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THE  
**BRONFMAN**  
FELLOWSHIPS

Annual Report







**1000+ young Jews** call themselves Bronfmanim. Between October 2012 and November 2013, over 40% of Bronfman alumni came together at two massive alumni anniversary gatherings in Israel and New York City to celebrate the impact the Bronfman Fellowships has on their adult lives.

The Fellowships are an engine for inspiration. As one alumnus shared, the Bronfman community is a place where he goes for a “jolt of ideas and energy.” This is what keeps alumni like him coming back to Bronfman programming, participating in our virtual conversations, donating to the Alumni Venture Fund, and seeking connections with other alumni. It’s also why so many alumni recommend Bronfman to their younger siblings, relatives and friends as a transformative experience.

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The **anniversary gatherings** encapsulated the “**restart**” that the Fellowships has undergone as we grow into a **long-term multi-generational** project.

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Transitioning from ‘The Bronfman Youth Fellowships in Israel’ to ‘The Bronfman Fellowships’ symbolizes our evolution. We have moved from being regarded as a teen program for North American students who visit Israel, to being regarded as a lifelong learning community of Israeli and North American opinion makers, community builders, thinkers, creators and influencers.

The Fellowships are grounded in respect for diverse expressions of Jewish identity and appreciation of Jewish learning as the key to a strong Jewish future. We facilitate an innovative paradigm of Jewish connection between Israelis and Americans, fostering leadership in both places and recognizing the importance and equity of each community.

2013 was a year of increased connection with our lay leadership, a time of celebration with alumni in Israel, and continued excellence and purposefulness in programming for our Fellowship Years in Israel and America. Our annual report focuses on highlights from 2013 and priorities for the year ahead, offering a window into the inspiring Bronfman community.



**The success of our community** relies on cultivating meaningful relationships. Under the leadership of Co-Directors Rebecca Voorwinde & Rabbi Mishael Zion, the Bronfman Fellowships staff has grown and professionalized. Our dedicated staff team (which includes seven alumni) exudes passion for the Bronfman Fellowships' mission. They seek to enhance community through individualized mentorship and making connections between alumni.

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Our **focus on engagement** has led to a significant increase in the percent of **our alumni** who regularly interact with the Bronfman community. Alumni are more likely to serve as **resources to one another** and to the wider Jewish community as a **result of this strategy** of engagement.

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**Our 31 volunteer** Israeli and American board members are key ambassadors to their alumni peers. Additionally, our 46 American and Israeli educators, all of whom have worked at some point with Bronfmanim, continue to connect to alumni, often serving as wedding officiants or confidants during major life events.

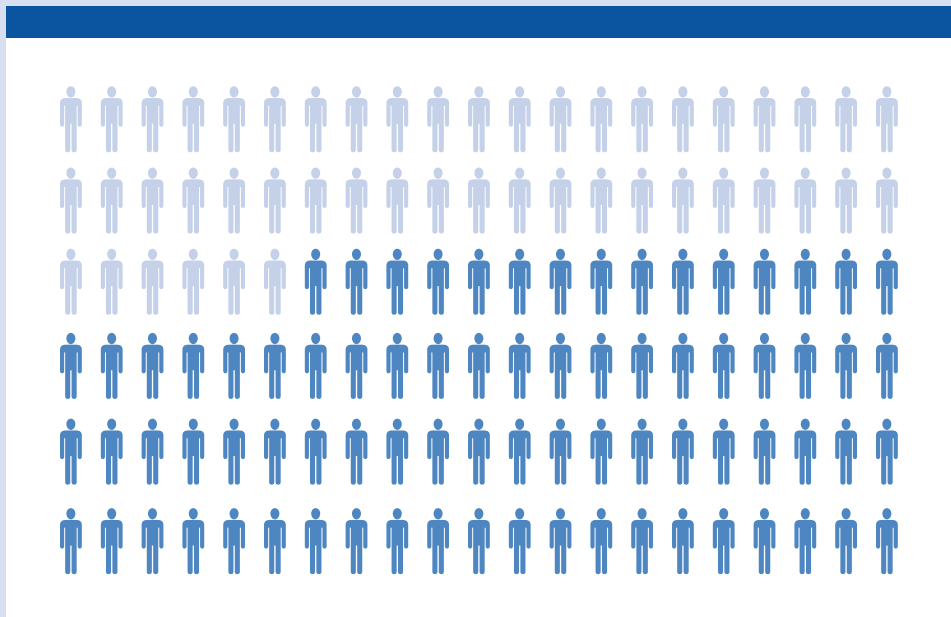


**25% of our alumni** met with at least one staff member (by phone or in-person) for a one:one conversation in 2013.<sup>1</sup>

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**436 of our alumni** interacted with the Bronfman community, through the listserv, magazine, reunions, events, volunteering as mentors for other alumni or supporting the Alumni Venture Fund in 2013.

