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Teen Philanthropy Project to Receive Award ing Philanthropic Innovation

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The Samuel M. Goldston Teen Philanthropy Project has been chosen to receive the Outstanding Philanthropic Innovation Award for 2008 in recognition of its exceptional contributions to the southwestern Pennsylvania community. The twenty-four local Jewish teenage philanthropists who participated in the project will be honored by the Western PA Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals as part of the National Philanthropy Day Celebration, on Wednesday evening, November 12, at the Sheraton Station Square Hotel.

The Samuel M. Goldston Teen Philanthropy Project is open to teens in the year of, or the year following, their becoming a bar or bat mitzvah, and requires each one to donate $500. The funds donated by the teens are then matched through the United Jewish Federation Foundation by Linda and Edward Goldston, in memory of their son. The teens research various local, national, and Israeli causes, and then decide how to allocate the collective funds. The projectôs charitable gifts this year totaled $18,000.

The participants in this yearôs project are: Samantha Ballengee, Jonah Baron, Justin Berk, Sharin Berman, Hannah Busis, Blaine Dinkin, Carly Eisner, Betsy Erlanger, Sam Gerson, Sarah Goldblum, Emily Gorby, Harrison Gottlieb, Scott Horvitz, Jacob Kander, Marissa Karp, Katie Katz, Natalie Palmieri, Jonathan Perlin, Ben Plaut, Dani Plung, Ben Schuster, Elizabeth Shackney, Felicia Tissenbaum, and Sarah Yalowich.

Based on the belief that young adults have a sincere desire to "do the right thing," and to make informed, strategic decisions to meet community needs, the program encourages participants to advocate for causes that are meaningful to them, and award funding to an array of worthy human service agencies.

The project, including an orientation and group building session, a study session focusing on Jewish values and local community needs, site visits to various charitable organizations and the final allocations meeting, is organized by the Agency for Jewish Learning, in close cooperation with the United Jewish Federation Foundation.

Following completion of the program, participants become trustees of the project and will have the opportunity to continue to be involved through their high school

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stees, and recruitment is in process for next yearôs

Sharon Perelman, associate director of the UJF Foundation, brought this project to Pittsburgh in 2006, and has worked tirelessly to make it the success that it is today. Five local couples kicked off the project in its inception, and were responsible for recruiting the founding teen trustees. Those couples are: Marcy and Jeff Bernson; Nancy and Dan Garfinkel; Sharon and Eric Perelman; Kate and Joel Rosenthal; and Lori and Bob Shure.

Registration is open for the program for the 2008/2009 year. Enrollment is limited to 25 students, with more than 17 students already enrolled. For information about registering for the program, contact Sara Gaal at the AJL, 412-521-1101 x3201 or sgaal@ajlpittsburgh.org.

Media Interview Options

Additional information and interviews are available with the following individuals:

- Sara Gaal, Project Coordinator
- Ed Frim executive director, AJL
- Sharon Perelman, associate director, UJF Foundation

The Agency for Jewish Leaning is the central resource and infrastructure for Jewish education in Pittsburgh. AJL provides training, consultation, resources and networking for educators, and offers a menu of classes for adults, teens and families. Departments include Adult Learning, Community and Education Resources, J-Site Community High School, Israel Education and Special Needs.

AJL is the only agency committed to enhancing the quality of Jewish learning across the Pittsburgh communityð in synagogues and day schools, suburbs and the city, for people of all ages, in formal and informal settings, and for all Jewish religious movements. The Agency for Jewish Learning is a beneficiary agency of the United Jewish Federation.

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