

WINTER 2020 | 5780

# TILLING THE FIELD OF JEWISH COMMUNITY FARMING

RESULTS FROM THE INAUGURAL FIELD-WIDE SURVEY



Prepared for The Jewish Community Farming Field Building Initiative  
by Informing Change

JEWISH COMMUNITY FARMING FIELD BUILDING INITIATIVE MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS



JEWISH COMMUNITY FARMING  
FIELD BUILDING INITIATIVE



# CONTENTS

- 4 Jewish Community Farming Field-Wide Theory of Change
- 5 Introduction
- 10 Case Study: Milk & Honey Farm
- 11 A Vibrant Jewish Community Built Around Farming
- 14 Case Study: Shoresh
- 15 Building Community & Identity
- 18 Case Study: Grow Torah
- 19 A Community Connected to the Earth
- 23 Case Study: Abundance Farm
- 24 Indicators of Field Development
- 27 Case Study: Adamah
- 28 Looking Ahead: Implications of Evaluation Findings
- 31 Appendix

# JEWISH COMMUNITY FARMING FIELD-WIDE THEORY OF CHANGE

**PURPOSE:** The Jewish Community Farming field integrates Jewish experiential education with agriculture in order to cultivate **community**, promote **environmental sustainability** and **food justice**, foster opportunities for meaningful **spiritual engagement** and personal growth, and strengthen Jewish life.

CORE VALUES	<p>Kayamut: Sustainability קיימות</p>	<p>L'ovdah ul'shomrah: Stewardship לעבדה ולשמרה</p>	<p>Kehilah: Building Community קהילה</p>	<p>Adam v'Adamah: Interconnectedness אדם ואדמה</p>	<p>Peah: Sharing Abundance פאה</p>	<p>Tzedek: Food Justice צדק</p>	<p>Shabbat &amp; Shmita: Cycles of Work &amp; Rest שבת ושמיטה</p>

STRATEGIES	Integrate experiential Jewish education with farm-based education	Provide education on environmentally sustainable practices	Produce healthy, sustainably grown food and make it accessible to all
	Celebrate Judaism, rituals, and holidays	Build Jewish community that is connected to land	
	Cultivate a deeper sense of reverence and wonder	Leverage a Jewish food justice paradigm to create a more just world	Advance our core values through partnerships with aligned organizations

OUTCOMES	INCREASE & DEEPEN:	<p>Connections between Judaism &amp; earth-based practices</p>	<p>Role of individuals &amp; Jewish traditions in creating a more just food system</p>	<p>Sustainable farming &amp; environmental stewardship</p>
	Participant Knowledge & Awareness			
	Participant Behaviors & Identity	<p>Connection to Jewish community</p>	<p>Commitment to food justice &amp; land stewardship</p>	<p>Connection to spiritual self</p>
Community Building & Engagement	<p>Commitment to Jewish farm-based education.</p>	<p>Commitment to food justice, equitable food systems, &amp; access to sustainably grown food for all.</p>	<p>Engagement &amp; diversity within the Jewish community.</p>	

**ULTIMATE OUTCOME:** An **engaged, inspired, and compassionate** Jewish community that is spiritually connected to **Jewish earth-based and agricultural traditions**, actively engaged in **food justice** efforts, and practices responsible **stewardship** of the earth.



# INTRODUCTION

Across North America, individuals and families are planting, harvesting, and tending to chickens, goats, and the many other animals that make up a farm, all while grounding their experiences in Jewish traditions and teachings. This uptick in Jewish farming practice spans urban and rural spaces and continues to expand as the demand for environmental and earth-based experiences increases.

The 2014 report *Seeds of Opportunity: A National Study of Immersive Jewish Outdoor, Food, and Environmental Education (JOFEE)*, commissioned by the Jim Joseph Foundation, documents how JOFEE engages participants in Jewish life, learning, and meaning. JOFEE experiences foster

## THE FIELD OF JEWISH COMMUNITY FARMING

“The Jewish community farming field integrates Jewish experiential education with agriculture in order to cultivate community, promote environmental sustainability and food justice, foster opportunities for meaningful spiritual engagement and personal growth, and strengthen Jewish life.”

- Field-Wide Jewish Community Farming Theory of Change, 2018 (Appendix A)

reconnection to the Jewish community and build Jewish leaders for tomorrow.<sup>1</sup> Building on evidence from the JOFEE report as well as trends across the US of increasing interest in farming,<sup>2</sup> community farming,<sup>3</sup> and urban agriculture,<sup>4</sup> and seeing growth in the number of North American Jewish organizations focused on community farming, leaders of Jewish community farming organizations began to examine their shared goals and approaches. They brought together organizations, funders, and other leaders who agreed that a new field of Jewish community farming was emerging.

This work became a shared project called the Jewish Community Farming Field Building Initiative (JCF-FBI, or the Initiative), with 17 Jewish community farming organizations (referred to collectively in this report as Initiative or JCF organizations) working together “to lay the foundation for a growing field and build the framework to catalyze a powerful force in engaging today’s Jewish communities.”<sup>5</sup>, <sup>6</sup> In a time when the Jewish community is searching for creative and innovative ways to encourage and support Jewish communal life, Jewish community farming appears to be a blossoming answer to this challenge. To support the development of this emerging field, the Initiative has secured philanthropic funding for capacity building, research and evaluation, and curriculum and program development.

## ABOUT THIS EVALUATION

In the winter of 2019, Initiative leaders partnered with Informing Change to conduct a formal baseline evaluation of program outcomes across Initiative organizations, to understand the impact of Jewish community farming on participants and document the current state of the field. This inaugural field-level evaluation was shepherded

