



The Gendler Grapevine Project: Information, Innovation, Inspiration

Announcement of 2017 Grant Opportunities
for “*HaBanim HaBonim*” outreach projects

Overview

Rabbi Everett Gendler, who has been described as the “father of Jewish environmentalism,” has been a pioneering and visionary figure in the Jewish ecological and social justice movements for more than half a century. In celebration of his lifetime of leadership, his family, friends, colleagues, and supporters have created “The Gendler Grapevine Project,” a six-year initiative designed to celebrate Everett’s inspirational leadership and perpetuate his life’s work. The goal of the Project is to establish roots of change in the Jewish community, which – like grapevines – will grow and connect, providing sustenance and inspiration for future generations.

From Everett’s 85th birthday on August 8, 2013, through his 90th in 2018, The Gendler Grapevine Project will promote initiatives that advance its core mission: celebrating the deep connections between Jewish tradition and the natural world and social justice by empowering individuals and communities through spiritual and practical application of these values. Through clusters of well-publicized targeted grants administered by a donor-advised fund at the Jewish Communal Fund of New York, The Gendler Grapevine Project has offered financial and informational support for innovative, effective, replicable projects at summer camps, rabbinical schools, synagogues, Jewish professional associations, interfaith outreach programs, and the like.

In 2013, we supported projects at [Jewish summer camps](#). The grantees developed and implemented sustainable and replicable initiatives designed to inspire the next generation of the Jewish community by motivating and empowering campers to be effective and enduring environmental stewards at their camps and in their home communities. In 2014, we supported initiatives at [rabbinical schools](#) to create sustainable, replicable “graperoots” environmental initiatives to inspire the next generation of Jewish leaders, communities, and community members. In 2015, we supported initiatives at [synagogues](#). These “New Seeds” initiatives were asked to draw inspiration from the life and teachings of Rabbi Gendler and turn that inspiration into physical and practical action that resonated with their congregants and the community. In 2016, our [“L’dor V’dor” grant cycle](#) had a similar goal to the 2015 cycle, but funding was made available to any non-profit organization that works in or with the Jewish community.

The [Gendler Grapevine Project website](http://www.gendlergrapevine.org) (www.gendlergrapevine.org) contains summaries of the initiatives and how to replicate them. The initiatives are promoted via social media (including our website, blog posts, Facebook page, and Twitter feed) and in articles in local, regional, and national media. Through this process of soliciting, supporting, and circulating information about a wide range of “graperoots” initiatives, The Gendler Grapevine Project serves both as a locus for information, innovation, and inspiration and as a concrete platform for Jewish social justice and environmental awareness and change.

2017 Opportunity

Our 2017 grant cycle is called “*HaBonim HaBanim*,” which means, “The children are the builders of our future.” In 2017, we will support grants that work to energize and educate the next generation to find ways to infuse Jewish values in their responses to social and environmental challenges. Organizations that are involved in youth programming within the Jewish community (e.g., Sunday schools, day schools, camps, community organizations) are hereby invited to apply for grants. Most of our grants range from \$1,000 to \$10,000. We anticipate supporting between 5 and 15 “HaBonim HaBanim” initiatives.

As you develop your proposal, we encourage you to draw inspiration from the life and teachings of Rabbi Gendler and incorporate these ideas into the physical and practical application of your project (see <http://gendlergrapevine.org/articles-teachings/> and <http://gendlergrapevine.org/in-the-news/>). For over 50 years, Rabbi Gendler has inspired students to ‘pray with their feet.’ He challenges them to not just learn but also to act. A few examples of how he has accomplished this include: reinvigorating interest in ancient traditions through liturgical renewal, grounding holidays in the local environmental or social issues, demonstrating how installing a solar ner tamid can have both spiritual and ecological impact and meaning, and getting involved in social issue such as the Civil Rights and Tibetan resistance movements and other social justice actions that speak to a Jewish commitment to make the world a better place for everyone. Rabbi Gendler has inspired his students and the youth by extending his spiritual practice beyond the four walls of the physical structures in which he worked and finding the spiritual in all aspects of daily life.

Our goal is to provide organizations funding to engage in experimental practices with the hopes that the next generation of Jewish community members and leaders will find meaningful connections between Jewish spiritual practice, social justice, the environment, and their daily lives. A goal of your initiative should also strive to engage youth who are not regularly involved in your organization’s activities to find meaning in Judaism’s connections to the natural world and to issues of social justice. We also encourage you to work across denominations (even religions!).

Grants will be distributed only to USA-based, 501(c)(3)-registered institutions, which may submit one proposal each. Past recipients are also invited to apply (see 7(h) in the proposal section below). We also encourage organizations to use our funds as a matching grant. Proposals may be funded in-full or in-part. In some cases, with the organization’s explicit permission, we may post promising proposals for which we do not currently have adequate funding as “funding opportunities” on our website.

