

News from the Fund

ASF's Fourth Year in Review

Building Partnerships



A Message from Laurie and Arthur

Our hearts are filled with deep appreciation for so many who support the important work of the Avi Schaefer Fund. Avi Shabbat gatherings on college campuses continue to provide a venue in which Avi's story is shared within a context of meaningful conversations and projects, bringing together diverse student populations. The Innovation Grants provide socially minded and creative students with funding to develop programs that foster understanding and civility.

Last March, our exciting Jerusalem Symposium drew a capacity crowd that engaged with dynamic presenters and panelists. On our website, you will find a short video highlighting the program. In February, our first North American Symposium, held in partnership with Mehon Hadar, and hosted by Columbia/Barnard Hillel, was filled to capacity and offered a stunning program of top academics. We also want to acknowledge a special appreciation of Brown-RISD Hillel for their guidance by providing and supervising dedicated student interns who help coordinate the Avi Shabbat and Innovation Grants Programs. As a small fund, these strategic partnerships have given us a wide impact and a broad reach to our target populations.

Yoav is an inspiring thought leader in all of our work, choosing relevant topics, reaching out to amazing speakers while keeping up a rigorous study schedule at Harvard. Our impact would not be possible without the hard work of our dedicated staff. Malka Fenynesi joined us 18 months ago to guide ASF with great skill and a caring heart. As Director of Campus Programs, Malka will focus on the development of our campus portfolio. In September, we welcomed Kim Freund, who joined the team as Managing Director, with an abundance of talent and a skill set that will motivate and guide us to deepen and further our many projects. Elan Ezrachi, our Director of Israel Programs, continues to offer critical leadership and great insights for ASF as we navigate the challenging political climate and the lived human experience in the Middle East.

We want to congratulate Yoav on his appointment to the International Hillel Board. Yoav has become an increasingly powerful and wise voice that many are eager to hear. We are also excited to welcome our nephew Brian Schaefer to our extremely dedicated board. Brian is a highly respected writer and provides an important perspective.

The Avi Schaefer Fund is poised for another year of supporting and delivering important and exciting programs. We will continue our involvement from Bonn, Germany, where we will be teaching Loyola Marymount University students for their semester abroad. We thank everyone for their support and we look forward to another year of creating important conversations, programs and projects.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie Arthur".

Celebrate Our Growth 2014



Laurie Reflects on the Event...

The idea for the **Celebrate Our Growth Open House** began with my interest in spending time in the garden and creating gifts to thank all of you for your support. Breathing fresh air, keeping my hands in the dirt and using plants as my palette provides me with a creative outlet that lifts my soul and keeps me steeped in thoughts about the family and Avi. I also enjoy the time spent with friends who help me with the plants and come over to sew in my studio as we prepare the Phone Pockets and t-shirt bags offered for donations at our event along with the artistic succulent arrangements. It all takes weeks of preparation; I enjoy it and find healing in these activities.

Once again, our third annual open house this past July was a tremendous success. Our yard overflowed with more than 200 supporters. Our wonderful team of volunteers helped us to prepare for and organize the yard, plants and food. Local businesses continue to contribute wonderful, nourishing food and this year we had three musicians who shared their talents with us, including Cantor Mark Childs. Altogether, it was a festive and beautiful day.

This wonderful gathering in the sun that allows us to share our accomplishments, as a caring community, is only possible because of the efforts of so many. We raised over \$10,000 at this fun annual community event. A big thank you to all those who helped make this day of celebration so successful. If you haven't joined us before, consider visiting next summer.



left: Cantor Mark Childs; Middle: ASF volunteers cousins Beth and Mark Horowitz; Right: Judy Karin proud of her succulent choice

Celebrate Our Growth 2013

ASF is so appreciative of our wonderful supporters and donors. Your support nurtures our growth. Here are some of the happy faces from the 2013 event.



