



Building a Jewish Food Movement in Colorado

A Case Study of the Influence of Jewish Outdoor,
Food, and Environmental Education

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To read the full report visit hazon.org/jofee

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Introduction

Over the past decade, observers of Jewish education have seen a growing interest and participation in experiences that integrate Jewish learning with the outdoors, food, and environmental issues. Philanthropists and practitioners have invested time and resources to develop new initiatives and organizations that provide learning opportunities that address these issues.

In 2013, a group of funders and Jewish educational practitioners designed a study to explore immersive Jewish outdoor, food, and environmental education programming, coined JOFEE for the purposes of this study.¹ By examining JOFEE's programs, participants, and professionals, the study aims to make meaning of immersive JOFEE experiences for funders, practitioners, and community leaders.

This case study² is a companion piece to the national study of immersive JOFEE experiences. It shares the layered story³ of what happened when a group of local funders and Hazon, America's largest Jewish environmental organization, came together to support a nascent Jewish food movement in Colorado.⁴

Creating a Jewish Food Movement in Colorado

THE CONTEXT

For years, if not decades, Colorado has been home to a rapidly growing, vibrant, food and environmental movement. It is commonly understood that many Coloradoans—especially

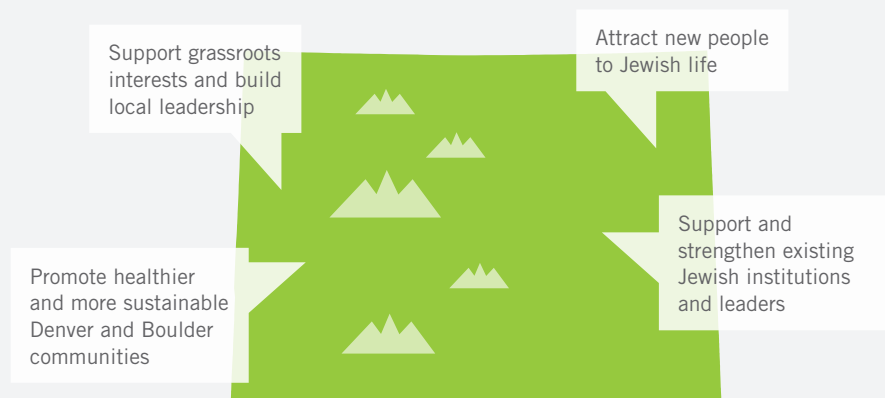
young people, including many identifying as Jewish—prioritize an environmentally sustainable lifestyle and make Colorado home precisely because of its natural beauty.

At the same time, grassroots Jewish outdoor, food, and environmental efforts have been bubbling up in Colorado, as well as across the nation. Denver and Boulder are home to blossoming independent grassroots efforts, such as Jewish CSAs (Community-Supported Agriculture)⁵; greening efforts (e.g., congregational “green teams,” recycling and composting efforts, synagogue gardens); and Jewish programming that connects to environmental and sustainability issues (e.g., programs for Jewish youth, Jewish outdoor adventure programming with an “Adventure Rabbi,” green Shabbat programming offered by Birthright NEXT, Tu B'Shvat seders).

Meanwhile, Rose Community Foundation, a sponsor of the 2007 Metro Denver/Boulder Jewish Community Study, was considering how to best address a key finding from the Study: the majority of Jewish people in Greater Denver and Boulder were not connected to local Jewish institutions even though most reported that being Jewish was important to them. The Foundation had anecdotal evidence that there was a nascent and high-potential connection between emerging food and environmental initiatives and the Jewish community. As of 2009, these Colorado funds and Hazon had relationships with each other, however, they had not all collaborated.

