assistance prevented Incubator camps from faltering due to their own internal weaknesses. The Incubator had productive interplay between workshops and technical assistance: workshops built general understanding of camp program and business aspects of camp, and one-on-one technical assistance provided deeper

program and business help as well as specific problem solving. As the camps developed, their need for specific expertise increased, requiring more customized technical assistance.

2. Many having never led a camp and being unfamiliar with the annual cycle of managing camp, the new directors deeply appreciated the opportunity to regularly spend time with experienced camp professionals who could alert them to what was likely to happen, and how they should plan to spend their time in the upcoming months. In the fast moving start-up years, this guidance helped the new directors stay focused on the most important next actions and avoid costly pitfalls. The camp directors often recall the importance of the Incubator’s mantra

of “get the kids” in the spring months prior to their camp’s first summer, without which they would not have pushed themselves to aggressively market camp and improve their skills in closing sales.

- 3. Annual benchmarks, unique to each camp’s situation, were set by the Incubator and regularly tracked.** The Incubator gave camps annual benchmarks for camper enrollment and board development, and in later years added benchmarks for fundraising and deficit reductions. These benchmarks helped camp directors, mentors and Incubator staff stay focused on priority goals, and make efficient use of Incubator workshops and consultations. The benchmarks and the accompanying technical assistance also helped camp directors to build their understanding of their leadership roles in the camp organization and transition from thinking of their responsibilities as those of a camp director (seasonal), to the broader responsibilities of a year-round executive director.

Through its group convenings, the Incubator conveyed standards and expectations around organizational and program development. Workshops kept directors conscious of the Incubator’s definitions and quality standards of Jewish camp and prompted the camps to regularly examine and strive to improve the full range of their camp programming. For example, camps continued to examine and improve their process of Jewish education (e.g., embedded versus surface, staff as Jewish role models). Camp directors took to heart the Incubator’s concept of intentional program progression, or “aspirational arcs,” as a structure for camper development and multi-year participation. Directors now use the concept in assessing and designing their program.

Operating Capital

Access to start-up capital was crucial to both starting the Incubator camps and planning for longer-term sustainability. Each camp was eligible to receive start-up capital of up to \$1.16 million; the funding allowed camp directors to concentrate on other components rather than fundraising. This funding was not issued as up front grants, but was made available to cover operating deficits during the camps’ initial planning and first three years of camp operations. The camps’ operating deficits ranged from highs of \$350,000–\$400,000 in the first year of operations, to lows of \$75,000–\$100,000 in the final year of the Incubator. Camps requested and received these funds from FJC on a quarterly basis.

Originally, the Incubator camps were under the impression that they would lose any start-up funding that was not used during the five years of the Incubator, which encouraged some camp directors to spend money quickly in the early years and delay thinking about long-term sustainability. After the first 24 months, the Incubator changed the guidelines on accessing and using

the start-up funds: it announced that funds for which the camp was eligible, but did not use during the Incubator years, could be “banked” to be issued as grants after the Incubator ended. This revised approach encouraged camps to develop financial plans with a longer-term horizon, to use the Jim Joseph Foundation’s funding more strategically, to look for cost savings and earned income, and to start fundraising more aggressively. At the close of the Incubator, there were unused funds still available to every Incubator camp, which could be accessed over two years within guidelines set by the Incubator. Camps are using these funds for camper scholarships, internal capacity building and technical assistance.

All of the camp directors and the experienced camp professionals serving as mentors and consultants say clearly that the level of success of these new camps—their program development, their enrollment growth in just four seasons, their organizational capacity—could not have occurred without the start-up capital made available by the Jim Joseph Foundation.

The Incubator Staff

A large part of the success of the Incubator is due to the experience, skills and particular alchemy of the Incubator staff. The three individuals serving as the key Incubator staff have a combined set of knowledge, skills and interpersonal styles that were a match to the developmental needs—in both content and methodology—of the individual camp directors. The different personalities and styles of the staff have been helpful in handling the ups and downs of new entrepreneurs who themselves have very different personalities. From first-hand experience with new and established camps, the Incubator team has knowledge and skills in:

- Camp operations, through owning and operating Jewish camps
- Financial management
- Marketing and communications
- Camp leadership and problem solving, including turn-around work with failing camps
- Youth development and young adult (staff) development
- Nonprofit management

Working in partnership with the mentors, the Incubator staff found a balance between stretching the camp directors beyond their comfort zones and keeping them focused and feeling supported. Directors say the Incubator staff built their confidence as entrepreneurs, yet also kept them aware of what they did not know.