- 
- 1 Informing Change. "Seeds of Opportunity." Informingchange.com. March 2014. <http://informingchange.com/uploads/2014/03/JOFEE-REPORT.pdf>. Note that many of the JCF organizations involved in the JCF-FBI have a long history in the Jewish community and contributed to the findings and impacts documented in the 2014 report.
  - 2 Dewey, Caitlin. "A Growing Number of Young Americans Are Leaving Desk Jobs to Farm." <https://www.washingtonpost.com>. The Washington Post, November 23, 2017. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/a-growing-number-of-young-americans-are-leaving-desk-jobs-to-farm/2017/11/23/e3c018ae-c64e-11e7-afe9-4f60b5a6c4a0\\_story.html?noredirect=on](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/a-growing-number-of-young-americans-are-leaving-desk-jobs-to-farm/2017/11/23/e3c018ae-c64e-11e7-afe9-4f60b5a6c4a0_story.html?noredirect=on).
  - 3 Birky, Joshua. "The Modern Community Garden Movement in the United States: Its Roots, Its Current Condition and Its Prospects for the Future," 2009.
  - 4 McMillan, Tracie. "Boom Time for Urban Farming." [nationalgeographic.com](http://nationalgeographic.com). National Geographic, May 27, 2016. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/people-and-culture/food/the-plate/2016/05/usda-recognizes-urban-growers-as-farmers--not-hobbyists/>.
  - 5 2016 Jewish Community Farming Field Building Initiative Grant Report.
  - 6 At the beginning of the Initiative, there were 17 participating organizations, including Netiya, based in Los Angeles, CA and Kaima, based in Beit Zayit, Israel, both of which have since stepped out of the active group. As of July 2019, there are 15 active organizations in the JCF-FBI.

by an Initiative task force, called the Evaluation Community of Practice, which also guided the Initiative’s development of a field-level Theory of Change and shared metrics in 2018. The evaluation results presented in this report are intended to establish baseline metrics that can be used to understand changes and growth in the field over the coming years.

Initiative organizations conducted an initial pilot survey in the fall of 2018 and the winter of 2019 to test the process of administering a community-wide survey and ensure the questions were understandable. Informing Change and Initiative leaders updated the survey following the pilot to ensure consistency across respondent types and that the survey included only the most relevant questions and areas of inquiry.

This evaluation is grounded in the Jewish Community Farming Field’s Theory of Change, which the Initiative created with Informing Change during 2017 and 2018.<sup>7</sup> After the Theory of Change was completed, the Initiative developed shared metrics and corresponding survey questions, as well as a centralized system for collecting organizations’ outcomes data. The Initiative secured consensus across participating organizations for all of these elements—the Theory of Change, the metrics, the survey questions, and the data collection system.

The Jewish Community Farming Field’s Theory of Change guides this evaluation, including its tools and analyses. Six field-level outcomes from the Theory of Change were chosen for measurement through this evaluation, which also inquired about

---

<sup>7</sup> The full Theory of Change can be found in Appendix A.

## INITIATIVE ORGANIZATIONS ARE LOCATED THROUGHOUT NORTH AMERICA, WITH MANY ALONG THE COASTS.



how and to what extent the Jewish community farming movement is gelling as a cohesive field.

## THE SIX INTENDED OUTCOMES EXAMINED IN THIS EVALUATION ARE:

1. **Increased connection** to Jewish community
2. A **more engaged** Jewish community
3. Increased awareness of the connection between **Judaism and earth-based practice**
4. Increased commitment to **food justice and stewardship** of the earth
5. Increased knowledge about the **role of Jewish traditions** in food systems and justice
6. Increased knowledge about the **role of individuals** in food systems and justice

## METHODS

The findings in this evaluation report are based on the following methods and approaches:

1. A survey of Initiative organization participants and a preceding pilot survey.
2. Observations of the Initiative's in-person convening in 2018; six phone interviews with Initiative organizations in preparation for the Theory of Change work; and two video or phone meetings with the Evaluation Community of Practice during 2018.
3. Secondary background research, including a review of grant applications, convening agendas and documentation, previous Initiative reports, program write-ups, and descriptions to inform case studies.

The evaluation survey was fielded between March 4 and April 1, 2019. Organizations distributed the survey via online and email outreach to program participants dating back to 2016. The survey yielded 646 responses, including 396 from adults, 154 from families or parents, and 96 from youth, representing 14 JCF organizations. The survey and resulting data contain shared quantitative measures as well as open-ended responses (written feedback) from 600 survey respondents across Initiative organizations that we analyzed for this report (see Appendix B for response counts by organization).



Included throughout this report are also five case studies, which highlight some of the successful Initiative programs and demonstrate a subset of the diverse programming models that exist in the field. Interspersed throughout this report are quotes from participants' responses to open-ended survey questions; the quotes represent 11 JCF organizations.

This evaluation has a few limitations:

- While organizations conducted outreach to participants dating back to 2016, respondents are self-selected, potentially biasing responses toward the most active and satisfied participants.
- Survey data are also self-reported, presenting only one perspective on results and impacts.
- This evaluation relies on a survey designed to be appropriate across diverse programs and age groups. This type of survey provides data describing a broad overview of progress toward outcomes, but cannot provide information about relationships between outcomes and specific program types (e.g., farming workshops vs. holiday gatherings).

## PILOT SURVEY RECAP

The pilot survey, fielded in the fall and winter of 2018 and 2019, yielded 148 responses, mainly from a few select farms. Compared to the survey results documented in this evaluation report, the pilot survey reached a smaller portion of the field participating in the Initiative.

The pilot survey and the survey that informs this report were administered close in time to each other, and have similar results—similar population reach, participant satisfaction, and outcomes and impacts. In many ways, the two surveys validate each other.

Similar outcomes are reported for all types of respondents—youth, adults, and families.

Similar outcomes are observed from all types of programming—single-day, multi-day, and immersive.



MILK AND HONEY FARM AT THE BOULDER JCC

- Annual Participants:** 2,500
- Size of Farm Property:** 2 acres, with an additional 7 acres available for goat grazing
- Organizational Structure:** Embedded in the JCC of Boulder, CO
- Annual program budget:** \$180,000
- Year Established:** 2015

At Milk and Honey Farm, children and families engage in experiential programs and activities to ignite wonder and discovery, grounded in a vast Jewish heritage. Young children gather herbs for Havdalah; grind wheat for matzo next to a field of living, growing wheat; and share fresh honey from a beekeeper on Rosh Hashanah. More than 2,000 food-insecure individuals in Boulder County have received fresh produce through Milk and Honey Farm’s partnerships with Boulder Food Rescue, Harvest of Hope, and the Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE) program of the Boulder County Public Health Department. Families are enthusiastic supporters of the Farm’s summer camp for school-age children and its regular schedule of activities for the Jay and Rose Phillips Early Childhood Center located on the same site. The farm’s milking goats and beekeeping demonstrations, which lend the farm its biblical name, draw youth and adults of all ages to this organization. Jewish holiday and Shabbat programming for families can draw crowds, with 150-200 people coming together to celebrate harvest holidays like Sukkot. Grounded in the community, the Farm provides an inclusive and accessible space where everyone is welcomed to learn and engage with Jewish themes through activities such as singing, Shabbat family yoga, or caring for the goats that roam the Boulder JCC’s property. Milk and Honey Farm provides a place for individuals to connect on the simplest level with soil, plants, animals, and each other.