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- 1 While the term JOFEE may not fully capture the entirety of these experiences, nor is it a universally agreed-upon term, we use the term JOFEE throughout this report for the purpose of brevity.
 - 2 This case study describes events and outcomes as recalled and interpreted by key stakeholders with various perspectives through interviews and focus groups. It also draws upon survey data of over 50 immersive JOFEE program participants in Colorado, most of whom attended a national Hazon Food Conference, as well as documentation provided by the funders about their investments.
 - 3 While this research and case study have identified many findings about JOFEE, there is still much to learn about JOFEE outcomes, opportunities, and challenges. This research was not designed to measure the exact nature and amount of change on participants, to isolate individual program outcomes and identify effective programs or program components, or to assess JOFEE's influence on Jewish organizations and communities. These are all important areas to explore more deeply in future studies.
 - 4 For ease to the reader, Colorado and Denver/Boulder are used interchangeably to describe the geographic areas where JOFEE efforts were focused, including the Greater Denver seven-county area, which encompasses Boulder.
 - 5 A CSA is a regularly scheduled produce pickup from a local farm, delivered to a central location. A Jewish CSA uses the CSA model as a platform for inspiring Jewish education and community building.

The Charge: Building a Jewish Food Movement in Colorado



Invest in people already committed to making change

A Pilot to Seed the Grassroots

In 2009, Rose Community Foundation, Oreg Foundation and Hazon began to deepen their work together. They shared the belief that integrating food, the environment, and the outdoors with Jewish life and culture was a potentially game-changing strategy for creating and sustaining a more welcoming and vibrant Jewish life in Denver and Boulder. They were also

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"This [food movement] capitalizes on an interest that exists independent of Jewish life."

—Interview Informant

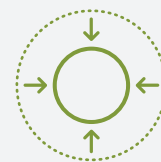
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committed to supporting grassroots efforts already underway. Consequently, with a goal to "sow the seeds of a Jewish food movement in Denver and Boulder," they developed an intentional strategy focused on "seeding the grassroots" and developing local volunteer leadership.

With support from Rose Community Foundation and Oreg Foundation, and with Hazon leading implementation, a delegation of 50 diverse Coloradans attended the national Hazon Food Conference, an annual four-day event exploring the connections between Jewish traditions and contemporary food issues. This was more than investing in participants to

attend a conference, though. This strategy explicitly connected to the goal of seeding the grassroots; the expectation was that deepening the knowledge and skills of participants and building a cohort of networked, local leaders would significantly contribute to building a grassroots Colorado Jewish food movement.

A cohort experience was created through some specific conference programming for the Colorado delegation and a follow-up gathering facilitated by Hazon. Upon their return, participants planned events and implemented new food-related programs in their communities. By all measures, this effort was a success. Demand far exceeded planners' hopes of having 25 participants. The Colorado delegation—the first of its kind—was the largest delegation present at the Hazon Food Conference. It was a powerful cohort experience that created a strong local network of leaders who were also connected to the broader, national JOFEE network of knowledge and supports. Further, it empowered participants to galvanize their peers back in their home communities around JOFEE and equipped them with tools and inspiration to be successful in doing this work. In sum, this initial investment clearly indicated that there was a solid base of committed individuals in Colorado who wanted to see more JOFEE and who were ready to make that a reality in their communities.



Start small
to test a new
approach

The Development of A Jewish Food Movement Network

Following are examples of efforts that sprouted from the investment in grassroots leaders attending the Hazon Food Conference or benefited from the networking and support from Hazon that followed the food conference.

- New volunteers and leadership connected to Ekar, a Jewish urban communal farm and garden
- The creation of community campaigns for home gardening
- The creation of multi-denominational goat and chicken co-ops
- Hosting Teva Topsy Turvy bus events in multiple congregations, schools, and JCCs
- The development of new Jewish CSAs (e.g., Minyan Na'Aleh, JCC)
- The training of educators in the community in Hazon's Jewish food education curricular materials
- The creation of Tuv Ha'aretz, Hazon's CSA in Boulder, which now serves every Boulder synagogue, and in its sixth year of operation, is serving more than 70 families
- The development of an experimental farm in Pueblo, Colorado that explores eco-kashrut, ethical slaughter and sustainability
- Collaboration between attendees (e.g., Ramah Outdoor Adventure and area synagogues sourcing organic food from the above-mentioned farm in Pueblo, Colorado)
- Hosting a full-house event that included a screening of *Vanishing of the Bees* and a tour of the farming activities at the Boulder Jewish Commons
- Further training of local Jewish CSA site coordinators resulting in new volunteer CSA site coordinators
- A greenhouse business
- The expansion of Birthright NEXT programs (e.g., eco-Shabbat, Harvest-to-Harvest)

“The whole point [of sending a Colorado cohort to the Hazon Food Conference] is not just to expose people to the issues, topics, and learning, but also to create networking opportunities. When I think of folks in the first cohort, and what they are doing now here in Colorado, we created a group of leaders.”