Chapter 6: Conclusion & Lessons Learned

“[In 2009] we were still convincing the Jewish camp marketplace that there was a place for specialty camps. It wasn’t just about competition. People just didn’t see how a specialty camp would be a Jewish camp ... Now [my organization] is thinking about another specialty camp, and it’s only because the Incubator is proving that specialty camps do have a place in the Jewish camp marketplace.”

– Camp field leader





MEETING THE JIM JOSEPH FOUNDATION’S GOALS

As the Incubator ends, the results of FJC’s Incubator approach and the continuing vigor of the new camps demonstrate that this investment has met the five goals set by the Jim Joseph Foundation when it launched this initiative.

- ✓ **Expanded camp opportunities for Jewish teens:** The Jewish camp field is now better able to serve Jewish teens with offerings at the Incubator camps that are appealing to them. Over 2,700 individual campers have attended one or more sessions at an Incubator camp. The camp models are successfully attracting new and “lapsed” campers who otherwise would not have attended Jewish camp, including many who have aged out of the camps they attended when younger. All models have a noticeable number of campers attending Jewish camp for the first time, and a majority of campers at all camps are in the intended target age range of 11 to 18.
- ✓ **Positive changes in attitudes, knowledge and behaviors related to Jewish life:** Data from campers and their parents indicate that the camp experience has a positive influence on campers’ attitudes and knowledge about Judaism and being Jewish, despite different approaches and activities in each camp model. Anecdotal data from campers and parents, as well as unprompted survey comments, offer very powerful examples of changed camper behaviors attesting to increased comfort, interest and appreciation of Jewish life and Judaic teachings. Parents and campers directly attribute these changes to the camp experience.
- ✓ **Broader camper networks of Jewish peers:** Across all camp models, campers report they have more Jewish friends because of camp and they continue to stay connected to some camp friends after the summer ends. Medium to high proportions of returning

campers say that their feelings of connection to other campers and staff motivated their decision to return to camp for another session. Among older campers, many are extending their Jewish connections in their synagogue and local communities because of camp.

- ✓ **Sustainable camps:** It is highly likely that hundreds of campers a year will continue to be served by these Incubator camps in the years ahead. All five have made progress to financial stability to some degree, but some more so than others. Growth in enrollment improves a camp’s financial stability, but larger size by itself does not mean sustainability. Fundraising, partnerships and year-round fee-for-service programs have been developed to varying degrees to replace the Incubator’s start-up funding.
- ✓ **Lessons to share with other camps:** There are elements from the Incubator camps that can be replicated in other camps, particularly the approaches to Jewish experiential education. “We have seen some definite models [of Jewish education] emerge, and approaches to how to work with Jewish life and Jewish education in camp settings. Being able to articulate those models is a gift of the Incubator,” observed the Incubator’s Jewish education consultant. Much of the knowledge gained through the Incubator continues to reside within the Incubator leaders, mentors and camp directors, who share their insights and lessons learned in numerous settings. They are applying these learnings in the Incubator’s second cohort of four new specialty camps, made possible with generous support from the Jim Joseph Foundation and the AVI CHAI Foundation. However, it would be worthwhile to consider how to codify this knowledge and disseminate it at the field level and in a more intentional manner.

Exhibit 16 documents the relative strengths and weaknesses exhibited by each camp model in the Jim Joseph Foundation’s five goal areas. It is apparent that each model is able to achieve the desired market outcomes and camper outcomes. As for the goal of sustainability, three of the models are closer to that

goal than the other two, for a number of reasons. No one model on its own can be exactly replicated at a different location, nor launched in the same way if under the leadership of a director with different talents; rather, there are lessons to be learned and program elements to be emulated from all.

Exhibit 16: Camp Model Progress Toward the Jim Joseph Foundation’s Goals

Stars indicate the benchmarks reached by each camp: ★=low ★★=medium ★★★=high

	Camp A	Camp B	Camp C	Camp D	Camp E
Market Outcomes					
Attracting new segments of Jewish campers (4 indicators)	★★★★★	★★★☆☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Camper Outcomes					
Strengthening the Jewish identity of campers (4 indicators)	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Building campers’ sense of belonging to a multi-year camp community (4 indicators)	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★☆☆
Financial Outcomes					
Demonstrating short-term financial stability and long-term economic sustainability (3 indicators)	★★★☆☆	★★★☆☆	★★★☆☆	★★★☆☆	★★★☆☆
Potential for Adaptation					
Shows potential for replication in other locations and/or with different leaders (4 indicators)	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★

VALUE OF THE INVESTMENT

As of summer 2013, the Jim Joseph Foundation’s \$10 million investment in the Incubator and its camps has resulted in five new camps, thousands of camper experiences, strong camper outcomes and changes in the broader Jewish camp field.