Harvesting herbs for Havdallah.



# A VIBRANT JEWISH COMMUNITY BUILT AROUND FARMING

Among the shared outcomes adopted by the JCF-FBI is a set focused on participants continuing or deepening their engagement in Jewish life, whether through Jewish farming activities, with other groups, or in their families. Survey respondents report that their Jewish community farming experiences increased their sense of connection to the Jewish community and prompted them to return to the organization for more.

**THROUGH THEIR WIDE RANGE OF OFFERINGS, JCF ORGANIZATIONS ARE ENGAGING JEWS OF ALL AGES AND LEVELS OF JEWISH ACTIVITY.**

JCF organizations are attracting a diverse cross section of Jewish participants. Survey respondents are of all ages, including youth, teens, young adults, adults, and families. This range, paired with a review of program offerings, indicates that JCF organizations provide programming tailored to the interests of different age groups, for instance, holiday events appropriate for families with young

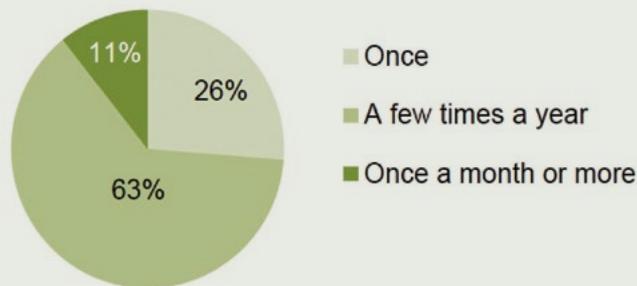
children, educational workshops for adults, summer camps that attract teens, and professional fellowships for young adults.

### MOST RESPONDENTS—WHETHER ADULTS, YOUTH, OR FAMILIES—SAY THEY PARTICIPATE A FEW TIMES EACH YEAR OR HAVE ATTENDED PROGRAMS SEVERAL TIMES.

Survey respondents include seasoned participants who have participated in farm programs multiple times as well as participants new to Initiative organizations; 11% of adult survey respondents and 17% of youth and families had recently experienced their first farm events (Exhibits 1 and 2).<sup>8</sup> This suggests that JCF organizations are successfully drawing participants back for more programming after their first experience, often a single-day event. Both single-day and multi-session offerings are thus important to supporting a breadth of participants and meeting communities’ varied needs and interests.

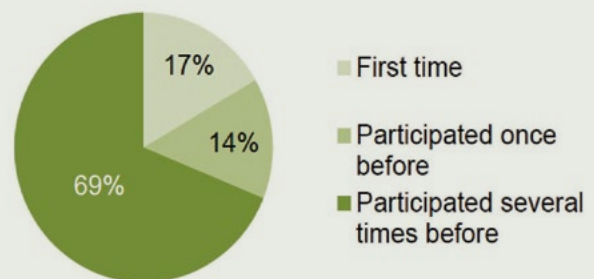
#### Most adult and youth respondents participate a few times a year in JCF programs.

Exhibit 1 | n=366



#### Youth and families report a pattern of multiple experiences at Initiative organizations.

Exhibit 2 | n=228



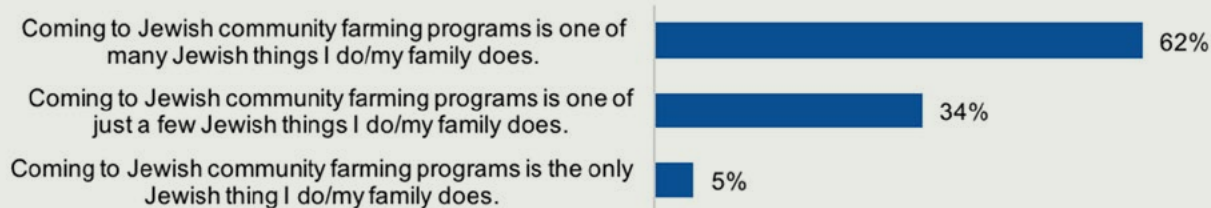
### FOR MANY PARTICIPANTS, ATTENDING JCF PROGRAMS IS THE ONLY JEWISH THING OR ONE OF JUST A FEW JEWISH THINGS THEY DO.

Although the majority (62%) of survey respondents report being highly engaged in Jewish life, a significant proportion report little Jewish engagement beyond Jewish community farming (Exhibit 3).

<sup>8</sup> Exhibits 1 and 2 exclude respondents who selected “other,” many of whom indicated they were in immersive programs lasting multiple consecutive days (like camp) or did not participate in any programs during the past year.

## SURVEY RESPONDENTS REPRESENT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT IN JEWISH LIFE.

Exhibit 3



## PARTICIPANTS ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR EXPERIENCES AT JCF ORGANIZATIONS, AND MOST RETURN MULTIPLE TIMES A YEAR.



Nine out of ten participants (92%) said they would likely recommend programs at the JCF organization they attended.<sup>9</sup> A large proportion of these respondents are program “promoters” (71%), meaning they are highly likely to recommend JCF organizations and champion their programs.

Program champions include survey respondents of all ages and from all types of programs, including single-day, multi-day, and immersive, indicating participant satisfaction across these categories.

---

<sup>9</sup> This represents participants who rated themselves at least 7 out of 10 when asked how likely they are to recommend a JCF organization’s programs (also known as a “Net Promoter Score” question). Question respondents are categorized as either promoters (9-10; the people most likely to actively say good things about the program), neutrals (7-8; people who liked the program, but not enough to promote their experiences without prompting), or detractors (0-6; the people who did not have an above average program experience and are most likely to share negative feedback). Only four of the JCF organizations had a net of detractors, totaling 10% or more of survey respondents. For more on the Net Promoter Score, visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/net-promoter-score-calculation/>. “Net Promoter Score® Calculation.” <https://www.surveymonkey.com>. Accessed June 20, 2019. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/net-promoter-score-calculation/>.