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—JOFEE Stakeholder

EXPANSION

In the wake of the Hazon Food Conference, alumni returned inspired, ready to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty. New JOFEE ideas blossomed and became reality in Colorado Jewish communities, all while existing efforts expanded and deepened. More and increasingly diverse people became interested and involved, and more Jewish institutions were eager to bring JOFEE to their work too. It was clear, though, that these efforts could benefit from more nurturing and support. Building off this momentum, Rose Community Foundation and Oreg Foundation, with the addition of 18 Pomegranates Foundation and Hazon, came together in October 2010 to craft a three-year grant of approximately \$360,000 to Hazon. The goal—the development of a Jewish food movement in Colorado that would build and strengthen Jewish life and community—and the strategy—grassroots community building—remained the same. In an iterative process that considered multiple approaches, they developed a multi-faceted, inter-connected approach that included several key components, described throughout this case study.⁶

The Charge for Hazon Colorado:

Hazon Colorado was charged with supporting and strengthening the grassroots Jewish food and environmental movement in Denver and Boulder by bridging what is happening with energy and Jewish expertise.

With this charge, Hazon Colorado aimed to offer new ways to connect Jews to Jewish life and to each other, especially young people, while promoting an increasingly diverse, open, and inspiring quality of Jewish life.



Find common interests among funders and/or grantees to leverage resources for mutual benefit



Map community assets and needs to understand what currently exists and what could exist

Following the first two years of this grant, the funders continued their support for two more years. As a result, the three funders made a total investment of approximately \$735,000 into JOFEE programs in Colorado over a five-year time period. During the same time period, individual donors and additional foundation support also contributed over \$150,000 to this work.

The funders leveraged a national JOFEE resource by bringing Hazon to Colorado. Hazon hired already locally-based staff who would offer expertise and leadership to existing and emerging efforts. A key element of Hazon’s staffing model was that it was field based, rather than office based, so staff worked primarily within the community, building relationships and networks.

Hazon Colorado’s first task was to lead a community mapping and needs assessment exercise. In order to plan how to best grow the movement, Hazon needed to identify what existed and explore what local leaders, practitioners, Jewish organizations, and community members would like to see from a Jewish food movement. Hazon’s mapping included food and environmental initiatives within the Jewish community, as well as learning about and connecting with secular and

⁶ These components did not necessarily happen at the same time or in the particular order presented here.

interfaith initiatives and environmental policy efforts. This mapping effort informed the development of Hazon's action plan and ensured that Hazon's work was indeed responding to the expressed needs and aspirations of the community.

Hazon Colorado provided a range of supports to existing and developing JOFEE efforts, many of which draw from Hazon's experience nationally. For example, Hazon Colorado shared its JOFEE curricula and engaged 20 Jewish organizations in Colorado through the opportunity to participate in Hazon's Food Audit, an assessment tool that helps organizations review and improve their food sustainability policies and practices. Hazon Colorado also provided capacity building supports to new and existing JOFEE efforts, such as consulting, technical assistance, planning, and staff and volunteer training, as well as serving as a network weaver among and across local and national practitioners.

Hazon facilitated a mini-grant program to fuel local projects at the intersection of sustainability and Jewish community life. Since 2010, Hazon Colorado, with guidance from its Advisory Board, has allocated more than \$40,000 in grants of \$1,000 to \$4,000 to 25 community projects and initiatives. Mini-grants built the capacity of programs to continue serving the community and included support to expand programming, develop new efforts, and hire staff. The combination of grant funds and capacity building supports facilitated the development of new grassroots efforts, some of which are

examples of "do-it-yourself" activities which attracted more people to Jewish life, and strengthened already existing initiatives.

Hazon Colorado built grassroots leadership by developing a local Advisory Board. The Advisory Board Members are champions for a Colorado Jewish food movement, shape Hazon's work in Colorado, and provide guidance to Hazon, while promoting a coordinated Jewish food movement. They also raise community awareness about JOFEE—for example, members who are rabbis have spoken about JOFEE from their pulpits—and connect people and programs to each other. This Advisory Board has attracted young leadership and is a model for intergenerational leadership. Many of the volunteers on the Advisory Board had not previously been part of Jewish life and attribute their new participation in the Jewish community to JOFEE efforts.