Youth have had a total of 4,257 camper-summer at the new Incubator camps, which tallies out to an investment of approximately \$2,349 per camper-summer to date. The summer experiences have been tailor-made to achieve the investment’s goals, and each of the 4,257 camper-summer has exerted a positive and multi-faceted influence on the individual camper. It is difficult to identify a useful benchmark against which to assess the appropriateness of this level of investment, given how unique this investment is in the world of Jewish camp. At the same time it is important to note that with each additional summer, the overall investment per camper-summer will decrease, thus increasing the Jim Joseph Foundation’s overall return on its investment.

Opportunities for additional camper experiences and outcomes like these will continue for years, possibly decades, because of the creation of these five new

camps birthed out of a vision of serving teens in unique Jewish environments, created to meet the interests and developmental needs of teens. It is highly likely that three of the five new camps—the larger ones—will return increasing numbers of camper-summer for many years; the two smaller Incubator camps have more challenges to overcome before claiming sustainability.

In addition, the Incubator and its successful camps have changed the field of Jewish camp by opening new perspectives on Jewish education at camp and marketing to teen campers. Lessons learned from the Incubator experience, as well as the closely monitored and evaluated development of the five new camps, are being shared and applied in other camp development and Jewish education efforts. These learnings are an important part of the added value of this investment.

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT NEW CAMPS

In the reflections of Incubator leaders, mentors and camp directors about what has been learned about incubating new Jewish camps, four overarching lessons stand out:

- **Time spent developing the mission, vision and goals of a new camp sets the foundation for all that is to follow.** Camp directors considered the exercises and strategy refinements required by the Incubator as “homework” rather than useful work for their camp’s development. However, the clarity of vision and values, mission and goals later gave camp leaders the ability to tell a powerful narrative about their camp; they could effectively talk about the “why” as well as the “what” in their camp philosophy and program. Their stories about camp became powerful tools for recruiting campers and staff, fundraising, training staff teams and planning program.
- **Camp directors need to be excellent sales people.** They had to sell camp and enroll campers, or their camps would fail before they even opened. For the Incubator directors—who had more

program experience than business experience—this message came as a shock. Before the camps opened, the Incubator helped the directors develop their marketing skills and perfect a narrative that expressed the essence of their camp and how and why it was different from any other camp. Incubator benchmarks motivated the directors to market more aggressively, pushing directors to find exciting and innovative ways to spread the word about their camps, including social media and the Internet. They learned to “sell” their camp experience to families by understanding the child, the family environment and the level of interest in the camp’s “Jewishness.” Enrollment grew because directors became excellent story tellers about their camps, able to make people envision what kids would do and feel the excitement.

- **A new camp’s board of directors needs to develop simultaneously with the camp program and infrastructure,** and not wait until after the camp is designed and operating. One reason for an early start is the time it takes to develop a board. The nature

of a board (e.g., group agreements, time intervals between decision points) means that its incremental growth will be at a slower pace than program development and other aspects of organizational capacity. A second reason is to allow a new board to grow as a group in understanding and embracing the camp’s vision and mission, which, in the case of experienced boards, new members receive as a legacy from their predecessors. New camps emerging from start-up need boards to review plans and vet new ideas, help assess risks, and serve as counsel and back-up for the director.

- **Specialty camps can deliver a high-quality Jewish program.** In 2008, as FJC staff and board sought applicants for the Incubator, they needed to actively encourage interest in specialty camps. There was

LESSONS FOR OTHER VENTURES

Additionally, the Incubator experience provides some lessons and considerations for future investments in new camps and Jewish education programs.

- **Investing time in identifying key Jewish values helps clear the path to greater program impact on participants.** All Jewish camps have some degree of impact, but these camps had greater impact thanks to the advance work they did identifying key Jewish values that coordinated with their camp specialty and philosophy. The Incubator provided a framework, a Jewish education consultant, and opportunities to discuss plans and concerns with peers. The process was intellectual, requiring reflection and values clarification activities with skilled facilitators. But by the time the camps opened, having the values in place made it easier for camp leaders to integrate Judaic teaching with more and different aspects of camp, as well as to innovate and deviate from traditional camp practices.
- **The presence of significant funding facilitates speed, quality and accountability.** Incubator leaders were able to set high standards and demanding timelines, and push directors to achieve benchmarks they would not have set as high for themselves. Directors felt both pressured and supported by the fact that others had invested in their vision and were counting on them to produce what they had promised.
- **Programs heading into new territory need guides who have experience in and knowledge about that territory,** but also a desire to encourage others to find other paths. This is a function for which intermediary organizations, such as FJC, are well suited.
- **Networks speed the process to sustainability.** Strong, active networks help program leaders bring in participants and resources, and disseminate success stories, recruitment messages and other requests. New programs often generate their own

widespread skepticism about specialty camps and about sessions shorter than four weeks. By 2012 when FJC opened the application process for a second specialty camp Incubator, these attitudes within the Jewish camp field had changed significantly. There was high interest in the new Incubator due to the new specialty camps’ enrollment success and stories circulating about the Incubator camps’ innovative marketing and their integrated Jewish learning. “[In 2008] we were still convincing the Jewish camp marketplace that there was a place for specialty camps,” recalled one field leader. “There is less fear now that new camps will steal kids away from the traditional camps,” said another.

