



Moving Traditions

Emboldening teens by fostering self-discovery, challenging sexism, and inspiring a commitment to Jewish life and learning

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founded
2005

board chair
Hope Suttin

2016 expenses
\$2,461,059

Moving Traditions understands that gender is a central focus of adolescence, with the pressure to conform to expectations during these coming-of-age years present in nearly every aspect of teen life. Adolescents navigate what it means to be identified as a “Jewish girl,” “Jewish boy,” or “Jewish trans youth” in a multicultural, multifaith, and highly secular world. This confluence of forces combined with the fact that teens are very likely to drop out of Jewish life provides Moving Traditions and the Jewish community with the opportunity to help teens reach their full potential by connecting relevant content with enduring Jewish values and by fostering positive peer-to-peer relationships through trained adult mentors.

In Los Angeles and beyond, Moving Traditions conducts research, develops curricular resources, and trains adults who work with teens to create safe spaces where they can explore the most difficult issues they face each day in the context of enduring Jewish values, within a small community of peers. Teens are encouraged to examine the ethical choices in their lives—to stand up to those who seek to damage others, to accept new responsibilities, and sometimes to take risks and break free of expectations. In the past two years, Moving Traditions has trained 49 Jewish educators and engaged 850 Jewish teens in the greater Los Angeles area, and it partners with 23 L.A.-based institutions to deliver programs to its teen constituents. Moving Traditions continuously responds to the changing social issues in teens’ lives—updating the Rosh Hodesh (the beginning of each month in the Jewish calendar marked by a special ritual) curriculum to reflect the world teen girls live in today, developing new material to address sexualization and to help them build a healthy sexuality, and creating a new, online program for transgender and gender. In addition, it is debuting a b’nai mitzvah program. Moving Traditions is powered by a belief that when Judaism promotes self-discovery, challenges traditional gender roles, and celebrates a diversity of voices, it has the ability to move teens, communities, and Judaism forward.

