

# Taking Our Place: Full Participation in Our Faith Communities

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**Reinventing Quality 2010**

**Baltimore MD**

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# What Does Judaism Say About Including People with Disabilities?

- Moses, Miriam and more
- “The World Stands on Three Things: Torah, Worship and Loving Deeds”



# Survey review

- Children-formal and informal educational opportunities
- Teens and Young adults-continuing participation and involvement, transportation
- Adults—affordable and well-run Jewish housing, transportation, engagement in the community

# What is “Inclusion?”

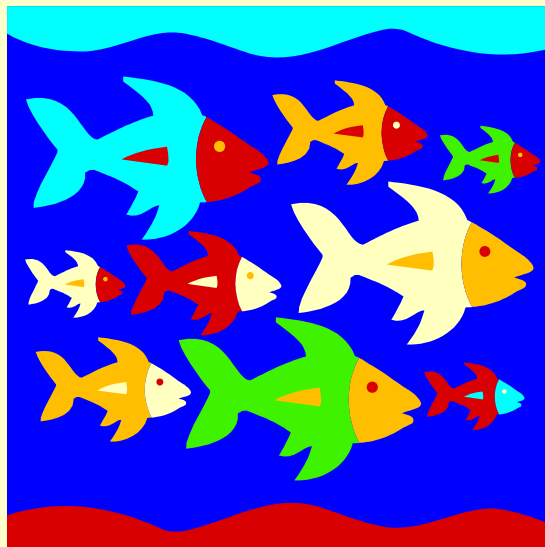
- the act of including : the state of being included
- the act or practice of including students with disabilities in regular school classes
- **synonyms** INCLUDE, COMPREHEND, EMBRACE, INVOLVE mean to contain within as part of the whole
- inclusive describes a group or organization which strives to include many different types of people and treat them all with respect.
- **NO ONE DOES THIS ALONE!**

# Belonging is Beyond Inclusion

- Meaningful
- Participatory
- Engaged with others
- Learning, listening and making personal meaning
  - What does text mean?
  - What do I think text means?
  - Learning with others
  - Satisfaction being with others in a safe environment
  - Supported as needed to participate

October 4, 2003

## Lucas Becomes a Bar Mitzvah



# Define Inclusion in Your Faith Community

Inclusion is the opportunity for all Jews, those with disabilities and those without disabilities, to participate in meaningful ways in the Jewish community.

Minneapolis Jewish Community Inclusion Program for People with  
Disabilities Mission Statement

# Turn Your Good Intentions Into Action

The great Chasidic Master, Yehudi Hakadosh wrote: Good intentions alone not accompanied by action are without value. The main thing is the action as this is what makes the intention so profound.

# Lifelong Belonging

Many points of entry  
Formal and informal  
Life cycle events  
Opportunity to reframe how people with disabilities are  
perceived by other members or participants  
Contribution

# Community Educational Points of Entry and Participation

- Early Childhood and Preschool
- Religious school-day and complementary
- Bar and Bat Mitzvah
- Summer camp-day and overnight
- Supporting parents through formal and informal networks
- Sermons
- Adult education and study
- Life cycle events
- Committee membership
- Friendship and feeling valued

# Sharon Meets Her Community



# David Continues His Journey



# Collaboration within your Faith Community

- Internal within each organization (i.e. committee collaboration, recognition that inclusion is woven into all aspects of organized life)
- Expectation that everyone has a role to play
- Leadership on all levels: clergy, administrative, lay leadership, staff, members
- Inclusion is not a program. It is a definition of a culture. It is a journey, a progression and a moral mandate.

# Community Collaborations

Jewish  
Disability  
Awareness  
Month



February 2010

# Strategies to Raise Awareness and Create Change in Your Organization

# Inclusion Committee

- Purpose
- Raise awareness
- Keep inclusion on the front burner
- Be the internal “go to” committee. Central resource for to individuals with disabilities, families and professional staff
- Where will Inclusion Committee fit in the structure of your organization?
- Is it an Inclusion Committee or is it part of another initiative? (i.e. Social Action, Caring Community, etc.)

# Self Assessment

- Self-assessment can draw stakeholders into the process. By asking them the questions, they realize the scope of need, begin to think differently. Look at points of entry for all congregants.
- Meet with professional staff, including rabbis, education directors, executive directors, youth directors, camp directors and committee chairs etc. to learn what challenges they face, to learn what they are currently doing in their areas and what changes they have made. How do they understand the concept of “belonging?” Do they get it?

# Roadmap to a Belonging Culture

Each journey is unique

# Intentions to Actions

- Emphasis on priorities, set by Inclusion Committee, may be authorized by administration or board or can be a “need to know” for them
- Opens up opportunities for volunteers to work on initiatives
- Provides concrete steps to take toward change.
- Can positively impact the culture of the organization
- How do you know where to go if you don't know where you are?

“I’m going to the Seder!”

