

**News Release****Release:** Feb. 10, 2015**Contact:** Adam Hertzman**E-mail:** ahertzman@jfepgh.org**Direct Dial:** 412.992.5225**To:** **Jewish Chronicle****Jewish Women's Foundation Creates Endowment Fund to Engage Young Jewish Families Through the *Centennial Fund for a Jewish Future***

The Jewish Women's Foundation of Greater Pittsburgh (JWF) has established a generous endowment fund for Family Place, a program of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh (JCC).

Family Place provides a Jewish context for helping new parents develop a social network and build parenting skills through the *My Baby and Me* program, which currently facilitates social support groups and community events for nearly 500 families. Family Place also serves as a home base for the local PJ Library, which distributes free Jewish children's literature and music to more than 1,300 Pittsburgh-area families on a monthly basis. The endowment will be used to increase the geographic and demographic reach of Family Place and to stimulate the development of innovative and evidence-based child development programs.

JWF Trustees were "particularly interested in reaching out to interfaith and unaffiliated families in the hope of strengthening their connection to Jewish communal life," according to Sharon Perelman, Associate Director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh's Jewish Community Foundation.

The endowment, part of the *Centennial Fund for a Jewish Future* (CFJF), takes advantage of matching funds donated by a small group of generous contributors. The Family Place Endowment fund will be administered by the Federation's Jewish Community Foundation, and the implementation of new programming at the Family Place site in the Squirrel Hill JCC will begin in 2015.

Judy Cohen, Executive Director of JWF, credits the decision to fund Family Place to the program's supportive environment as well as to the innovative programming presented by JCC President and CEO Brian Schreiber in his grant application. "Family Place is an introduction to the community and its resources, with a comfortable approach for moms (and dads) to connect with other parents if they decide to raise their children with Jewish values and as part of the Jewish community," said Cohen.

"With the rate of intermarriage and the number of families that don't identify with any one religion threatening the perpetuation of Jewish life in the future," she continued, "Family Place's goal of supporting new mothers who want to raise Jewish families really appealed to

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us.” To achieve this aim, Family Place proposed training ambassadors to young families to build authentic peer-to-peer relationships that provide avenues for Jewish engagement — an innovative approach to building social networks, especially considering that nearly 65 percent of the families served by the JCC are not native to the Pittsburgh area. Other proposed strategies include hiring a Development Consultant to improve Family Place’s child development programming and creating a pre-K readiness program.

Said Schreiber, “The JCC views the involvement of the Jewish Women’s Foundation in Family Place as the start of an ideal partnership. We hope to make a difference in the lives of young families in the greater Pittsburgh area, providing a comfortable hub for the entire community built on shared interfaith values, like-mindedness, guidance and support.”

CFJF, operated by the Federation’s Jewish Community Foundation, provides immediate and ongoing funding for Jewish programs and experiences to produce a vibrant, thriving Jewish community in Pittsburgh. Inspired by active and committed Jews who possess a strong desire to pass on the love of Judaism to their children and grandchildren, CFJF expands opportunities for Jewish engagement. One way to do this is to reach out to families and individuals at critical times in their lives, when they are making the choice to seek out the Jewish community as a resource — or to go elsewhere. To date, CFJF has raised more than \$23 million.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, a member agency of The Jewish Federations of North America, raises and allocates funds to build community locally, in Israel and around the world. With the vision of a thriving, vibrant and engaged Jewish community, the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh aims to carry out its work in the context of cooperation and inclusiveness. For more information, visit www.jfedpgh.org.

For more information about the JWF Family Place Endowment or CFJF, please contact Sharon Perelman, Associate Director of the Jewish Community Foundation, at sperelman@jfedpgh.org or 412.992.5224.

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