*Top left: Grandma Sylvia Gross with Yoav Schaefer; Top Middle: Cousins Greg and Aaren Alpert; Top right: Michael and Erika Eskenazi
Bottom far left: Judi Weisbart, Madelyn Swed; Bottom inside left: Reine Melnick, Iliana Gans; Bottom inside right: Jack and Sylvia Camiel; Bottom far right: Amy Locke*



Join Us Next Summer...

Save the date for the fourth annual **Celebrate Our Growth** Open House which will take place on Sunday, July 19, 2015, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at the home of the Gross Schaefer Family in Santa Barbara. More information will be available closer to the event.



Campus Activities

Growing and Deepening ASF's Programs on College Campuses

Written by Malka Fenynesi, ASF Director of Campus Programs

In 2014, students from California to New York, from Toronto to Texas gathered together for Avi Shabbat, which continues to be a very meaningful and constructive force on campuses, encouraging unlikely friendships, collaborations, and learning. The power of Avi Shabbat is multifaceted, including concept development, organization and planning, culminating with the communal Shabbat meal and program. Relationships inspired during these Shabbat programs carry forward onto campus and into communal life. Winter 2015 will mark the fifth year that campuses across the US and Canada will gather together for Avi Shabbat.



Avi Shabbat at Houston Hillel, 2014

The success of the Avi Shabbat Program and the depth of student commitment led ASF to create the Innovation Grant Program, now in its third year. This program offers opportunities for more substantive programming and imaginative collaboration. Last year, ASF was excited to fund eleven unique projects.

Here are some of the standout projects funded:

- Williams College: Students of multi-faith backgrounds went on an Alternative Spring Break trip where they engaged in community service, travel, shared reflection, and prayer.
- Stanford University Hillel: Student and staff trainings expanded knowledge, curiosity, and skills on the Israeli Palestinian Conflict.
- Loyola Marymount Hillel: Hosted a series of thematic Inter-faith dinners and conversations.
- Binghamton University: Muslim Students Association & Hillel hosted an Avi Shabbat followed by "Visit a Mosque, Visit a Synagogue", a very successful field trip which fostered friendship and learning among Muslim and Jewish students.
- George Washington University Hillel: Followed their Avi Shabbat with a Freedom Seder in cooperation with two African American student organizations.

Please consider funding an Avi Shabbat or an Innovation Grant on a campus this year. We are pleased to continue working with the 60 plus campuses that are active and welcome the opportunity to bring the program to those we have not yet reached. We thank you in advance for your support!

To see a list of the campuses we reach, donate to support one of our campus programs, or to apply for our 2014/15 Innovation Grants please visit: www.avischaeferfund.org



ASF supplies yartzeit candles to campuses to light on Avi Shabbat

Our New Mission Statement

Evaluating our Work and Assessing its Impact



When we initially created the Avi Schaefer Fund over four-and-a-half years ago, we were determined to continue Avi's work on campus, and created projects that reflected our dedication to influencing campus discourse. Those early years were exhausting, emotional, and often frantic—not only were the projects of the fund meaningful, but they also became the central means by which we, as a family and a community, channeled our grief and attempted to fill the void in our lives left by Avi's tragic death. As such, we were driven by a determination to honor Avi's memory and to continue the work Avi began on campus. The fund grew at a quick,

overwhelming pace, and we found ourselves creating exciting and enriching programs in both North America and Israel. Even though we had a significant impact on campuses through our substantive programs, we were still grieving, still searching for our unique voice.

And yet, those early years were also years of learning and growth. Now, almost five years later, we are in a position, both professionally and emotionally, to evaluate our work and assess our impact. Our programs have expanded beyond our initial mission statement, and we want to acknowledge their evolving and impactful nature. Most importantly, our growing projects are a reflection of a larger transition from a place of memory and healing to one of legacy and action. ASF is increasingly being recognized for the importance of our work and the unique value we bring to the table. We have also come to realize the ways in which we can have the greatest impact. As a result, we embarked on a process to rethink our mission and the direction of the fund in light of everything we've learned over the past few years and the feedback we've received from our participants, partnering organizations, and supporters.

