

# GRAND STREET

## INTRODUCTION

Against a backdrop of a generational wealth transfer and changing dynamics in the American Jewish community, Grand Street is a place where young Jews (18-28 years old) who are involved or will be involved as leaders in their family's philanthropy come together.

Grand Street began in 2002 with twelve people meeting for a weekend to ask their own questions, to develop a Jewish philanthropic analysis and capacity for strategic thinking, to create a space where they can find personal development, and where they can build a network of their peers in similar positions of philanthropic responsibility. A new cohort of ten individuals is added each year.

Some participants are in college or have recently graduated; some have assumed roles within their family's foundations; yet many are just aware of those imminent responsibilities. All of them feel alone in being young and associated with philanthropic wealth while not only allocating – or planning to allocate – money but also reconciling their personal passions with their families' interests, both Jewish and universal.

There are no preconceived outcomes or expectations for participation in the network, only unexpected benefits. The cohort groups have bonded together to such an extent that members self-organize an annual trip to international Jewish communities such as those of Argentina, Poland, Brazil, and Israel, and have taken a domestic service trip to New Orleans. Additionally, projects such as the *Slingshot* guide and the Slingshot Fund grew out of the collective thought and action of this group.

## GOALS

Founding members of this network have taken it upon themselves to identify the goals of Grand Street which they articulate as follows:

- **To build a network of young Jews in similar positions of philanthropic responsibility.**
- **To create a space where members can find personal development in the philanthropic realm with their peers and outside of their family foundations.**
- **To invite participants to ask their own questions.**
- **To develop their Jewish analysis and capacity for strategic thinking.**

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## THE OPPORTUNITY

The Grand Street network is a unique opportunity for young Jews to explore what it means to be in a family involved with Jewish philanthropy. While most young people do not want to confront these issues within the context of their families, a network of their peers provides a space for an independent yet informed and supported exploration.

Annual weekend gatherings offer participants space to explore, off the record, their values, vision, and strategy for themselves and their philanthropy moving forward. The agenda is a mix of formal and informal exercises and discussions to give the cohort the common ground and open space necessary to engage in a meaningful set of conversations about Jewishness, philanthropy, family, and the intersection of the three.

Participants are eager to meet their peers, learn more about each other's feelings and experiences, and have left the weekends empowered to continue their conversations and explorations. Their ease with one another emerges from a profound understanding of their commitment to their families, yet a similar desire to embrace the opportunities in ways that reflect their own generational identities.

After the gatherings, members continue to meet on their own as individuals and in small groups, exchanging information, know-how when working with their foundations, as well as general feedback and support. The gatherings are also catalysts to participant's serious engagement with their family's philanthropy. One Grand Street member describes how the experience of the network has catalyzed his involvement in Judaism and Jewish philanthropy:

*The experience of being among peers with whom I could freely talk about issues of wealth and philanthropy – conversations that are hush-hush in all other settings – has been valuable on a number of levels. It has helped me to focus on two very important questions: what is my relationship with Judaism? And how should this inform my future philanthropic choices? I continue to work on both of these. Additionally, the creativity and diversity of perspectives among participants was very stimulating and thought-provoking during the weekend, and many conversations that began at the retreat are still being tossed around among us. The network effects of being part of a group of future Jewish philanthropic leaders are exciting, and I look forward to continuing involvement.*

**Each year, a new cohort group is launched. Please let us know if you, others in your family, or people in your networks would benefit from the Grand Street opportunity. Feel free to contact Sharna (212.931.0109) or email [sharna@2164.net](mailto:sharna@2164.net). We would be delighted to talk with you about the opportunity or to reach out to next generation family members or foundation trustees whom you think would benefit from being a part of this network of remarkable young people.**