



USY Pillars

Join us in building the future you want

Vision

Our youth engagement efforts are by teens, for teens, and about teens. We create Jewish experiences that support and connect youth as they move through the joys and challenges of growing up. Through Jewish learning and experiences, youth discover their best selves, define their life purpose, and belong to a lifelong community. We create safe spaces for our participants to explore, experiment, and thrive through opportunities for experiential learning and growth that support, challenge, and develop the next generation.

#1 Accessible Judaism

Jewish life is meaningful and exciting! Participants of our programs come from diverse Jewish backgrounds to connect with and learn from each other. Our opportunities for Jewish learning and experiences of varying depths for different audiences bring connection and passion to living Jewishly in the 21st century.

- **Self-Directed Journeys.** Creating pathways for *Torah* (learning), *Avodah* (observance), and *Chesed* (acts of service), youth can build their own journey according to their passions and talents.
- **Peer Coaching.** Teaching youth that every step on the ladder means extending a hand to help others at different places in their journey.
- **Accessible Role Models.** Enabling access to caring clergy and professionals, our youth can flourish under the guidance of our most talented community leaders.

#2 A Spiritual Home for Life

We provide a warm and welcoming “home base” for youth to build a community that will last a lifetime. We are an antidote to the loneliness and stressors that can accompany life, empowering youth with the spaces and tools to satisfy their deep spiritual, social, and emotional needs. Jewish teens are turning to us (USY) to connect, to express, and receive care and love, and to develop long-term relationships that they already sense will enrich them for decades.

- **Tent Without Walls.** Hosting gatherings within and beyond synagogues to meet youth where they are.
- **Alumni Mentors.** Drawing upon a robust network of alumni, youth have access to mentors and role models who eagerly “give back” based on their own youth experiences.
- **Peer-to-Peer Engagement.** Our youth are the natural “influencers” who are hungry to recruit their peers.

#3 Magnetic Core

This re-energized USY is the magnetic center of our formative Jewish experiences. We create pathways to connective spaces, meaningful opportunities, and impactful experiences that meet Jewish youth where they are to foster their personal Jewish journey. Participants seek us out for experiences to develop individual and communal Jewish purpose and pride.

- **Opportunities Everywhere.** Empowering youth and community advisors with an entrepreneurial toolkit to offer opportunities in physical and digital spaces.
- **Sharing Our Story.** From grassroots impact to deep peer engagement to centralized communications, the stories of our success magnetically draw in youth yearning for spiritual and personal development.
- **Innovation Funding.** Enabling youth to try new approaches and activities through micro-grants.

#4 Network of Advocates

We engage with a network of community partners to invest, empower, support, and elevate Jewish youth for their growth. We leverage and partner with other organizations, within and outside the Conservative/Masorti Movement, to provide a robust global Jewish community for our youth throughout their lifetime.

- **Groundbreaking Content.** Engaging partners to provide innovative content and programming.
- **Peer Partnerships.** Collaborating with other Jewish youth organizations to deliver our content and messages to youth in a variety of venues.
- **Co-Creat The Future.** Using our network of partners, to develop impactful experiences with lifelong influence that attracts new funders.
- **Sustainable Giving.** Using a combination of grants and donations, our programs have sustainable and generous funding to pursue innovation to meet the evolving needs of our participants.

#5 Young Leaders of Today and Tomorrow

Our participants have opportunities to grow, to experiment, and to learn from their leadership experiences. They are poised to lead in all facets of their lives, to shape the future of the

Conservative/Masorti Movement, and to make the world a better place. Our alumni continue to be leaders in the Jewish and secular world.

- **By Youth, For Youth.** Youth are the leaders and key innovators of their own experiences.
- **Lived Experiences.** Facilitating Jewish living at every stage of their Jewish journey.
- **Elevated Platform.** Providing spaces for youth voices to resound across the globe.

Key Shifts

To build the future of our collective dreams, the organization requires key shifts in thinking and operating.

- **Intentionally center youth in everything we do.**
 - We are shifting from a staff-focused model to lifting up the teen voice. Youth voices are at the forefront of every conversation. Staff roles become more of a support system to the teens.
- **Proclaim Torah proudly.**
 - We are shifting from being shy about our motives and hiding the Jewish aspect to centering our Torah. We're not for everyone, and that's okay. We attract youth who desire to build deep spiritual roots, Jewish learning, or moving religious experiences.
- **Within and beyond synagogues.**
 - We are shifting from synagogue-only entry points to multiple entry points. We meet youth where they are and offer programming in diverse venues, both physical and virtual. We focus on communities, in partnership with synagogues and other outlets. Move away from USY as a service to synagogues to a youth-centered organization, welcoming all interested Jewish youth as participants.
- **Full partnership in the Movement.**
 - We are shifting from USY being a subsidiary of a movement partner to a full and equal movement partner. We will break silos and create a robust network of advocates and partners. Programming, Innovation, Content, Experiences, and Funding will be a community priority, not just the responsibility of USCJ and its member synagogues.
- **Focus on Impact and Outcomes.**
 - We are shifting from defining our success based solely on numbers to a focus on impact. We will employ both qualitative and quantitative methods to set directions and to determine priorities.
- **People First.**
 - We are shifting from institution-first to people-first. Our focus will not be on organizational structures like the chapter/region, but rather on interpersonal relationships and connections.