networks by building on what their leaders already have. Incubator camps in very active organizational networks are doing better overall; the directors and mentors name many specific benefits to camp growth that have come from being supported by wide circles of organizations and endorsed by key communicators who are active in spheres beyond the camp’s satisfied customers. Future investments in new camps should be accompanied by building directors’ early awareness of how networks support start-up businesses, and helping them to find or develop a supportive network to match their program and market goals.

- **Access to evaluation support during start-up and early operations helps new entities understand and communicate their stories.** The new camps would have been unable to design and administer surveys of campers and parents in the midst of opening and growing their camps without some external guidance and support. Yet having credible findings so early in their history has proven to be very useful in fundraising and camper recruitment, and has whetted the camp directors’ appetites for continued learning and insights to help improve programming, marketing and communications.

In the journey from idea to reality, the Incubator and its camps have made giant strides in concepts, slow but steady steps in implementation, and running leaps in dedication to a bright future for Jewish camp in the middle and high school markets. With FJC’s leadership and reputation in the camp field, there is great promise for sharing the story of the journey and the results, and inspiring others interested in creating high-quality Jewish camps.



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- FJC Incubator enrollment reports 2010–13
- This ranges from 85% to 98% across the camps.
- This ranges from 74% to 85% across the camps.
- This ranges from 88% to 98% across the camps.
- JData. www.jdata.com. This includes data from 88 to 119 Jewish overnight camps through the three years.
- This ranges from 12% to 36% across the camps for “attending another Jewish overnight camp;” from 22% to 30% for “not sure of their plans;” and from

- 17% to 38% for “not going to any other camps.”
- Sales, A., Samuel, N., & Boxer, M. (2011). Limud by the Lake Revisited: Growth and Change at Jewish Summer Camp. Brandeis University
- Cohen, S. M. (2006). Jewish Overnight Summer Camps in Southern California: A Marketing Study. Foundation for Jewish Camping, Inc.
- For 2012 campers, this ranged from 48% to 100% across the camps for their new campers and 74% to 100% for their returning campers. The average of 2012 new campers ranged from 11 to 15 years old and from 12 to 16 years old for returning campers.
- This ranges from 85% to 99% across the camps for “Jewish” and from 1% to 15% for “some of us are Jewish and some aren’t.”
- Sales, A., et al, Limud by the Lake Revisited
- Parents reporting that their family identifies as “Conservative” ranges from 14% to 75% across the camps. “Reform” families range from 5% to 72% across the camps.
- Cohen, S.M., Jewish Overnight Summer Camps.
- This ranges from 56% to 91% across the camps.
- This ranges from 52% to 82% across the camps.
- This ranges from 74% to 90% across the camps.

- This ranged from 89% to 95% across the camps.
- Data taken from Summation Research Group Inc.’s CSI Study.
- This ranged from 76% to 84% across the camps.
- This ranged from 14% to 41% across the camps.
- Up to a year following each camp season, Informing Change asked campers and their parents if something big changed in campers’ lives as a result of attending an Incubator camp the previous summer. From their comments to this open-ended item, we identified if there was a change and, if so, what kind of change. The changes campers and parents described represent large, longer-term influences of camp and came without any prompting.
- This ranges from 65% to 74% across the camps for campers and 74% to 90% for parents.
- This ranges from 41% to 58% across the camps for campers and 47% to 62% for parents.
- This ranges from 33% to 56% across the camps for campers and 37% to 55% for parents.
- This ranges from 33% to 42% across the camps for campers and 27% to 45% for parents.
- This ranges from 33% to 52% across the camps for campers and 41% to 58% for parents.