Leverage national/outside expertise to augment—not overtake—local initiatives



Relatively small, targeted grants can both support local projects and cultivate local leadership

Hazon Colorado Mini-Grants

The following is a selection of the work done by the diverse group of mini-grant recipient organizations to build and strengthen a Jewish food movement across Colorado.

- Expanding programming at a sustainable goat co-op in Boulder to bring more people into Jewish life by connecting with the land, animals, and food
- Launching a two-week-long day camp at Ekar that teaches about farm-based Jewish learning
- Creating Jewish garden programs at synagogues, the Denver Jewish Day School, and the Denver Loup JCC to engage participants, transform JOFEE programming in their classrooms, and add a strong food justice lens to their work
- Developing a co-op endeavor that provides local, sustainably raised, and humanely slaughtered kosher chickens, and, in turn, educates the community about eco-kashrut
- Developing an educational greenhouse at Ramah Outdoor Adventure, a Jewish overnight camp in Colorado, to enhance a camp's farming program and increase the amount of food served at camp that is actually grown by the campers
- Increasing healthy food access, nutrition awareness, and cooking classes for food pantry clients by providing educators and necessary ingredients
- Increasing staff to educate campers about eco-kashrut, and environmental issues, such as animal appreciation in the ecosystem



Additionally, Advisory Board members play a key role in the mini-grants allocation process, which has cultivated engagement and built broader community among these members. The grant process developed members' knowledge of and familiarity with Jewish food programs happening in the Colorado Jewish community. In having an opportunity to see themselves as something larger than themselves or their organizations, members of the Advisory Board were empowered as local leaders to understand and represent the broader changes that were happening in Colorado Jewish life.

In 2012, Hazon Colorado launched an annual, community-wide Colorado Food Festival that raised awareness and attracted a diverse group of attendees.

At this annual day-long conference with more than 30 sessions, a wide range of people in the Colorado Jewish community—foodies, beekeepers, rabbis, nutritionists, chefs, farmers, vegans, and omnivores—come together to explore the interplay of food, sustainability, Jewish traditions, and contemporary life. Content is presented by leaders in the Colorado Jewish community and Jewish and secular food movements, and topics include conscious consumerism, perspectives of kosher dietary laws, workshops on baking challah, and even a live kosher chicken slaughter. Likely due to the range of content areas and the deliberate integration of both Jewish and secular food related topics, this event attracts people who are not otherwise engaged in Jewish life. The 2012 event was the first-ever single-day Hazon Food Festival anywhere in the country. The Festivals are developed by a diverse planning team and have attracted over 400 people in their first two years. This has served as a model for Hazon Food Festivals that now occur across the country.



Listen to local needs and interests



Local experimentation can become a scalable, national model

The funders continued to support an annual Colorado delegation to the national Hazon Food Conference. Year after year, this is a place where Coloradans connect with each other, learn together, and then return home with reinvigorated energy, eager to embrace new Jewish practices and create Jewish community. Since inception, over 100 Coloradans have attended the Hazon Food Conference. Following the first two years of this grant-cycle, the funders made another grant to continue Hazon Colorado for two more years.

Who is Involved in Colorado's Jewish Food Movement?

Grassroots JOFEE efforts have been woven through intentional investments in the community. The tapestry of people who are involved in JOFEE in Colorado includes a diverse group from across the Jewish community. People are drawn to JOFEE as a way to deepen their outdoor, food, and environmental interests through connecting them to their Jewishness.

"This program is an essential component of my living a fulfilling life. It provides a complement to my excellent work and home life. It enriches each through a Jewish context."

—JOFEE Participant

Colorado JOFEE Participant Backgrounds



Primary Motivation for Participating in a JOFEE program:
Integration of outdoor, food, or environmental education and Jewish experiences

What is Changing in the Lives of Individuals?

On an individual level, the research indicates that those involved with JOFEE in Colorado have seen a positive influence on their Jewish lives and practice; their connection to the outdoors, food, and the environment; and the intersection of these two areas. Their personal testimonies illustrate the deep relevance JOFEE brings to their lives.