“I am now engaged in Jewish community and practice in a way that feels meaningful and connected.”

“My Jewish community farming experience made me feel more comfortable expressing my Jewish self to others and even to myself.”



## SHORESH JEWISH ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

<b>Annual Participants:</b>	4,000
<b>Size of Farm Property:</b>	27 acres across 3 campuses in active use and stewardship, 75 additional acres not in use
<b>Organizational Structure:</b>	Canadian independent charitable organization (nonprofit)
<b>Annual program budget:</b>	\$350,000
<b>Year Established:</b>	2009

The kehilah (community) spirit of Shoresh Jewish Environmental Programs (Shoresh), along with its varied programs, draws in a diverse set of individuals and families seeking connection with the earth and Jewish life. This value is evident at Shoresh’s community garden in downtown Toronto, where clients of Jewish Family and Child Services work with Shoresh staff and volunteers to grow healthy food to take home. Shoresh combines nature-based learning and environmental stewardship with Jewish education, demonstrating the intimate link between nature and the cycles of the Hebrew calendar.

In addition to garden and farm programs, participants can support healthy pollinator populations through Shoresh’s community-supported beekeeping program. Participants plant wildflowers, shrubs, and trees to attract pollinators at the Bela Farm Bee Sanctuary; care for honeybees in the apiary; collect data for a research project about native pollinators; participate in annual honey harvests; and share the abundance of the hives at the Rosh Hashanah Honey Markets. Shoresh also models the Jewish responsibility to act as Shomrei Adamah.



Young participants on a field trip.



## BUILDING COMMUNITY & IDENTITY

**T**hrough their range of programming—from single-day holiday celebrations to ongoing experiences such as fellowship programs and summer camps—JCF organizations provide multiple ways to engage in Judaism and actively participate in the Jewish community. These organizations serve both as entry points into Jewish life and as a way for the already engaged to deepen their connections and commitments.

### THE SPECIFIC FOCUS OF JCF PROGRAMS IS ATTRACTIVE TO LESS-ENGAGED JEWS.

Agricultural traditions are at the core of Jewish heritage, and they inspire and guide the programs offered by JCF organizations. Many program participants are first attracted to JCF programs because of their specific focus or “specialty”: earth-based practices or food justice in a Jewish context. As has been documented with new Jewish camps, specialty opportunities motivate newcomers of all ages and individuals who are only somewhat engaged in Jewish life to sign up.<sup>10</sup> Specialty activities create easy ways for newcomers to connect with Judaism and with

---

10 Irie, Ellen, Tina Cheplick, and Sheila Wilcox. "New Jewish Specialty Camps: From Idea to Reality." Informingchange.com. <http://informingchange.com/uploads/2014/03/New-Jewish-Specialty-Camps-From-Idea-to-Reality-Foundation-for-Jewish-Camp-Specialty-Camps-Incubator-Evaluation-Report.pdf>.

one another, initially over shared interests and then through deeper, meaningful experiences. JCF programs offer a low-barrier entry point for interested and less-engaged Jews, who find this Jewish experience important: 86% of JCF participants and families for whom JCF programs are their only, or one of their only, Jewish activities report increasing their understanding of how connecting with the earth relates to Jewish values, practices, and teachings, and 65% feel more inspired to be active in Jewish life because of their JCF experience.

“[My children] have made many lasting friendships with other like-minded kids, which have continued to grow and strengthen.”

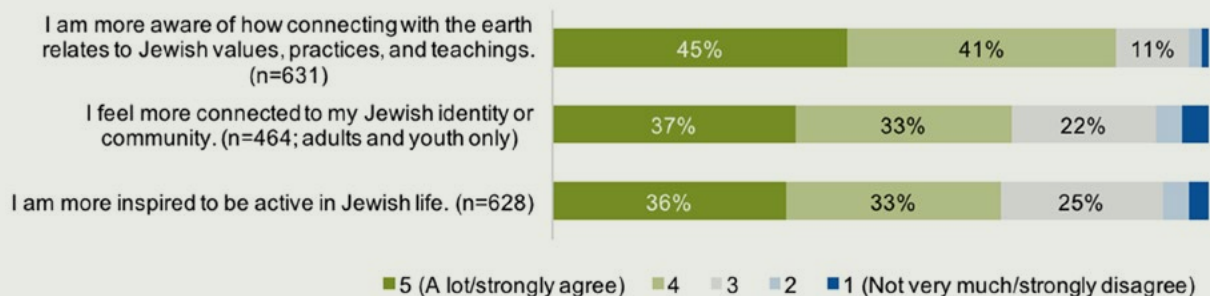
**PARTICIPANTS APPLY WHAT THEY LEARN AND EXPERIENCE AT JCF PROGRAMS IN A WIDE VARIETY OF WAYS, INCLUDING ENHANCING THEIR JEWISH CONNECTIONS OR PRACTICES, TAKING ENVIRONMENTALLY FOCUSED ACTIONS, AND TEACHING OTHERS.**

Participants who are already connected to Jewish life and take part in many Jewish activities report their experiences at JCF organizations inspire them to be more active in Jewish life and make them feel even more connected to their Jewish identity. Jewish community farming participants connect with one another in meaningful ways, building relationships and community. Many survey respondents describe how they or their families have formed lasting relationships with other JCF program participants.

Participants for whom a JCF organization is one of a few or the only Jewish activity in their lives report deeper connections to Jewish community and stronger Jewish identity because of their JCF participation.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY FARMING INSPIRES CONNECTION TO JEWISH LIFE, TEACHINGS, AND IDENTITY.**

Exhibit 4





Reflecting on what they do, think, and feel after JCF programs, participants say they appreciate learning a variety of approaches to Jewish practice. They leave programs feeling inspired to participate in Jewish life on their own terms and in their own ways. New or renewed practices mentioned by survey respondents include observing Shabbat at home, saying the blessing for the first bloom of the season, deriving meaning from holidays, and celebrating what one respondent called “the less well-known Jewish holidays.”

Participants leave programs feeling empowered and inspired (77%), which sustains their intentions to continue engaging in Jewish life as they define it and being active in a Jewish community (Exhibit 4). Many survey respondents comment that they increased their involvement in Jewish activities following their JCF experience, including going to synagogue more regularly and taking up a new activity with a Jewish group.



