

# Diller Teen Fellows Parent Survey



In February and March 2006 the Jewish Educational Service of North America (JESNA) continued the evaluation of the Diller Teen Fellows program, looking at eight years of programming in the San Francisco Bay Area. After having already collected data from 82% of the alumni, JESNA interviewed a sampling of parents to learn more about the impact the program had on their teen(s), their family, and the community at large. Parents were selected randomly from different cohorts. The following excerpts have been taken from the initial data collected. A full report will be available on May 24, 2006.

## Impact on Teen in Each of the Four Core Program Areas

### Leadership

“Diller taught my daughter how to be a team player among kids with whom she shared the same characteristics (leaders). The program taught her to listen, accept and tolerate others.”

### Judaism

“Diller helped both of my children connect to Judaism where religious school was insufficient. Neither of my kids wanted to attend summer camp and Diller succeeded in helping them find another way to connect to Judaism and meet other people.”

### Social Action

“Diller made my daughter realize that she could have an impact on the community. The trip to Israel and the work they did helping to clean up the Jerusalem neighborhood made her realize that unless she takes initiative, change will not happen. Diller has made her much more involved in the community.”

### Israel Connection

“His connection to Israel was strengthened immeasurably – he spent the following summer living in Israel because of his experiences on Diller and the people he met. That’s unquestioned. It gave him a deeper knowledge of Israel and of American affairs within Israel. As a result, he is interested and involved with AIPAC which he would not have done without the Diller experience.”

## Impact on the Family

### Connection to Community

“Diller absolutely helped us to be more connected to the community through her. We were involved through parents meetings and preparing for presentations, we had kids at our house. Her involvement was helpful and useful especially for us because we are immigrants.”

### Connection to Israel

“My daughter’s trip inspired my husband to go to Israel with our synagogue. My husband is now very active in our synagogue. He was clearly beaming when our daughter would talk about her experience there.”

### General

“The Diller program gave me the joy of seeing my child grow and learn and become a deeper more complex person, more ready to contribute, more ready to take on a leadership role. He is more eager to share and accomplish things.”

## Was Diller a worthwhile investment of time and money?

"It gives Jewish teens a sense that they can accomplish something. That they can have a voice and can refine their skills in leadership. Especially the connection with teens in Israel was worthwhile. It's a worthy program. It's nice to see it's going out to other communities."

"It was totally worth ever penny. The opportunity it offered – for her to be there, to learn the language, to travel and engage in a serious political project. The Israeli school thing – that was high-level stuff."

"Definitely worth whatever monetary amount we had to put forth. Worth every penny. We never questioned the value of the experience. I could not put a price on something that important and profound."

"150%. I am very grateful that he had that experience. I cannot say enough. It was the best thing that he could have had at that age, at that time, at that year. He was really ready to open up to that. Financially it was well worth it based on what he got out of it."

## Would they recommend the Diller Teen Fellows program to other families?

"I have recommended it because it is a great way for kids to develop leadership skills in the Jewish community. It is also a great way to connect to kids outside of their own synagogue."

"I would talk about the way I saw it impacted my child – enhanced her leadership capability and her worldliness – her ability to be a more mature person. I would say that I saw something different about her in a better way after she finished the program."

***"this program will allow your child to develop tools to become a future leader"***

"I would tell them that this is an extremely unique opportunity to experience Judaism in a way that you cannot experience through your family, community, or synagogue. Being with kids that are just like you and being part of a group was such an adventure. This program will allow your child to develop tools to become a future leader in the Jewish community, and if not a leader, at least to be involved. They will gain a better understanding of how a group functions but how to remain an individual."

## Benefit to the Community

"It is powerful for a community to see teens doing good things. They see the kids involved in the Yom HaShoah program, had a tent at Israel day. It gives a visible face to what teens can do in the community and supports them to stay involved in the Jewish community. Diller is good for teens and for community and it is good for younger kids to see older kids doing something like this."

"When is this going to be a national program? It is different from all the other trips Jewish kids go on, very different – selection of kids, how the trip is designed, organized, combination of all of it together. Obviously this has had an incredible impact on my daughter."