People report that JOFEE adds meaning to their lives.

For more than half of the people from Colorado in the national study of immersive JOFEE programs, JOFEE has influenced their connection to Judaism, Jewish tradition, and culture.⁷ Approximately 75% report JOFEE has had a positive influence on their understanding of the interconnectedness between their Jewishness and their relationship to the outdoors, food, or the environment. That JOFEE has attracted committed volunteers (e.g., volunteers with the Food Festival, CSAs, the Hazon Advisory Board) as well as supporters of Jewish farms and co-ops (e.g., Ekar Farm, goat co-op, CSA members) who had previously not been participating in Colorado Jewish life is another testament to how JOFEE is adding meaning to participants' lives. Those who attended the Hazon Food Conference praise the opportunity to learn more about Jewish life and practice together with learning about the outdoors, food, and the environment.

People in Colorado tend to report that JOFEE has a greater influence on their Jewish cultural practices than on their religious practices. To illustrate, about half attend more Jewish

educational events or read literature with Jewish themes because of JOFEE, and many report joining a Jewish CSA because of their JOFEE experiences. On the other hand, JOFEE has had less influence on their attendance at synagogue or in their observance of Shabbat.

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"This conference really helped me solidify my interests and goals for how I want to connect my passion for food to my Jewish identity."

.....
—JOFEE Participant

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"[The Hazon Food Conference] has enhanced my personal growth and will also allow me to give back to the community."

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—JOFEE Participant

People in Colorado are reconnecting to Jewish life through JOFEE.

More than half (61%) report having felt disengaged from Judaism and Jewish life during some period of their life, however many say that JOFEE helped them to engage or reconnect Jewishly. JOFEE provided them with opportunities to make likeminded Jewish friends and develop connections to Judaism and Jewish life that bring meaning to their lives, whether that be getting involved in Hazon, learning about other ways to practice and experience Judaism, or finding spirituality in the outdoors.

⁷ These terms reflect the language used in the participant survey.

“So often it feels like the Jewish community is segmented and working against each other. This conference illustrated that it is possible for Jews across the spectrum of affiliation to come together for a common goal. I look forward to being part of that movement in the Denver/Boulder area.”

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—JOFEE Participant

People in the Colorado delegation to the Hazon Food Conference, in particular, often reference that it was one of the first times they experienced Jewish life in a positive way. They value the pluralistic, non-judgmental community, and they appreciate efforts in which Jews are working to improve the world in a broad sense. They returned from the conference inspired and feeling empowered to participate in Jewish life in a way that matched their interests.

The Colorado Food Festival is also proving to be a portal into Jewish life. With both Jewish and universal content that speaks to Coloradoans, and attentiveness to diversity and inclusiveness on the part of the planning committee, this one-day event has a low-barrier to entry, and, perhaps due to this, has succeeded in attracting diverse participants.

Through JOFEE, people are inspired to make their lives and communities increasingly sustainable. In addition to Jewish outcomes, JOFEE experiences in Colorado are also contributing to individuals’ awareness of and commitment to outdoor, food, and environmental issues, and people are making some changes in their lives, work, organizations, and

communities in these areas. For the vast majority, JOFEE has helped to shape their understanding of where their food comes from, as well as their concerns about environmental issues.

Long after the programs end, people continue their learning and doing. Most explore new ideas or skills and take action following their JOFEE experience, both within Jewish institutions and in independent, do-it-yourself (DIY) efforts in their homes and with small groups. Further, some note that learning about national projects helps them think about opportunities in their local communities. Jewish communal professionals who attended the Hazon Food Conference, in particular, cite tangible changes they made in their institutions and in their lives.



JOFEE adds meaning to participants’ lives



JOFEE is a portal for people to reconnect to Jewish life

Experiences from the Hazon Food Conference

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“At my first conference last year, it was a complete revelation to me that there were people thinking about sustainability and food justice in light of Jewish tradition. This year, given all the people who were there, it feels like it will be easier to help people in our communities feel the same excitement. Attending this conference last year was a transformative experience for me. I have become significantly more involved in my synagogue, in the larger Boulder and Denver Jewish community, and feel like what I do, especially in relation to getting people involved in the CSA program, is more infused with a sense of its connection with Jewish tradition.”