“I feel invigorated about life and connected to Judaism in a profoundly deep and inspired way. This is how I want my Judaism to be: rooted in the earth and filled with love.”

“The existence of these programs makes me proud to be Jewish and grateful that I can point to and join with these groups that are using our history and identity to actively work toward social justice, community building, and environmental sustainability.”



<b>Annual Participants:</b>	5,000 individual students
<b>Size of Farm Property:</b>	Does not have its own property; conducts activities in garden spaces at 12 sites in the New York metro area and greater Northeast region.
<b>Organizational Structure:</b>	Independent 501c3
<b>Average annual program budget (2018 &amp; 2019):</b>	\$220,000
<b>Year Established:</b>	2014

GrowTorah brings Torah to life for students through interactions with the natural world. During weekly, 30-minute garden programs at nursery, elementary, and high schools, as well as a weeklong summer day camp, Grow Torah cultivates an appreciation of nature and a responsibility to care for and protect it, in line with Jewish values. For example, every student activity in the gardens involves making a new bracha. GrowTorah strives to be inclusive and provide Jewish education for different learning styles; thus, some of the students most enamored by GrowTorah programs are the ones who are least attentive to Jewish education in the classroom. Parents and students report that the programs inspire more Jewish activity at home and with friends, and parents sometimes reach out for more resources about the environment, animal welfare, and teaching Torah and Jewish practice through gardening. GrowTorah adds new school partners every few months, with the goal of reaching every Modern Orthodox Day School in the next 10 years.



Harvesting carrots.



# A COMMUNITY CONNECTED TO THE EARTH

As they articulated in the collection of shared outcomes for this Initiative, JCF organizations are committed to increasing knowledge and behaviors that respect and protect the earth's natural resources, and to making healthy food available for people in need, whether through increasing public will, encouraging individual actions, or directly distributing food produced by JCF organizations. Survey results show that JCF programs are advancing these goals.

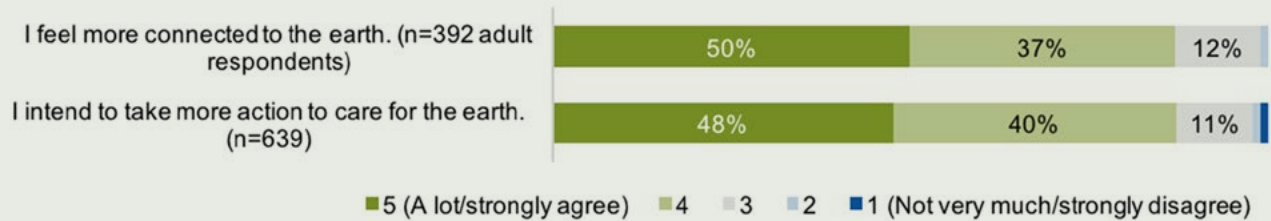
## JCF ORGANIZATIONS FOSTER PARTICIPANTS' CONNECTION TO THE EARTH AND TEACH THEM ABOUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN JUDAISM AND EARTH-BASED PRACTICES.

JCF organizations provide hands-on experiences that connect community members to the earth. Participants learn about centuries-old Jewish traditions along with modern or present-day concerns. Further, 90% of parents and families report that their family or child learned about the connections between Jewish traditions, food, and farming at JCF organizations. Grounded both in their own experiences and in Jewish teachings, participants share that organizations connect them to the seasons and moon cycles, and increase their understanding of and connection to the Jewish agricultural tradition.

Participants also build their personal understanding of how to care for the earth and deepen their commitment to making environmentally sound choices in their everyday lives (Exhibit 5).

## PARTICIPANTS CONNECT TO THE EARTH AND COMMIT TO ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP.

EXHIBIT 5



## THROUGH SPECIALTY PROGRAMS ROOTED IN JEWISH TEACHINGS, JCF ORGANIZATIONS FURTHER THE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND FOOD JUSTICE MOVEMENTS.

At programs, participants learn about their own role in pursuing food justice; 80% report they've developed a greater understanding of how their choices can support a sustainable food system. The connections between food choices, food justice, earth-based practices, and Jewish teachings are the most common themes in comments by survey respondents.

The topic of environmental stewardship resonates strongly with youth participants: 86% report they learned how they can contribute to sustainability.

"I have developed (and am continuing to develop) a lifestyle connected to Jewish rituals and cycles and the earth, and to health, sustainability, and self-sufficiency. I've gained community and skills that I've integrated into my everyday life."

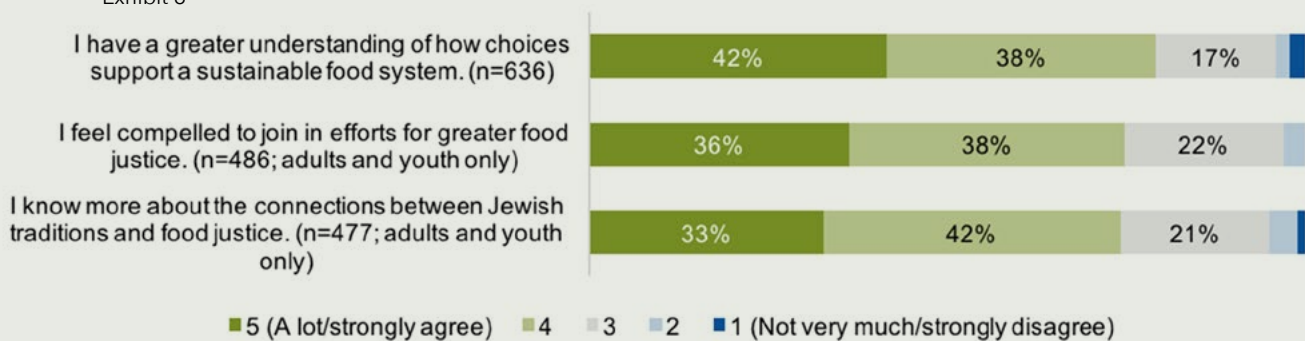
"I feel more strongly connected to the land and the efforts we are undertaking to repair the world. My choices, in Jewish and non-Jewish circles, have a deep impact on our planet."