The fund continues to be focused on campuses and the Israeli-Palestinian conversation, but we also want to acknowledge the substantial work we are doing to foster interfaith dialogue and cross-communal understanding as well as our ongoing efforts to impact the conversation around Israel within the Jewish community. We remain committed to furthering the dreams and ideals that inspired Avi throughout his life and empowering young people to, like Avi, work to change the world. Therefore, we hope that this new articulation of our work and our areas of impact will help us to better achieve the goals towards which we aspire. As always, we thank you for your support and we hope that you will share your thoughts toward our evolving and ongoing work with us.

Avi Schaefer Fund mission statement:

The Avi Schaefer Fund (ASF) is dedicated to nurturing Avi's values of mutual respect and understanding through cultivating opportunities for informed dialogue and by empowering young people to be change-makers in the world.

Jerusalem Symposium 2014



Top: YMCA Jerusalem Youth Chorus performs at Symposium; Bottom left: Attendees checking in for Jerusalem Symposium; Bottom right: Elan Ezrachi with Yoav Schaefer

The Fifth Jerusalem Symposium

Written by Elan Ezrachi, Director of Israel Programs

As we head into a new year, we are in high gear for the Fifth Annual Jerusalem Symposium in Memory of Avi Schaefer. The first Symposium took place in February 2011, a year after Avi's death. The idea to conduct such an event in Jerusalem was an intuitive response on behalf of Avi's family and the newly formed Avi Schaefer Fund. Since then, the Symposium is held every year and is now a signature feature in the landscape of programs that are offered to young adults from North America who are spending the year in Israel.

This year's Symposium, scheduled for March 16th, is titled: "Between Judaism and Democracy: Reconciling Israel's Jewishness with its Democratic Character." This topic has been at the forefront of Israeli public discourse in recent months as social, religious and ethnic tensions within Israel have risen. This topic is also echoed in the harsh conversation around Israel in the North American Jewish community. The Symposium will take place just hours before Israelis go out to the ballot for the March 17th national elections.

The Jerusalem Symposium reflects the core values of the Avi Schaefer Fund: to conduct a deep and serious conversation on Israel, based on critical approaches around the pursuit of peace and social justice without compromising on love of the country and its people. The Symposium typically attracts approximately 300 young adults from North America who are spending the year in Israel in academic, training and leadership programs.

The fifth Symposium will feature high-level lectures, focused breakout sessions, dialogue opportunities with young Israelis, and networking for the future. I am fortunate to plan this program with Yoav Schaefer. The Symposium organization is in the dedicated hands of Tal Redler. We are happy to be working with a group of enthusiastic partner organizations such as Masa – Israel Journey, The Shalom Hartman Institute, Hebrew Union College, the Jewish Theological Seminary, The Pardes Institute, Merchavim, and more. We will continue to enjoy the support of Avi's friends who are scattered in all areas of life throughout Israel, and who are committed to continuing Avi's work. Stay tuned!

The Jerusalem Symposium reflects the core values of

North American Symposium 2014

Tough Talk with a Diverse, Respectful Audience

The Avi Symposium makes its first North American appearance.

Written by Brian Schaefer, Avi's cousin and newest ASF board member

Four years ago, I happened to be living in Israel when the Avi Schaefer Fund launched its first symposium in Jerusalem. I was able to witness firsthand the impressive line-up of notable speakers, the intellectual weight of the conversation and the young, curious audience in attendance. Now, I live in New York and was able to attend the birth of the North American Symposium, which took place on February 9th this year at the Columbia/Barnard Hillel, in partnership with Mechon Hadar.