- This ranges from 82% to 91% across the camps.
- This ranges from 20% to 41% across the camps for campers and 25% to 43% for parents.
- This ranges from 21% to 40% across the camps for campers and 22% to 40% for parents.
- This ranges from 38% to 56% across the camps for campers and 42% to 62% for parents.
- This ranges from 70% to 84% across the camps for campers and 65% to 73% for parents.
- This ranges from 68% to 80% across the camps for campers and 58% to 76% for parents.
- This ranges from 53% to 74% across the camps for campers and 65% to 85% for parents.
- For a full discussion of integrating Jewish education into camp activities, see Sales. Limud by the Lake Revisited.
- Bikkurim uses the term *mezzanine stage*, a venture capital term, or *post start-up stage* to describe an organization that is between a start-up and a fully developed company. See Bikkurim’s report *From First Fruits to Abundant Harvests: Maximizing the Potential of Innovative Jewish Start-ups*, available at <http://www.bikkurim.org/sites/default/files/files/Abundant%20Harvest%20Full%20Report.pdf>
- Proposal to the Jim Joseph Foundation submitted by FCJ, 2008

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EVALUATION FRAMEWORK: INCUBATOR LEVEL

PURPOSE: To increase the number of campers in Jewish summer camp through the creation of five new specialty camps			
PRECIPITATING ISSUES - A small percentage of Jewish children (10%) attend Jewish camp; many Jewish teens are choosing non-Jewish camps and camps focused on skill-building - Existing Jewish institutions struggle to incorporate innovative strategies to engage the interests of the current generation of Jewish youth - Current Jewish camps do not have the capacity to attract, retain or accept all Jewish teens in their programs, leaving teens camp-less and campership funds unused - FJC cannot reach economies of scale in technical assistance through one-on-one work with entrepreneurs or camps interested in developing new programs	STRATEGIES Market Alignment Identify innovative camps that spark the interest of the target population and support their program development Financial Investment Provide start-up capital to sustain selected camps in organizational development over initial three summers Start-Up Operations Support Give expertise and support in the early stages of camp operations Jewish Integration Infuse Jewish experiential education in camp programs to strengthen teen Jewish community and Jewish self-identity Preservation of Best Practices Document and disseminate best practices for current and future specialty camps	INCUBATOR TACTICS - Streamlining delivery of FJC resources through cohorts - Consultations in organizational development (e.g., governance, marketing) Jewish education and specialty program design - Mentor program - Workshops and expert speakers - Directors take initiative in designing camp curriculum, staff development, public relations & marketing - Leveraging campership initiatives to decrease barriers to attend Jewish camp - Provision of funds	INTENDED OUTCOMES - More teens attending Jewish camp - More program slots available for currently non-attending Jewish teens - More camp options available for families currently choosing private camps and specialty camps in the non-sectarian private market - By 2014, five new Jewish specialty camps are self sustaining, each one serving 550 campers each summer - Specialty camps, in all aspects of their programs, demonstrate effectiveness in instilling Jewish identity and promoting youth outcomes that are consistent with their Jewish mission and values - More effective use of campership incentive programs
TARGET POPULATION: Jewish Teens - In middle and high school - Never attended Jewish camp - Attending non-Jewish camp - Exceeding traditional camp age requirement			
ULTIMATE IMPACT: Increase experiential Jewish learning, strengthen Jewish continuity and foster strong Jewish social networks among Jewish youth			

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK: CAMP LEVEL

PURPOSE: To increase the number of campers in Jewish summer camp		
PROBLEMS - A small percentage of Jewish children (10%) attend Jewish camp; many Jewish teens are choosing non-Jewish camps and camps focused on skill-building - Current Jewish camps do not have the capacity to attract, retain or accept all Jewish teens in their programs, leaving teens camp-less and campership funds unused - Jewish youth do not see Jewish values as relevant to their everyday lives	STRATEGIES - Develop strong specialty programs - Integrate Jewish experiential education into everyday activities - Build community and sense of <i>ruach</i> during and after camp - Hire and train excellent staff - Develop campers' leadership skills - Launch new business and transition to early stage business; eventually mature	CAMPER LEVEL OUTCOMES - Increased self-confidence, self-esteem and self-awareness - Increased skill and changed awareness in specialty area; increased range of options for future choices - Increased Jewish knowledge - Deeper integration of Judaism into everyday life and decision making - Increased connections to Jewish community and Jewish peers
	TARGET CONSTITUENCIES: Jewish Teens - Middle and high school students - Never attended Jewish camp - Attending non-Jewish camp - Exceeding traditional camp age requirement	BUSINESS LEVEL OUTCOMES - Organizational sustainability - High camper and staff retention, campers returning as counselors
ULTIMATE IMPACT: Increase experiential Jewish learning, strengthen Jewish continuity and foster strong Jewish social networks among Jewish youth		