## MOST PARTICIPANTS LEAVE JCF PROGRAMS FEELING INSPIRED TO MAKE CHOICES THAT SUPPORT THE ENVIRONMENT AND FOOD JUSTICE.

Some even adopt new habits to support environmental longevity, such as shifting to environmentally friendly practices in their homes and gardens, making intentional food choices, choosing vegetarian options more frequently, and only using locally sourced animal products. JCF experiences led several respondents to think about kosher eating practices in new ways.

## JCF ORGANIZATIONS POSITIVELY INFLUENCE PARTICIPANTS' KNOWLEDGE & AWARENESS OF THE CONNECTIONS AMONG JUDAISM, FOOD JUSTICE, AND EARTH-BASED PRACTICES.

Exhibit 6



Nearly three in four JCF participants (74%) report feeling compelled to join in efforts for greater food justice following JCF programming (Exhibit 6). Participants look both within and outside the Jewish community for these ongoing opportunities. For example, participants have created environmental clubs or taken on leadership roles in other organizations in the JOFEE network.

“I feel much more comfortable with how I define my Judaism and spirituality. I started to wear a kippah, pray on occasion and attend Shabbat events on a more frequent basis. Additionally, I become more inclined to bring my Jewishness into non-Jewish organizing spaces I am part of (i.e., climate justice work) and bring my organizing into the Jewish spaces I am in.”

- Immersive Program Participant

## GREATER DOSAGE YIELDS DEEPER OUTCOMES.

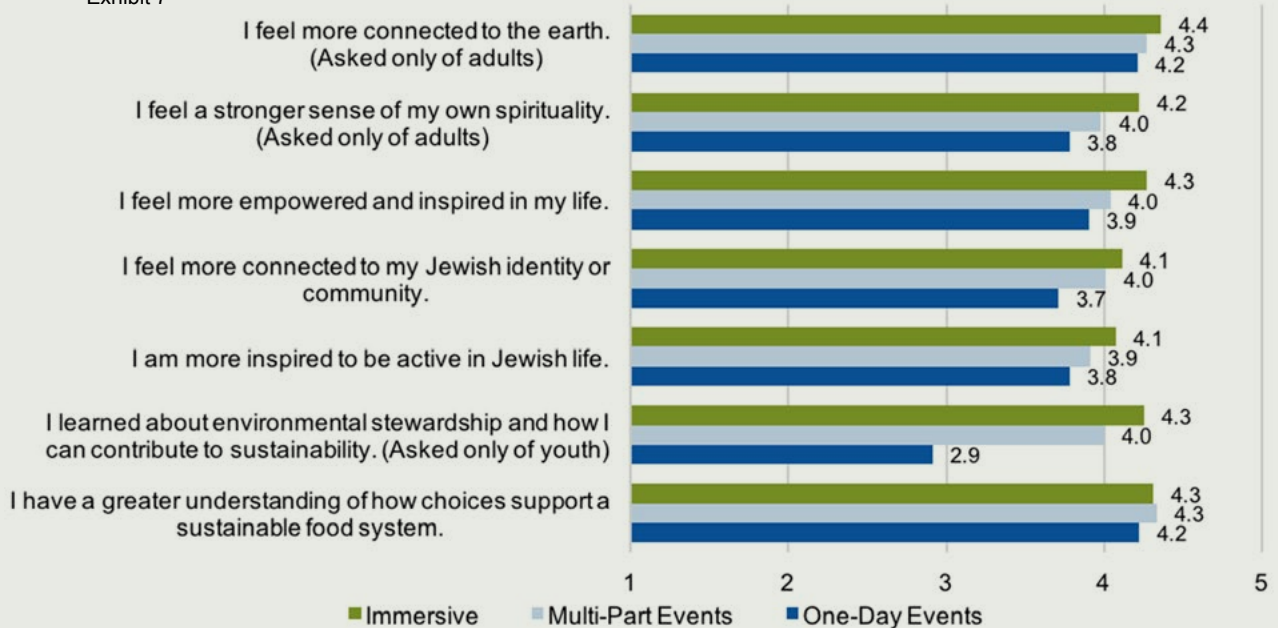
To understand JCF organizations' impacts more deeply, the evaluation team examined differences in outcomes alongside some variable factors, including frequency of participation, previous participation, program type, and level of engagement in other Jewish activities. For this survey population, there were few meaningful differences across these factors. Evaluation results showed that single-day, multi-day, and immersive programs (e.g., holiday celebrations, ongoing volunteer days, and summer camps, respectively) all contribute to increases in participants' knowledge, commitment, and connection. Even so, participants in immersive opportunities tend to report feeling more knowledgeable, committed, and connected compared to participants in single-day or multi-day programs (Exhibit 7). In open-ended responses, participants in non-immersive opportunities tend to discuss themes of food, nature, and gardening more frequently than other topics. On the other hand, participants in immersive programs draw connections to Judaism, the earth and behavior change. The question of how different variables in participation (e.g., frequency, length of program, method of program delivery) affect participant outcomes merits continued exploration.

"I feel more strongly connected to the land and the efforts we are undertaking to repair the world. My choices, in Jewish and non-Jewish circles, have a deep impact on our planet."

- Single-Day Program Participant

## ALL TYPES OF JCF PROGRAMS YIELD THE FIELD'S INTENDED OUTCOMES.

Exhibit 7





<b>Annual Participants:</b>	1,500 individuals
<b>Size of Farm Property:</b>	2 acres: 1 owned and 1 “loaned” by neighboring property owner
<b>Organizational Structure:</b>	Embedded within Congregation B’nai Israel in Northampton, MA and in partnership with a neighboring Jewish Day School (Lander Grinspoon Academy) and the city’s Food Pantry (Northampton Survival Center)
<b>Annual program budget:</b>	\$220,000
<b>Year Established:</b>	2014

Abundance Farm creates community nourished by Jewish teachings through the integration of educational experiences, justice work, and regenerative agriculture. This organization provides farm-based Jewish experiential education to students of the three schools located on the same Jewish campus as the farm—the pre-school, the synagogue religious school, and the K-6 Jewish day school. The farm serves as an outdoor classroom for each of these schools, who use it to help teach both Jewish and secular studies.