The New York symposium was the colder of the two. But it also came to life remarkably formed. For a frigid Sunday in what turned out to be a notoriously harsh winter, the symposium managed to draw hundreds of participants spanning generations, religious backgrounds and political affiliations. The theme, "Jews, Judaism and Power" was not a timid one and could have easily polarized. But what struck me most throughout the day was how respectfully participants engaged with contentious topics and differences in opinion.

Following the symposium, I spoke with a number of other attendees who noticed the same thing: panelists shared ideas about Israeli politics and American-Jewish communal dynamics that in the past might have been met with resistance or heated debate, but here were met with thoughtful questions from the audience. In the past several years the American-Jewish community has really been struggling with how to articulate its love and concern for Israel. The North American Symposium was the first time I've felt a public event was able to address that complicated relationship in a respectful and productive way.

Somehow—perhaps because of the diversity of stakeholders and organizers, perhaps because of the broad ideological spectrum of breakout panel topics and speakers, perhaps because we all gathered with Avi's memory in mind—the Avi Schaefer Fund managed to create a safe space for these difficult conversations. It's an important, and profound, accomplishment.



North American Symposium 2014 Panel participants from left to right: David Biale, Michael Walzer, Leora Batnitzky, Rabbi Shai Held

Message from Yoav

I am immensely proud of all that we have accomplished over this past year. The projects of the Avi Schaefer Fund (ASF) continue to create meaningful and lasting change in the lives of young people who have participated in our programs. Virtually everywhere I go—whether in North America or in Israel—I meet people who have taken part in one or more of our programs, or who have been inspired by Avi's story. As such, I am constantly reminded of the importance of our work and of the unique role that we play in fostering a civil and nuanced conversation around issues so crucial to our shared future. And as a recent member of Hillel International's Board of Directors, I have also had the opportunity to share our work with Jewish leaders and professionals from across North America and Israel.

We are currently planning a number of exciting programs in the coming year focused on issues that are both important and timely. One of the most rewarding experiences this past year has been my partnership with Rabbi Shai Held, Dean and Chair in Jewish Thought at Mechon Hadar in New York City. Shai is an inspiring teacher and Jewish leader and I am truly grateful to have worked with him in planning our upcoming North American Symposium. The symposium in partnership with Mechon Hadar will take place at Hebrew Union College in NYC on January 11th and will focus on the topic of race and social justice in America. In light of this summer's events in Ferguson and the ongoing national conversation about Eric Garner's tragic death, we are excited to organize an event relating to such an important issue. We hope that those of you in the New York area will join us for what promises to be a wonderful program.

Similarly, Elan Ezrachi, our representative in Israel, and I have worked together to plan our 5th annual Jerusalem Symposium, which will take place this March. This year's symposium will explore issues surrounding the tension between Judaism and democracy in Israel—an issue that has recently made headlines in the aftermath of the controversial nation-state bill.

I am excited to work with our new managing director, Kim Freund, the professional team, and the ASF Board to make this coming year even more meaningful and inspiring than the past one. As always, I thank you for your ongoing support for our efforts to honor Avi's memory. As we approach five years since Avi's tragic death, I can't help but reflect upon our work and feel confident that Avi is proud of what we, as a community of family and friends, have created in his memory.



Thoughts from ASF Managing Director Kim Freund, who joined ASF in September 2014

I am so excited to join the team as the new managing director of the Avi Schaefer Fund. I moved to Los Angeles from Calgary, Canada with my husband, Kevin in 2001 to pursue an MBA in non-profit management. Since graduating, I have worked for several Jewish organizations including the Jewish Federation and several Israeli based organizations. With our two children, Isaac (9) and Lindsay (6), who attend Ilan Ramon Day School, we are active participants in Jewish learning and life in Los Angeles.

It is extremely meaningful to be part of an organization with such impact on campuses, and beyond, throughout North America and Israel. In a few short months, it has become clear to me what an amazing person Avi was and what a special family the Gross-Schaefer's are! I look forward to continuing the successful work of the last five years as we look toward a bright future.