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS APPROACH

- The evaluation used a multi-year mixed-method approach to address the five evaluation questions. The major data collection approaches were:
- Interviews** with camp directors, camp staff, Incubator staff, mentors and The Jim Joseph Foundation staff. These interviews focused on learning more about the camps' development, including successes and challenges. A small group of parents of 2012 campers were also interviewed to understand more deeply the reasons why they chose the camp and how the experience influenced their children, if at all.
 - Surveys** of campers and their parents.
 - The **new camper** surveys occurred within the first two days of camp to provide baseline information about attitudes, knowledge and behaviors about Judaism; they were used in 2010–12.
 - The **returning camper** surveys also occurred within the first two days of camp to evaluate the long-term (i.e., approximately one year later) outcomes of the previous summer; these were used in 2011–12.
 - The **returning campers' parent** surveys also occurred in May of the year following their children's camp experience to evaluate camp's long-term outcomes; these were used in 2011–12.
 - The **follow-up camper and parent** survey was administered to all 2012 campers and their parents in March and April 2013 to evaluate camp's long-term outcomes. These surveys included campers who had decided to return in 2013, who had decided not to return and who were not yet sure of their plans.
 - In addition, Informing Change obtained results from the CSI study conducted for FJC by Summation Research Group, Inc. from 2010–12. This survey was administered to parents in the fall immediately following their children's camp experiences. Many items asked about demographics to understand who came to camp and satisfaction with several elements of camp. The survey is administered to other North American Jewish camps, which provided a comparison group for our evaluation.
 - Observations** of the Incubator workshops, camps and reviews of CSI results. The observations provided the evaluators with an insider's perspective on camp and Incubator operations and growth.
 - Organizational capacity assessments** of camp directors, mentors and FJC Incubator staff. These semi-annual assessments helped camp directors track and communicate their organizational development needs and progress.

Exhibit B1: Data Collection

	Prior to the 2009–10 Report	Prior to the 2010–11 Report	Prior to the 2011–12 Report	Prior to the 2012–13 Report	Total
Interviews	30	34	25	55	144
Surveys	564	1,138	1,508	790	4,000
Observations	10	8	8	0	26
Organizational Capacity Assessments	2	2	2	0	6

- The following analysis methods were used throughout the evaluation:
- Qualitative data** (e.g., interviews, observations) were analyzed using NVivo software to identify trends across all camps.
 - Survey and organizational capacity assessment data** were analyzed using SPSS and Excel software. All findings were calculated from the total survey sample sizes, unless otherwise noted. Respondents falling into the “NA” category either did not answer the question or answered “Don’t know/Not applicable,” unless otherwise noted.
 - For the new and returning campers’ survey data, an aggregated **Level of Jewishness** score was calculated. This aggregate score summarizes six different survey items about Jewish friends; youth group involvement, synagogue/temple involvement and participation in online Jewish communities. The purpose of the score is to describe campers as having low, moderate or high levels of Jewish engagement, involvement and experiences.

Exhibit B2: Survey Respondents 2010–13

	92Y Passport NYC	Adamah Adventures	Eden Village Camp	Ramah Outdoor Adventure	URJ 6 Points Sports Academy	Total
New Campers 2010	84	43	127	109	201	564
New Campers 2011	106	47	147	131	259	690
Returning Campers 2011	5	17	70	69	124	285
Returning Campers’ Parents 2011	3	8	38	43	71	163
New Campers 2012	114	69	131	140	255	709
Returning Campers 2012	15	17	151	102	228	513
Returning Campers’ Parents 2012	10	8	85	60	123	286
Follow-up Campers 2013	54	42	61	95	96	348
Follow-up Campers’ Parents 2013	57	36	105	107	137	442
Total	448	287	915	856	1,494	4,000

Exhibit B3: Survey Response Rates 2010–13*

	92Y Passport NYC	Adamah Adventures	Eden Village Camp	Ramah Outdoor Adventure	URJ 6 Points Sports Academy	Total
New Campers 2010	95%	100%	95%	93%	96%	96%
New Campers 2011	98%	100%	91%	96%	99%	97%
Returning Campers 2011	71%	94%	99%	100%	93%	97%
Returning Campers’ Parents 2011	50%	47%	56%	65%	65%	61%
New Campers 2012	95%	96%	94%	98%	100%	98%
Returning Campers 2012	100%	81%	97%	78%	100%	97%
Returning Campers’ Parents 2012	77%	89%	38%	63%	66%	55%
Follow-up Campers 2013	41%	45%	21%	35%	21%	28%
Follow-up Campers’ Parents 2013	44%	43%	42%	48%	35%	41%

*Based on the August enrollment report provided by FJC in 2010–13.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENTS

To achieve long-term business sustainability, a camp organization must develop a depth of capacity across a wide range of organizational indicators. Since April 2010, Informing Change has tracked the progress of 21 aspects of the Incubator camps’ organizational development through semi-annual assessments by camp directors, mentors and Incubator staff.