“It was AMAZING to see Jews doing Jewish things for a greater cause. I feel so blessed that I was able to bear witness to such a movement...I feel inspired to integrate Judaism and agriculture into my life.”



Through JOFEE, people are inspired to make their lives and communities increasingly sustainable

JOFEE's Influence on Individuals

- 80% continue to explore new ideas or skills related to the Jewish outdoor, food, and environmental education movement (e.g., learning about community gardening or connecting to local farmers)
- 47% have made or suggested outdoor, food, or environmental changes in their workplace (e.g., introducing reducing and recycling efforts, introducing composting and general promotion of more sustainable food practice)
- 44% have started a new effort—program, organization, or business—relating to the outdoors, food, or the environment (e.g., introducing new programming in a JCC, new program partnerships, leading “contemplative” hikes, building a garden)

What Is Changing in the Colorado Community?

The work inspired by JOFEE programs has seeded many changes in the Boulder and Denver Jewish communities and institutions by building the capacity of JOFEE efforts, building Jewish community, and supporting Jewish institutions, all while building a healthier and more sustainable Denver and Boulder.

Through offering new ways to connect to Jewish life, JOFEE is building an accessible and meaningful Jewish community from the ground up. JOFEE efforts in Colorado Jewish communities are described as having “a casual, easygoing atmosphere” where “families can do their own form of education.” JOFEE carries the perception that it is universally relevant, and that it offers “something for everybody” in an “open, diverse, and vibrant Jewish community.” This means that JOFEE is an inclusive and welcoming entry point for those otherwise not connected to a Jewish community, a platform for hyper-local and DIY Jewish engagement, as well as strengthening Jewish institutional life.

For individuals and families less connected to Jewish institutional life, JOFEE is perceived as a low-barrier entry into Jewish life. The content is accessible and open to Jews and allies, and includes a mixture of Jewish and universal themes and can be experienced outside institutional walls. This is particularly important in light of the fact that, often, Jewish institutions are not perceived as relevant or accessible. For examples, small-group gardening has grown, as have one-off JOFEE programs, such as book groups, film screenings, and speaker programs. Judaism Your Way, a Denver-based organization that aims to offer innovative opportunities to connect Jewishly for all Jews and their loved ones, wrote a Passover Haggadah focused on food justice for their Seder. Another example is the increase in Tu B'Shvat seders and related programming utilizing JOFEE curriculum. Programs report that there has been greater participation from individuals who have not otherwise been Jewishly engaged.



“These efforts are creating a much broader-based community. For young people, the Jewish community becomes more appealing when it’s perceived as less exclusive.”

—JOFEE Stakeholder

JOFEE initiatives and organizations have increased local capacity. Likely as a result of encouraging institutional collaboration, Hazon’s deliberate network weaving, the mini-grants and the funders’ commitment to grassroots community building, community stakeholders believe that there is more support and more capacity for JOFEE in Colorado. Ideas and efforts are being seeded, and leaders—nascent and otherwise—are being supported. Additionally, as organizations are increasingly interested and willing to learn about and from each other, they are bringing these learnings to make improvements in their work.

JOFEE is increasingly present and meaningful in Jewish institutions in Colorado, and there is a perception that it is increasing the relevance of Jewish institutions. Colorado Jewish institutions are embracing JOFEE in multiple ways. With more on-site gardens, for example, more Jewish organizations have natural spaces for JOFEE programming. The Boulder JCC’s garden was designed to be an outdoor classroom. The early childhood education center in Denver, boasting a new garden, has become more focused on nature and the natural world. There is also an increased emphasis on food justice. One congregation took on the “Food Stamp Challenge,” for example, in which members lived on the average daily food stamp benefit.

“An important emergent issue in the Jewish world is that our Jewish institutions are in many cases not relevant to Jews, because they aren’t offering cutting edge programs, building relationships with people, or creating networks in the way that they could be. One profound thing [about these efforts] is that we’re going to the grassroots level, not depending on Jewish institutions to deliver meaning to people.”

