Dear Friends,

Boston's Jewish community is vibrant. Forward-thinking. Embracing.

But many don't know that one in five Jewish students has learning differences. Gateways is dedicated to welcoming individuals with learning challenges and disabilities into Jewish life and supporting our community in opening its gates to embrace these students and their families.

But it takes a village to create lasting change. Gateways works throughout the community, with students and families, schools, synagogues, organizations and friends to build the supports to ensure transformation. True change takes time, and Gateways has therefore launched a campaign for inclusive Jewish education.

We are working to meet the needs of our community in Boston and to respond to requests from across North America to share our expertise with the broader Jewish world. We will be communicating with you regularly to showcase Gateways' panorama of programs, and illustrate how Gateways continues to impact our community.

Thank you for being part of the transformation.

Michelle S. Alkon, President
Arlene Remz, Executive Director

“The Ambassadors for Inclusion/Understanding Our Differences program has become one of the highlights of our year, and we are better schools and raise more aware graduates through providing and bearing witness to these experiences each year.”

– Pete Sperber, JCDS
Forty years ago Sandra Perrin looked around her temple and saw many children, but none with disabilities. “We’re losing families, I thought. They don’t have any synagogue to come and get nachas (pleasure) from their children. We’re lacking as a community.”

Perrin did something: She spearheaded a fund for children with special educational needs at Temple Israel, which galvanized other synagogues to act similarly.

Perrin and her husband, Donald, continued their commitment to inclusion by supporting Gateways’ Teen Madrichim Training Program.

Their gift has a multiplicative effect. The program trains synagogue educators to teach teens to serve children of all abilities. This makes it possible for children with learning differences to become active participants in Jewish education. In the process, educators grow as professionals and teenagers learn to make the world a better place. “It’s awesome,” says Perrin. “It’s a different kind of mitzvah.”

“Gateways gives hope. Not just for children, but for families. It allows people to walk proud being Jewish.”

– Sandra and Donald Perrin

Gateways’ Peer Development Initiatives: Working Together to Create an Inclusive World

Through the power of experience, Gateways’ Peer Development Initiatives offer children and teens a means to grow beyond their boundaries, explore fresh ways of thinking and expand exponentially in their ability to comprehend the world. Our array of hands-on learning opportunities teaches students with and without disabilities what it means to live in an inclusive world.

Gateways’ four peer development initiatives are training a new generation of allies and advocates. The Gateways Sunday Teen Volunteer Program, the Teen Madrichim (Guides) Training Program, the Mitzvah Mensches social action and philanthropy youth group and the Ambassadors for Inclusion disability awareness initiative (operated in partnership with Understanding Our Differences and with the support of The Ruderman Family Foundation) offer experiential opportunities to learn about differences, interact with individuals with disabilities and build lifelong leadership skills.

The experiences students have through Gateways positively impact their lives, perspectives, and, often, their career paths. Most importantly, they help us all take steps towards shaping a world that supports and honors each individual.

Why We Give

Gateways Facts

• Gateways has engaged 1,100 Teen Volunteers over 18 years.

• In 2018, over 2,300 students in 13 schools and 13 synagogues took part in Ambassadors for Inclusion programming, in Boston and in three metropolitan areas nationally.

• Since 2014, Gateways has trained educators from over 30 Boston-area synagogues in our Teen Madrichim Training curriculum, and in 2017, Gateways coached 48 educators in Albany, New York to bring the program to their congregations.