For each organizational capacity area tracked in Informing Change’s evaluation of the Incubator camps, there is a description of the mature state to which the new camps are striving. These descriptions were developed by Informing Change in consultation with Incubator staff; some include benchmarks developed specifically for the five Incubator camps.

The Assessment Process

Assessments were done semi-annually. At each assessment, three individuals—the camp director, the Incubator mentor assigned to the camp and the Incubator staff member responsible for coordinating organizational development technical assistance—rated where the camp stood in its progress to mature status. Each assessor gave a rating of the current level of capacity in each area:

- Need for greater capacity
- Basic capacity in place
- Moderate capacity in place
- High capacity in place
- Fully mature
- Not applicable/Don’t know

The average of the three assessors’ ratings in all areas as well as an aggregate rating of all Incubator camps’ scores were reported to the camp and the Incubator for comparison.

The Capacity Areas

Vision, Mission & Leadership

Mission Focus: The camp’s mission clearly described its reason for existence; staff frequently referred to it and used it to direct actions and set priorities.

Strategic Planning: The camp organization had a set of clear, coherent, medium- and long-term strategies that drove behaviors at all levels; strategies were clearly linked to camp mission, vision and goals.

Advisory Board & Lay Leader Engagement: The camp organization had an active advisory board or other lay leadership group to provide guidance from the perspective of the camp’s stakeholders and peers and, if needed, oversight in compliance with nonprofit laws and best practices; this board/group understood the camp’s program services, supported its organizational development, and worked in close partnership with the director(s); members of the board/group supported the camp financially and were active in appropriate ways.

Legal Structure: The camp organization’s structure, policies and practices all complied with state and local

laws; internal decision-making processes were clear and adhered to; everyone in the organization understood the parameters of authority of the board, camp director, senior staff and other positions of authority.

Management

Performance Management—Year Round: The camp organization had set a few demanding, quantifiable, outcome-focused performance targets in all areas, which all staff diligently worked to achieve; staff and board regularly review progress toward targets.

Performance Management—Camp Season: There were a few demanding, quantifiable, outcome-focused performance targets set for the camp; all seasonal staff, as well as year-round staff, understood the targets and diligently worked to achieve them.

Management Systems & Practices—Year Round: The camp organization had effective systems in place that supported the oversight and development of camp administration, including facilities, health and safety, and progress toward ACA accreditation.

Management Systems & Practices—Camp Season:

The camp’s senior staff had established effective systems that ensured oversight of camp program and administration, including finances, facilities, health and safety, and progress toward ACA accreditation.

Information Systems: The camp organization had established systems for tracking and reporting information for decision-making, including but not limited to data on campers and prospective campers, staff, finances, grants and donations, property and facility upkeep, health and safety indicators, and compliance requirements; senior managers regularly received and used reports from these systems, including while camp was in session.

Finances & Fund Development

Financial Management: The camp organization’s annual budget was realistic and well understood; it also included a “reach” beyond the previous year’s budget. Staff did solid financial planning that was continuously updated; performance to budget was closely and regularly monitored, and advisory board/group members

received regular financial reports. An annual financial audit was performed or supervised by third-party experts.

Financial Sustainability: The camp organization’s economic model generated a successful financial bottom line, with highly diversified funding from multiple sources; the camp organization was able to accumulate a reserve/rainy day fund.

Fund Development: The camp organization had mechanisms in place to successfully raise funds, including a multi-year fund development plan and adequate capacity to conduct fundraising activities to meet annual target amounts in different areas (e.g., grants, donors, events, annual fund).

Personnel

Senior Management—Year Round: There was a year-round executive leadership team comprised of the director(s) and 1–2 veteran leaders who had demonstrated talent and experience in fields relevant to camp management; director(s) shared leadership roles with this team; tenure on the senior management team was 18 months or longer.

Senior Management—Camp Season: During the camp season, the camp director(s) worked with a leadership team of 3–4 veteran camp staff (administrative and program) with experience in fields relevant to camp management; 75% of the camp’s summer leadership team was retained from year to year.

Staff Recruitment & Retention: The camp organization recruited and retained excellent staff. The camp’s staffing design created an effective operating team that was able to fully provide the specialty program. Staff position requirements met ACA standards. One hundred percent of camp staff positions were hired in time to participate in pre-camp training. More than 60% of camp staff in any summer was returning staff.

Staff Training: The camp organization developed and trained excellent staff. Program specialists were highly trained within their specialty areas. Staff training, policies and procedures met ACA standards.

Camper

Camper Enrollment: Camp enrollment held steady at 80% of capacity or contracted capacity (bed spaces), or greater. The camp’s supply of camperships met the demand.

Camper Retention: Camper retention rate was 60% or better.

