



Seattle Jewish Community School

Challenging each Mind and Inspiring each Heart

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SJCS Awarded \$25,000 through PEJE Challenge Award

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Seattle, WA — Seattle Jewish Community School was announced as a winner of the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE) 2011 Challenge Award, designed to drive increased revenue through innovation. SJCS was one of 25 schools across North America recognized for implementing an initiative that creatively responded to the day school sustainability challenge.

SJCS's award-winning innovation focused on its strategic initiative to reposition its North Seattle campus as a multi-use community hub and gateway for Jewish families. SJCS is strategically investing in programs and partnerships that create new points of entry to Jewish community and strengthen existing ones. Diverse program options are available for children birth to age 11 and their families. SJCS's partnerships leverage existing expertise of other Jewish agencies in order to realize expanded programming for the traditionally under-served North Seattle and surrounding suburban area. SJCS's current partners include the PJ Library, Seattle Jewish Cooperative Playschool, and the Stroum Jewish Community Center.

"We are thrilled that our initiative to optimize our campus and our staff expertise on behalf of the entire community has been recognized nationally and rewarded financially," said Shoshi Bilavsky, Head of School.

Bilavsky continued, "The majority of Seattle's young families remain unaffiliated in the traditional sense. We see this diverse new programming profile and innovative outreach as not only the key to growing our enrollment but also the key to a future that will require all institutions to re-imagine how we deliver Jewish programming and re-define Jewish engagement."

Celebrating its twentieth anniversary in 2011-12, SJCS did not have a permanent campus for its first 17 years. In October of 2008, SJCS completed purchase on its multi-story building that includes a science lab/art studio, gym, kosher kitchen, and bright, spacious classrooms.

Nationally, 127 day schools rose to the PEJE challenge, submitting a total of 141 applications for a prize of \$25,000 in unrestricted dollars. In two cases, two related schools implemented the same initiative and will share a prize, bringing the total number of winning schools to 27.

The review process was rigorous, with each application receiving multiple reviews. Applications were scored based on a weighted formula and ranked by PEJE professionals and a team of outside readers that included PEJE board members and experts in the field of Jewish day school education.

"The challenge for applicants was to think innovatively, to defy their status quo, and to initiate bold changes within their school with the intention of stimulating growth in one of their key revenue streams" said Amy Katz, Executive Director at PEJE.

Seattle Jewish Community School provides an excellent, egalitarian K-5 General and Judaic education that promotes Jewish identity and practice, respect for diversity, responsibility for our world, and lifelong learning. For more information about SJCS, visit www.sjcs.net.

The Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE) believes that day schools are essential for fostering an engaged Jewish people for an enduring future. For more information about PEJE and full list of award-winners, visit www.peje.org.

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