From the beginning, Abundance Farm has prioritized food justice, security, and access. Operating from the Jewish belief that humans are meant to relate to the earth as stewards rather than as owners, Abundance Farm draws on Jewish agricultural laws and the concept of hefker to approach the land as ownerless or communal. During the growing season, the farm collaborates with a nearby food pantry to run a free, bi-weekly Pick-Your-Own program, in which farm staff and volunteers guide and assist participants in harvesting produce for their families. The farm specializes in growing crops of particular cultural significance to people from around the world; many immigrants and refugees value the farm as the only local source for fruits and vegetables of cultural significance to them. For example, the farm has provided people from the Congo and Rwanda with amaranth; people from Egypt, Syria, and Sudan with molokhia (okra family); people from Ecuador with uvillas (ground cherries); and people from Morocco with bakoula (mallow). In this way, Abundance Farm enables community members to stay connected with their respective cultures. Abundance Farm also serves as a community commons and gathering space. The farm hosts annual harvest festivals, prayer and meditation services, potlucks and informal weekly gatherings of all types. The farm also recently opened an outdoor, wood-fired kosher bakery.



Enjoying the greenhouse in winter.



# INDICATORS OF FIELD DEVELOPMENT

**T**he Jewish Community Farming Field Building Initiative uses *The Strong Field Framework* from the Bridgespan Group and the James Irvine Foundation to guide its design, assess field development, and examine how its organizations are advancing as a field.<sup>11</sup> The framework identifies five key shared elements that when present, help leverage change across a community: Shared Identity; Standards of Practice; Knowledge Base; Leadership and Grassroots Support; and Funding and Supporting Policy. The Initiative is working to build out these vital elements for the Jewish community farming field.

The Initiative has coordinated a number of field-wide activities to support strategy, learning, and relationship development, among other field-building goals. To date, the Initiative has hosted a series of convenings for participating organizations; funded a mapping project to document the history of Jewish farming in the US and to understand the reach and diversity of JCF organizations in the US and Canada; created a field-wide Theory of Change; and piloted and implemented an evaluation

---

<sup>11</sup> The Bridgespan Group. "The Strong Field Framework." June 2009. Accessed June 20, 2019. <https://irvine-dot-org.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/64/attachments/strongfieldframework.pdf?1412656138>.



process. The Initiative has explored and addressed field-wide challenges head-on, most notably the issue of gender equity. Beginning in 2018, organization leaders came together to explore the ways gender inequity and unconscious bias have manifested in the JCF field and how individuals have navigated their experience with these issues. JCF organizations then developed a shared framework of “Behavioral Norms” for gender equity, grounded in the field-wide discussion and based on shared organizational values. This successful effort to establish standards of practice for implementation is a strong indicator of an active, self-aware field.

In addition to providing evidence of participant outcomes, the Jewish Community Farming Field Building Initiative evaluation survey—its origins, line of inquiry, and administration process—is also evidence of a new field’s developing self. Three main points stand out as indicators of field development.

- ▶ **SHARED VISION.** This evaluation was possible only because the organizations in the Jewish Community Farm Field Building Initiative see themselves working together as a field, with common goals. In January 2018, the organizations in the Initiative began a 10-month process of articulating a field-wide Theory of Change, an umbrella strategy under which all of them could fit their work and their goals. Developing the field-wide Theory of Change included reaching consensus. Through a multi-day convening, several follow-up conference calls, a webinar presentation, and written input about draft documents, farm representatives came to agree on the field-level Theory of Change, which lays out the shared strategies, values, and field-level outcomes they jointly strive to achieve.
  
- ▶ **SHARED MEASURES AND A SINGLE SURVEY FOR ALL ORGANIZATIONS.** In addition to creating the Theory of Change, the group came to agree on a set of key indicators for six shared outcomes, and agreed to collectively gather data to assess progress toward these outcomes. This required making a myriad of collective decisions necessary to arrive at the final survey tool—agreements around content, wording, tone, and response options. The collective processes and consensus indicates giant steps in the development of a field of practice.
  
- ▶ **SHARED OUTCOMES.** Despite very different settings and styles of programs, evaluation results show that Initiative organizations produce highly similar results, and their common strategies yield the intended field-level outcomes. The similarity of the data collection tool used and the results produced across these diverse settings provide evidence that Initiative

organizations are moving as a field and producing results that support the field's Theory of Change.

Our observations (through strategy and evaluative work) also document four other elements of field development. The presence of shared language, professional development opportunities, and peer support all happen at and through JCF-FBI convenings and written communications. Field-focused leadership, generated from within the group, is also present; the field-level activity is coordinated by a leadership board, management team, and sub-committees. These ongoing leadership teams and learning opportunities continue to codify common strategies and strengthen the group of organizations as a coordinated field.



# אדמה ADAMAH

<b>Annual Participants:</b>	30 Fellows and many (thousands) of retreat guests
<b>Size of Farm Property:</b>	20 acres, including 4 cultivated
<b>Organizational Structure:</b>	A program of Hazon located at Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in the Connecticut Berkshires
<b>Average annual program budget (2018 &amp; 2019):</b>	\$283,000
<b>Year Established:</b>	2003

Adamah, a program of Hazon located at Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in the Connecticut Berkshires, has been offering immersive two to three-month programs for adults in their 20s and 30s since 2003. The Adamah curriculum integrates organic agriculture, farm-to-table living, Jewish learning, community building, social justice, and spiritual practice to help Jewish young adults better themselves, their communities, and the world. Adamah's farm-based experiential and spiritual learning differs from other Jewish young adult fellowship programs, which tend to emphasize intellectual learning. Adamah Fellows tie their Jewish learning and reflections to hands-on opportunities growing produce, pickling vegetables, and bringing food to market. Alumni of the program report lasting spiritual influence in their lives from the group Shabbats, rituals, and communal living with people from diverse backgrounds, as well as their group's lively discussions of Jewish text, leadership, environmental sustainability, and social justice. Fellows say this interdisciplinary approach, absorbed during two to three months living on site, allowed them to strengthen their connection with the earth and gain a deeper understanding of their own identity and their place in the world. They graduate from Adamah with skills to promote and spread sustainable, community-enhancing practices in their synagogues, families, and Jewish community organizations.





# LOOKING AHEAD: IMPLICATIONS OF EVALUATION FINDINGS

In addition to providing a baseline for future assessments, this first-ever field-wide evaluation surfaced implications for field-level activities. We offer the following thoughts for consideration and discussion.