Camper Inquiries & Yield Rate: The yield of enrolled campers from “qualified” inquiries from campers/families was 20% or better. Word of mouth recommendations

or referrals from previously enrolled families ranked as one of the top sources of inquiries and new camper enrollments.

Program

General Camp Program: The overall camp was intentional about creating a community of campers and staff; camp program was well organized, appropriate for the camp’s age group(s) and aligned with the camp’s mission.

Specialty Program: Specialty program curriculum and delivery process were well defined, appropriate for the camp’s age group(s), aligned with the mission and linked to overall camp strategy.

Jewish Experiential Education: Jewish education curriculum was integrated into overall camp and specialty program areas; all staff delivering components of this program were well trained and comfortable in their roles.

Program Improvement: The camp had formal mechanisms in place to assess camper satisfaction and whether program goals were being achieved; staff used evaluation results to inform program changes and set program goals.

Communications

Marketing & Branding: The camp had a clear brand that differentiated the camp from others and attracted high interest from its target population and their families; camp materials clearly promoted this brand. The camp had a multi-year, actionable marketing plan with realistic targets and adequate funds for full implementation.

Customer Service & Communications: The camp organization maintained year-round communications with key stakeholders; communicated regularly with new and returning campers’ families; operated an active year-round calendar of communications activities (e.g., mailings, articles, Web-based communications, speaking engagements); used services of qualified external resources for highly effective, targeted communications.

External Relations & Networking: The camp was active in strategic alliances and partnerships that significantly advanced camp goals. The camp was also active in Jewish youth networks, camp networks and specialty area networks. The camp was known and well regarded in the larger Jewish community and in the community where it was located.

EVALUATION LIMITATIONS & STRENGTHS

Limitations

- The primary data sources used in this evaluation were self-reported (e.g., surveys, interviews, organizational capacity), which may have presented some bias.
- For the organizational capacity assessment, respondents rated camp development against a provided description. This process may have resulted in more subjective ratings. However, the use of multiple raters helped protect against any bias.
- Younger campers and non-native English-speaking campers may have had difficulty with some of the language used in the surveys. This may have affected their responses to items. However, the large number of campers completing surveys should have helped balance out any of these issues.
- Due to camp size and response rates, some camps were more represented in the aggregated survey data (e.g., URJ 6 Points Sports Academy) than others (e.g., 92Y Passport NYC), which may have biased results toward the larger camps.

Strengths

- Nearly every Jewish camper, whether new or returning, completed a survey in 2010, 2011 and 2012, which suggests the camper survey sample was highly representative of Jewish campers attending Incubator camps. Many 2012 campers also completed the follow-up survey in 2013.
- The evaluation used multiple methods to evaluate Incubator camps’ growth, which enabled Informing Change to triangulate findings to reach conclusions supported by multiple data sources. This gave Informing Change greater confidence in the findings and resulting implications.





The Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC) is the only public organization dedicated solely to nonprofit Jewish overnight camps. FJC employs a variety of strategies toward a single goal: to increase the number of children in Jewish summer camps. To this end, the Foundation creates inspiring camp leaders, expands access to and intensifies demand for camp, and develops programs to strengthen camps across the Jewish spectrum in North America. Through strategic partnerships on local and national levels, FJC raises the profile of Jewish camp and serves as a central resource for parents and organizations alike. FJC works with more than 155 camps, 75,000 campers, and 11,000 counselors across North America each summer to further its mission. www.jewishcamp.org

By investing in promising Jewish education grant initiatives, the Jim Joseph Foundation seeks to foster compelling, effective Jewish learning experiences for young Jews in the United States. Established in 2006, the Jim Joseph Foundation has awarded \$285 million in grants to engage, educate, and inspire young Jewish minds to discover the joy of living vibrant Jewish lives. www.jimjosephfoundation.org

New Jewish Specialty Camps: From Idea to Reality

Foundation for Jewish Camp Specialty Camps Incubator Evaluation Report

Prepared for:
Jim Joseph Foundation

Prepared by:
Informing Change
Ellen Irie, Tina Cheplick,
Sheila Wilcox

Foundation for Jewish Camp
253 West 35th Street
4th Floor
New York, NY 10001
tel 646-278-4500
fax 646-278-4501

www.jewishcamp.org

2040 Bancroft Way
Suite 400
Berkeley, CA 94704
tel 510.665.6100
fax 510.665.6129

www.informingchange.com
info@informingchange.com



343 Sansome Street, Ste 550
San Francisco, CA 94104
Phone: (415) 658-8730
Fax: (415) 658-8736

www.jimjosephfoundation.org
info@jimjosephfoundation.org



253 West 35th Street, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10001
Phone: (646) 278-4500
Fax: (646) 278-4501

www.jewishcamp.org