—Interview Informant



By offering new ways to connect to Jewish life, JOFEE is building an accessible and meaningful Jewish community from the ground up

This embrace of JOFEE serves current constituents and attracts new participants. For example, more synagogues, independent minyanim, and JCCs are hosting Jewish CSA programs, reaching over 125 families in 2013 alone. As a result of the Jewish-inspired content in the CSA experience, members report a stronger connection to their Jewish community and the land that grows their food, resulting in both strong participant, organizational, and community outcomes.

“The building design and the space of the [Boulder JCC] site has everything to do with [questions like:]...Where are the gardens? Who will do the garden? Do we have demonstration kitchens so that parents can help prepare food after the kids harvest crops?”

—JOFEE Practitioner

There has been an increase in the partnerships between JOFEE efforts and Jewish institutions. For example, congregations, Jewish day schools, and early childhood education centers are partnering with Ekar Farm, Hazon and other JOFEE organizations, to support or deliver youth and family education programs such as field trips to local farms and incorporating Jewish food and Jewish environmental themes in their curricula. JOFEE has also sparked partnerships outside of the Jewish community. The Boulder JCC, for example, worked with a local nonprofit, Growing Gardens, to develop a garden-themed summer camp that complements their onsite preschool garden.



“I love going there [Hazon Food Conference] and being with like-minded people. I always leave with one idea and I made some good contacts professionally.”

— JOFEE Stakeholder

“For [Jewish] institutions, JOFEE is a way to link to something really hot. It’s a new way for people to be Jewish.”

—Interview Informant

JOFEE is building a healthier and more sustainable Denver and Boulder. From food justice programs to promoting healthier eating to supporting local farms, most if not all the examples mentioned herein are indirectly and directly supporting the goals of building a healthier and more sustainable world around us. Perhaps Hazon’s Food Audit is the best example of this. Twenty Jewish organizations in Colorado have participated in Hazon’s Food Audit and have taken concrete steps to make healthier and more sustainable choices. For some, steps were small, and for others, like Congregation Bonai Shalom, which has had a long-time focus on the environment, the Food Audit spurred a month of food-justice related community education programs. Ramah in the Rockies is not only creating a healthier Jewish overnight camp in Colorado, it is serving as a national model of how overnight camps, Jewish and secular, can become sustainable environmental operations.



JOFEE initiatives and organizations have increased local capacity



JOFEE is increasingly present and meaningful in Jewish institutions in Colorado

“Hazon’s Food Audit is a reason why synagogues and JCCs are composting, are conscious about where their food comes from. My synagogue is now exclusively vegetarian. People are talking about things, thinking about things.”

—Interview Informant



“In Boulder I see [JOFEE] becoming more mainstream and more institutionalized. I see it becoming a less discrete funding area, rather something that is just part of what we are doing, more integrated.”

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—JOFEE Participant

Conclusion

This case study documents how a targeted strategy designed to support and augment grassroots Jewish outdoor, food, and environmental efforts in Colorado is having an important, ongoing influence on the Jewish community and the individuals engaged in the effort. This case study is intended to spark a conversation in Jewish communities, among community members and leaders, Jewish communal professionals, JOFEE

practitioners, and funders. While this story of the Jewish food movement in Colorado certainly has some unique elements to it, it illustrates one strategy to strengthen Jewish life and community. The approach to the work—how it was done as well as what was resulted—in whole or in part, may provide useful lessons for many others outside Colorado.

Key Takeaways



Invest in people already committed to making change



Start small to test a new approach



Find common interests among funders and/or grantees to leverage resources for mutual benefit



Map community assets and needs to understand what currently exists and what could exist



Leverage national/outside expertise to augment—not overtake—local initiatives



Relatively small, targeted grants can both support local projects and cultivate local leadership



Listen to local needs and interests



Local experimentation can become a scalable, national model



JOFEE adds meaning to participants' lives



JOFEE is a portal for people to reconnect to Jewish life



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JOFEE initiatives and organizations have increased local capacity



JOFEE is increasingly present and meaningful in Jewish institutions in Colorado



Thank you to all the photographers and to Bonai Shalom, Ekar, Hazon, and Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA for contributing photos to this report.

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This report was printed on recycled paper with soy based ink in limited quantities.

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A full copy of the report with appendices and case studies is available online at hazon.org/jofee.

For questions regarding the report, please contact jofee@hazon.org.