► **RECOGNIZE THE SUCCESS AND OPPORTUNITY OF JCF PROGRAMS.**

Evaluation results support the hypothesis that connecting Jewish teaching and experience to earth-based practices (and farming) can yield Jewish community and Jewish identity development. JCF organizations are reaching and positively impacting community members with varying levels of engagement in Jewish activities, including those who are less engaged and have been historically difficult to reach. JCF organizations can celebrate these successes and elevate their programming as meaningful and relevant Jewish opportunities for the modern world.

► **RAISE UP FOOD JUSTICE.**

Food justice is surfacing as a draw for JCF participants and an area of JCF impact, as reported by survey participants. Many Initiative organizations include a specific curricular focus on food justice, successfully educate participants about the issue, and encourage participants to adopt behaviors that support food justice. However, while creating the Initiative's Theory of Change in 2018, it was evident that not all Initiative organizations had

adopted a food justice lens in their programming. JCF organizations can more strongly leverage food justice as a programmatic focus and expand their vision, reach, and mission with shared language and values around this issue. For some organizations, food justice may be a way to reach new audiences, or tap into new funding opportunities. Consider a way for the Initiative organizations with food justice lenses to share knowledge, resources, and encouragement with those who are less experienced with food justice, for example, through a capacity building conference call or workshop.

► **FURTHER LEVERAGE EXISTING IMMERSIVE OPPORTUNITIES.**

From this evaluation as well as the extensive evaluations of JOFEE, the long-lasting benefits of immersive experiences are clear, including leadership development and community building. However, not all Initiative organizations are positioned (or need to be positioned) to provide immersive opportunities, whether due to budget, facilities, or interest. Therefore, it might be worthwhile to consider how Initiative organizations might jointly benefit from already-existing immersive opportunities. For example, field-level scholarships could support participants, cross-program counselor-in-training opportunities, or staff internships.

► **MAINTAIN A MIX OF PROGRAM TYPES.**

Despite the high yield of outcomes from immersive programs, encourage organizations, funders, and stakeholders to recognize and honor the benefits of offering a mix of program types. Programs of differing types all yield important outcomes and reach important audiences. These program types come with their own specific considerations. For example, one-day events may yield milder outcomes, but can draw a larger number of participants than immersive fellowship or camp programs. Maintaining a healthy mix of one-day, multi-day, and immersive experiences in the field will help foster both broad and deep outcomes.

The administration of the field-level survey has built capacity and stimulated individual organizations' interest in program evaluation. Field leaders can take advantage of the momentum generated by this year's survey and evaluation to continue to strengthen the field, and not just in the area of evaluation. We encourage field leaders to consider the following as next steps in your field-building efforts.

- ▶ **CONTINUE TO MEASURE SHARED OUTCOMES.**  
Build a data collection routine and aggregate from all JCF organizations so that participation can be incorporated in each organization's annual workplan.
  
- ▶ **EXPAND THE SURVEY.**  
Think about the field-level questions this survey did not answer, and how you could change or replace some questions to get more helpful data.
  
- ▶ **COLLECT "CENSUS" INFORMATION.**  
In addition to regular surveys, institute an annual "census" of JCF organization enrollment data (e.g., attendance levels, demographics, types of programs) to understand your participant base; this will give you more data and information about the full population the field is serving (i.e., information about 90–100% of the field's participants).
  
- ▶ **MAINTAIN SHARED LANGUAGE.**  
Note if JCF organizations use new terms for demographics or different terminology for similar programs, and aim to agree on what terms mean.
  
- ▶ **OFFER OCCASIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN PROGRAM EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT** (including the role of the field-level Theory of Change as the foundation for shared measurement). Buy-in will be built through ongoing onboarding and updates on shared measurement and field-wide strategy. Try to ensure that all JCF organizations have at least one staff member who understands the field-level evaluation framework and how to align their own in-house surveys and other data collection with it.
  
- ▶ **OFFER STAFF PEER SUPPORT FOR EVALUATION.**  
Consider continuing the Evaluation Community of Practice, reconstituting it with new members, or having evaluation discussion groups at convenings.
  
- ▶ **CONTINUE TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARING MODEL CURRICULA.**  
Try to identify and highlight the elements of curricula that support field-level outcomes and can be activated in diverse settings, and identify which elements depend on organization context and location, and thus will be likely to vary across organizations.

## APPENDIX: SURVEY RESPONDENTS

PARTICIPANTS FROM 14 OUT OF THE 17 INITIATIVE ORGANIZATIONS ARE REPRESENTED IN THIS REPORT.

Exhibit B1

Organization	Location	Website	Adult	Parent	Youth
Abundance Farm (n=63)	Northampton, MA	abundancefarm.org	35	9	19
Adamah (Hazon) (n=100)	Canaan, CT	hazon.org/adamah	93	6	1
Beantown Jewish Gardens (n=14)	Boston, MA	beantownjewishgardens.org	12	2	0
Coastal Roots Farm (n=14)	Encinitas, CA	coastalrootsfarm.org	10	4	0
Eden Village Camp (n=175)	Putnam Valley, NY	edenvillagecamp.org	51	73	51
Eden Village West (n=24)	Richmond, CA	edenvillagewest.org	11	12	1
Ekar Farm (n=22)	Denver, CO	ekarfarm.org	18	4	0
GrowTorah (n=52)	Multiple sites	growtorah.org	19	10	23
Jewish Farm School (n=80)	Philadelphia, PA	jewishfarmschool.org	73	6	1
Milk and Honey Farm at the Boulder JCC (n=28)	Boulder, CO	www.boulderjcc.org/farm	23	5	0
Pearlstone (Hazon) (n=52)	Reisterstown, MD	pearlstonecenter.org	37	10	5
Shemesh Organic Farm at Shalom Institute (n=40)	Malibu, CA	shalominstitute.com	21	16	3
Shoresh Jewish Environmental Programs (n=32)	North York, ON (Canada)	shoresh.ca	32	0	0
Urban Adamah (n=102)	Berkeley, CA	urbanadamah.org	78	23	1
<b>Totals (646)</b>			<b>513</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>105</b>

**EJF** Emanuel J. Friedman  
PHILANTHROPIES



**JIM JOSEPH**  
FOUNDATION  
Shimon ben Joseph

  
**Leichtag**  
Foundation

DIANE & GUILFORD  
**GLAZER**  
FOUNDATION