**62% OF US ALUMNI DIRECTLY ENGAGED WITH BRONFMAN IN 2013**



<sup>1</sup> Data collection made possible for North American alumni through Bronfman's salesforce database. In 2014, a salesforce database will be customized to allow for similar tracking of Israeli alumni.



# 3 Year Plan:

## VISIONING BYFI'S FUTURE

We are exactly where we wanted to be in our 3-year process. We have developed a clearer, more purposeful vocabulary to describe what BYFI does and infused every aspect of the Fellowship Year with this thinking. Our formal revision of our mission statement will take place by the start of 2015.

JULY '11 - AUGUST '12

### I Setting The Stage

#### FOCUS

- 1 Establish co-Directorship model
- 2 Upgrade & professionalize staff and organization
- 3 Strengthen relationships with alumni and the Samuel Bronfman Foundation
- 4 Build on momentum through continuation of existing programming

SEPTEMBER '12 - JUNE '13

### II Visioning

#### FOCUS

- 1 25th reunion event as marker to focus on 'Visioning'
- 2 Meetings with stakeholders to explore 'big questions'
- 3 Assess 2012 changes and pilot new programming
- 4 Implement further changes to program

JULY '13 - JUNE '14

### III Implement

#### FOCUS

- 1 Revise mission statement and articulate new vision
- 2 Implement new vision throughout program
- 3 Identify metrics for evaluation of new vision

# What does it mean to be an **American Jew?**

**We believe that a fellowship** program interested in incubating Jewish identity for North Americans and Israelis must include time exploring how cultural context, country and home influence Jewishness. For this reason, in 2013 we added a new seminar focused on North American Jewish Identity to culminate the Fellowship Year experience. The five-day seminar held in NYC in March for American Fellows includes cutting-edge Jewish innovators and thinkers, historical site visits, alumni panels, and a vibrant Shabbat on the Upper West Side. **Even with the addition of a longer seminar for Fellows, the cost of the 2013 Fellowship Year was less than the cost of our Fellows program in 2009.**

MILESTONES  
in 2013 | January

★ 2012-13 Campus Ambassadors  
Winter Seminar

““ The Seminar made me  
**empathize with the  
American Jewish experience**  
and for the first time in my life made  
me **feel completely like an  
American Jew.**””



## February

- ★ 2013 Amitim selected. Acceptance rate: 16%
- ★ Alumni Venture Fund (AVF) fundraising closed: \$26,500 raised from alumni, parents and friends



# How do **Israeli** and **American Jews** **relate** to one another?

**The Us/Them binary** between American and Israeli Jews is the wrong paradigm. For many years, the Bronfman Fellowships' mifgashim (encounters) between our Israeli and American Fellows struggled to overcome these attitudes.

The premise of the Bronfman Mifgash is encountering an "other," while still giving those who differ from you the benefit of the doubt and embracing a deep curiosity and open argumentativeness as a way of strengthening relationships. This year, we prepared both groups through text study and discussions to anticipate with excitement their encounter, to see the mifgashim in the summer and winter as highlights of their Fellowship Year. We revised the mifgash curriculum to focus on shared experiences, including a challenging exploration of the refugee issue in South Tel Aviv.

The mifgash is not about enormous revelations, it is about planting seeds. This summer we created the best environment for such seeds to not only be planted, but also to take root.

## March

- ★ Amitim Seminar #1: "Opening"
- ★ First class gift raised for AVF from 2012 Fellows and Amitim
- ★ Israeli Alumni Artists Showcase, "Totzeret Bogeret." 60 Alumni attended
- ★ 2012 North American Fellowship Year concludes with 5-Day American Judaism Seminar in NYC

# THE CHANGES TO THE MIFGASH LED TO A SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED IMPACT FROM 2012



Please indicate the extent to which you found the Mifgash experience informative and/or thought provoking

**2013: 73%** of Fellows said **“very much”**

2012: 30% of Fellows said **“very much”**

Please rate the Mifgash on the extent to which it provided an opportunity to personally connect with your Israeli peers

**2013: 65%** of Fellows said **“to a great extent”**

2012: 46% of Fellows said **“to a great extent”**

*From 2013 North American Fellows survey.*



## April

- ★ 2013 North American fellows selected. 10% acceptance rate

## May

- ★ Alumni Advisory Board (AAB) meeting
- ★ Amitim Seminar #2: “Israeli Identities”

# What attracts young Jews to serve as lay leaders?

**The Bronfman Fellowships' cultivation** of lay leaders through our Alumni Advisory Board and Vaad is a model that recognizes the contributions that bright young Jews can make to shape the strategy and direction of a program. This model is a solution to the leadership crisis many funders predict in the Jewish community.

