

FOR RELEASE

## Jewish Women's Archive Announces 2017 Winners of Prestigious Prize for Educators

*Tali Puterman of Boston, MA, and Aya Baron of Oakland, CA, selected for their creative use of Jewish women's stories in their teaching*

**Brookline, MA, September 6, 2017**—The Jewish Women's Archive (JWA), the world's largest source of information, history, and resources about Jewish women, announces the 2017 winner and finalist of the [Natalia Twersky Award for Educators](#). Awarded to educators who use primary sources to incorporate the voices and stories of Jewish women into their teaching, this year's Twersky Award goes to **Tali Puterman**, Social Justice Educator and Community Organizer at Temple Israel in Boston, MA. The finalist (second-place winner) is **Aya Baron** of Oakland, CA, Youth Programs Manager at Wilderness Torah. The prize confers cash awards to both winner and finalist.

Since it was founded in 1996, JWA has been committed to recognizing the work of educators who incorporate Jewish women's history into their teaching, and who inspire the next generation with role models and stories of Jewish women. Mikki Pugh, JWA Director of Programs and Education, says of the 2017 winners: "We are thrilled to honor these two innovative young educators, who are using the stories of Jewish women to inspire their students to make positive change in the world."

[Tali Puterman](#) is the Social Justice Educator and Community Organizer at Temple Israel of Boston. A native of Cape Town, South Africa, Puterman draws on her own experiences in post-Apartheid South Africa to challenge her students to question and confront injustices and see themselves as Jewish leaders of change. Puterman's winning lesson plan, "[Henrietta Szold: Learning from the Past to Shape Our Future](#)," tells the story of feminist activist Henrietta Szold to connect students' Jewish identities and history with the understanding that they can be valuable activists and change-makers in society.

Puterman says: "I believe it's important to actively highlight Jewish women role models to students of all genders and to inspire students to recognize their value and potential as leaders. Winning JWA's Twersky award means so much to me, as it helps shine a light on people and ideas that are often marginalized and provides resources and a community for educators doing this work."

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Finalist [Aya Baron](#) is passionate about cultivating a regenerative Jewish culture, developing rites of passage experiences for youth, and working with adolescent girls. Her lesson plan, "[In Search of Eshet Chayil](#)," explores a poem from Proverbs delineating qualities of an ideal Jewish woman. By exploring the traditional Jewish prayer along with contemporary popular magazines that depict images of women, the lesson intends to help young girls find their footing in the face of popular culture in ways that ignite their confidence, creativity, and self-expression.

The Twersky Award, first offered in 2012, is named for Natalia Twersky, a champion of Jewish education and the mother of JWA founding executive director Gail Reimer. Educators may nominate themselves or others for the award, and candidates undergo a rigorous application process, that includes submitting an original lesson plan. Winners are selected by an outside award committee, and winning lesson plans become part of JWA's curricula on [jwa.org](#), offered to educators around the world. Learn more at [jwa.org/twersky](#).

### **About the Jewish Women's Archive**

Founded in 1995, the Jewish Women's Archive is a national organization dedicating to documenting Jewish women's stories, elevating their voices, and inspiring them to be agents of change. JWA's award-winning website, [jwa.org](#), is the world's largest source of information about Jewish women and is used by more than 1.6 million people in more than 230 countries each year. JWA also offers highly regarded public programs, provides resources for educators, offers a fellowship for teen girls to train the thought leaders of tomorrow, and sparks conversation through a lively blog, podcast, social media presence, and more. For more information, visit [jwa.org](#).

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