In Israel and America we received the highest-ever level of interest in filling new board seats, a sign that alumni want to take responsibility for actively leading the Bronfman community.

The more that alumni board members feel a sense of purpose and belonging on the board, the more they want to offer their time and commitment towards building the Fellowships' community. Investment in the board means that volunteers can lead more programming, making it possible for staff to focus on major projects. For these reasons, we hosted our first-ever full-day seminar for past and current Alumni Advisory Board members and an overnight board retreat featuring text study, singing, and strategic planning for the year ahead. A representative from the Vaad flew from Israel to participate in the meeting, part of a greater effort on our part to foster relationships between our Israeli and American lay leaders.

## June

- ★ 2013-14 Campus Ambassadors selected from Brown, Harvard, UC Berkeley, WashU, Huron, and Whitman. Projects include: Jewish film festival and Israel/Palestine dialogue group
- ★ "Bogrim Merachim" text study events hosted by Israeli alumni
- ★ Gap Year in Israel Program - Closing Seminar. 21 Amitim and 12 Fellows doing learning and service in Israel
- ★ 2012-13 Campus Ambassadors closing seminar

## July

- ★ US Summer Fellowship in Israel
- ★ Summer Mifgash

66 alumni have served on the North American Alumni Advisory Board since its founding in 2003. They represent 8% of the American Alumni community.

Alumni have served on the Vaad since its founding in 2011, including 13 Amitim and 2 American who made aliyah.

50% of past and present members of the Alumni Advisory Board attended our meeting on October 13th.

Our alumni boards represent the diversity of our entire community, including a large age range. AAB: 21- 44, Vaad: 22-36

Zohar Nevo (Amit '98, Vaad member) pictured here, travelled to the US to attend the Alumni Advisory Board retreat.



## August

- ★ Israeli alumni board (Vaad) grows to 10 members

## September

- ★ Gap Year in Israel program. Third cohort, first gathering. 13 Amitim and 6 Fellows
- ★ Amitim seminar #4: "Heshbon Nefesh"

# How are young Israelis shaping society?

**The Bronfman Fellowships** was ahead of the curve in 1987 when we introduced pluralism and text study to the North American Jewish communal scene. Today, we are once again leading the way, this time through our focus on cultivating diverse Jewish leadership in Israel and our work to bridge the divide between Israelis and Americans.

Amitai Bronfman is the only Israeli program of its kind that brings together a group of talented 17 year olds from all walks of life who will learn and grow together, bringing those friendships, ideas and connections into their adult lives.

This year we celebrated 15 years of Amitai Bronfman. Today we can proudly say that Israeli Bronfmanim are enriching Israeli society at the same rate as our American alumni.

The promise identified in these young people at age 17 is realized today. Our Amitim can be found in the Israeli supreme court, working with underprivileged students in Beer Sheva, leading innovative theatre in Tel Aviv and conducting important medical research in Rehovot. One Amitah is an anchor on Israeli news, another was recently elected to a municipal city council. We are poised as a program to accelerate the leadership and impact of our Israeli alumni through community building and developing connections between our American and Israeli alumni.

## October

- ★ 12% of US alumni community attended Bronfman events over Columbus Day weekend
- ★ 2013-14 Campus Ambassadors seminar #1
- ★ Alumni Advisory Board meeting and board retreat
- ★ 2013 Collegiate Weekend @ Yale. Record breaking 50% of our campus alumni in attendance
- ★ Amitim Seminar #5: Running a day camp for 30 adults with disabilities, in collaboration with the Fuerstein Institute



60% of the Amitim community  
attended the 15th Anniversary Celebration

## Snapshot THE AMITIM FELLOWSHIP YEAR

**Selection:** Candidates complete a rigorous application that includes several essay questions and two letters of reference. Alumni readers review applications and staff determine candidates for interview. 60-70 candidates are interviewed in locations across the country to identify a Fellowship cohort that reflects diversity in geography, socio-economics, ethnicity, and religiosity.

**Seminars:** Eight seminars over the course of ten months:

- 1 Opening Seminar - becoming a group
- 2 Israeli Identities Seminar - exploring diversity and Israeli society
- 3 Pre-Mifgash - preparing to meet the American Fellows
- 4 Heshbon Nefesh Seminar - spirituality and self
- 5 Fuerstein Seminar - Fellows run an extended weekend of programming for adults with special needs
- 6 Pre-US Trip - includes an evening with Fellows' parents
- 7 Winter trip to the US - 10 days in the US over the winter to explore Jewish identity through speakers and site visits in NY and Boston
- 8 Closing Seminar

**Mifgashim:** 12 days with American Fellows during two Mifgashim. The first in Israel over the summer. The second during the winter trip to the US. Both Mifgashim include homestay weekends.

**Content:** Understanding Jewish identity, challenges in Israeli society, North American Jewish life and meeting thinkers and role-models to serve as inspiration. Seminars include speakers, site visits, text study, group discussion and experiential education. Fellows are encouraged to take responsibility for their experience through group work (Zman Kvutzah) and personal leadership (Zman Amit). By the end of the Fellowship Year, each Amit will have led and designed for the group a thirty-minute interactive session that reflects their personal passions.

### November

- ★ Amitei Bronfman 15th Anniversary
- ★ JFNA General Assembly. BYFI co-sponsors "Shake up the Shuk" session for young Jewish leaders
- ★ Recruitment for 2014 Fellowships in full swing. Over 10,000 emails and letters sent in Israel and America
- ★ Alumni Venture Fund grant applications. 16 received, applicants 18-40 years old, 95% had contact with BYFI staff in 2013



## RECOGNITION OF OUR CO-DIRECTORS:

**Becky Voorwinde** was awarded one of six Rodkin Fellowships for excellence as a young Jewish professional by the Jewish Communal Service Association.

**Rabbi Mishael Zion** was named one of *Newsweek's* 10 Rabbis to Watch.

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Our **co-Directors** continue to see their **writing published in a range** of national publications including: **eJewishPhilanthropy, The Forward, Huffington Post, Jewish Week, Ravsak Journal, Sh'ma, Tablet, The Times of Israel, TIME Magazine.**

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**Newsweek**

**TIME**

**FORWARD**

### December

- ★ Amitim seminar #6: "US Trip"
- ★ Winter Mifgash in the US
- ★ AVF fundraising in Israel publicly launched

## NOTABLE ALUMNI HONORS IN 2013:

**Matti Friedman** (*Fellow 1994 & Former Vaad member*) won the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature by the Jewish Book Council

**Alana Kinarsky** (*Fellow 2003 & Alumni Advisory Board member*) spoke on a Plenary Panel at the JFNA General Assembly.

Two alumni were recognized by the *Diplomatic Courier* as the Top 99 under 33 Foreign Policy Leaders: **Anne Dreazen** (*Fellow 1999*), **Eric Trager** (*Fellow 2000*)

**Jessica Kantor** (*Fellow 2000*) named one of Hollywood's 35 under 35 by *The Hollywood Reporter*

**Yair Eddie Fraiman** (*Amit 2000*) was elected to Yokneam City Council

**Josh Goodman** (*Fellow 1993*) named AP Bureau Chief for Colombia, Venezuela and Panama.


**Reyna Schaechter** (*Fellow 2012*) was named one of the *Jewish Week's* 36 under 36

**Jewish organizations turn** to us for advice on alumni engagement.

In 2013 our staff consulted with 14 organizations: American Friends of Reuth, Camp Ramah, Encounter, Footsteps, Foundation for Jewish Camp, Genesis at Brandeis, Hadar, Kevah, Moishe House, New Israel Fund: New Generations, Repair the World, Szarvas, Wexner Graduate Fellowship, Yedidim.




### Our social media presence



**Rabbi Mishael Zion's** "Text in the City" Divrei Torah mailings have a consistent 30% open rate among alumni, parents of alumni and partner organizations



**31,000+ Unique visitors** to our website (bronfman.org) since 2012. Average time spent on the site is 3.9 minutes



**880 Facebook** likes (grew +166 in past year) on Bronfman Fellowships' Facebook page



**223 members of private Facebook** page for alumni in Israel & America (launched this summer)



**170 members of LinkedIn** Bronfman group (+64 in past year)



## 1 Elevate the Fellowships' public presence for impact in Israel and North America.

Develop crisp key messages about what makes the Fellowships special. Co-Directors continue writing and speaking widely. Link alumni to high-profile opportunities. Present a session at annual Jewish Funders Conference. In partnership with an appropriate media outlet, launch web series featuring alumni musings on "What am I learning?"

## 2 Enhance collaboration between our Israeli & American alumni.

Create a method of jointly assessing Alumni Venture Fund grant applications as a learning opportunity. Increase meetings and interactions between Alumni Advisory Board & Vaad. Continue to be a voice regarding the benefits of Israeli exposure to North American Judaism and vice versa.

## 3 Solidify our approach to action-learning for Fellows and alumni.

Pilot 'Boker Bronfman' (bronfman brunch), small meetings of alumni with a shared personal or professional interest for deeper conversations and learning. Launch fourth cohort of Campus Ambassadors program to enhance leadership on campus. Revise Ma'aseh project concept for Fellows to encourage risk-taking in senior year projects. Offer increased guidance and mentorship for Alumni Venture Fund grantees.

## 4 Plan for long-term strength and sustainability. Review staffing responsibilities. Develop relationships with partners and identify areas for support from alumni and their families.

## 5 Focus on sharing educational model with wider Jewish world. Sharpen recruitment messaging and new recruitment videos in Israel and America.





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