Examples of Themes Rabbi Gendler Translated from Theory into Practice and Inspired Youth into Action

- Social action and its spiritual basis (e.g., [Involvement in the American Civil Rights movement and its biblical basis](#), [1962 Rabbis Head for Birmingham](#), [Teaching Shalom in the Shadow of Tibet](#))
- Spiritual and moral practice in every day life (e.g., [The Life of His Beast](#))
- Liturgical renewal (e.g., [On the Judaism of Nature](#); [Ever Since Eden: Trees, Torah, and Tu B’Sivat](#); [Turn, Turn, Turn](#))
- Incorporating rhythms of nature into the rhythms of daily life (e.g., changing well cap on the solstice)
- Translating theory into practical application and action (e.g., [Eternal Light Goes Solar](#))

- Grounding and rooting spiritual practice into place (e.g., [Winter Rye Omer Counting](#))
- Bringing new depth of meaning to traditional rituals (e.g., [New Year, New Dumpling](#))
- Reclaiming the rich potential meaning of holidays (e.g., [Rabbi Gendler on Rosh Hashanah, Counting the Omer](#))
- Identifying commonalities across spiritual traditions (e.g., incorporating Native American poetry into Jewish holiday traditions)
- Igniting enthusiasm for environmental action and social justice
- Or, develop any idea you have that is inspired by the [articles and teachings page](#) and the [articles about page](#)

Torah Values

The Gendler Grapevine Project encompasses the following important Jewish values, all of which bring out the deep and enduring connections between Judaism as a religion and environmental sensitivity and social justice as a life-practice.

Environmental Themes:

- *L'ovdah u L'shomrah – To Till and to Tend.* Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden to till (or serve) the land and to tend (or guard) it. We are partners with God in the ongoing work of creation and must carry out this responsibility with great thought and awareness.
- *L'dor V'dor – From Generation to Generation:* We are obligated to provide for those who come after us. This includes preserving our natural resources and planting seeds – both literal and figurative – that will bear fruit in later years.
- *V'ahavta L'reacha Camocha – Love Your Neighbor as Yourself:* We must treat all of our fellow human beings with love and respect. This includes thinking about how one's use of resources and disposal of waste affects those around us.
- *Bal Tashchit – Do Not Destroy:* Wastefulness is forbidden, as is the destruction of resources and property.
- *Tzedek, Tzedek Tirdof – Justice, Justice You Shall Pursue:* Our pursuit of justice includes ensuring that the world's limited natural resources are equally shared among the current global population and future generations.

Social Justice Themes:

- *The Universality of Y'tziat Mitzrayim, the Liberation/Self-Determination of Peoples*
- *Tzedek, Tzedek Tirdof – Justice, Justice You Shall Pursue*
- *Economic Justice*
- *Justice and Compassion*
- *Appropriate Means*

Evaluation Criteria

We ask that you draw on the concept of *HaBonim HaBanim* as you develop your proposal. Priority for grant recommendations will be given to organizations that successfully address each of the following criteria.

- **Torah Values.** Projects should reflect values inherent in Jewish teachings.
- **Environmental/Ecological Conservation.** Projects should involve concrete action to protect

and conserve the environment as well as educate Jewish communities to be more mindful of the natural world around us.

Or

Social Justice. Projects should involve concrete action to engage in meaningful and relevant issues related to social justice.

- **Grapevine.** Projects should be replicable; they should seek to inform, to innovate, and to inspire; they should be designed to grow and spread throughout Jewish communities. They should be designed to become self-supporting over time, from generation to generation.

Grant recipients will be expected to complete the following requirements.

- Ensure that your constituency is aware of the project, its importance to Jewish values, and the care of the planet and/or focused issue.
- Promote The Gendler Grapevine Project to your community in concrete and visible ways for the duration of the project and beyond.
- Identify and propose highly visible activities to build community support for the project's activities and outcomes.
- Provide meaningful volunteer opportunities, as appropriate.
- Accept requests to provide consultations to other organizations interested in implementing similar projects.
- Be able to measure and document meaningful outcomes, provide a mid-year report explaining the progress made on the project, and, within six months of completing the project, provide a short summary of these measures and findings to The Gendler Grapevine Project in the form of a brief report.
- Complete the project by July 31, 2018 (unless project is explicitly a multi-year project).

Project Duration

- Anticipated completion time for funded projects will typically be no more than 18 months following finalization of a grant agreement. Projects may be a discrete part of a longer-term project, provided there are definable outcomes for the proposed phase of the overall effort. The project narrative should include a clear timetable or schedule for project completion.

Application and Review Timeline

- March 31, 2017: Deadline for Grant Proposal Submission (grant recommendation proposal form can be found below or on the Gendler Grapevine Project [website](#))
- April 2017: Conditional notification of grant awards
- May 2017: Transfer of grant funds and beginning of project implementation

GENDLER GRAPEVINE GRANT RECOMMENDATION PROPOSAL
(HaBonim HaBanim Project 2017)

[NOTE: Items (1)-(5) may be answered directly, or the organization may include standard materials that provide answers to these questions.]

- (1) Organization's name(s), address, website, and contact information (telephone and email for point person(s))
- (2) Number of years in operation
- (3) Size of organization (# of members)
- (4) 501(c)(3) status of the organization. [Note that due to restrictions on grants administered by our donor-advised fund at the Jewish Communal Fund of New York, we are unable to recommend funding for non-501(c)(3)-administered projects.]
- (5) Part of a larger organization?

Please describe the nature of the organizational relationship, if any. Specifically: is this organization authorized to make independent application for the grant and launch a unique project?

Would the other associated organizations be potential applicants or could they adopt a similar project in the future?

- (6) Does the organization currently receive or have funding specifically earmarked for environmental or social justice initiatives?

If so, what are the amount and source(s) of that funding?

How would a Gendler Grapevine Project grant affect the organization's current programs?

- (7) In a brief (1-2 page) document, please describe the project for which you are requesting funding and how it will be executed. The document should address how it meets the following criteria.

- (a) Torah value(s) being supported
- (b) How the project addresses the issue of connections between Judaism and the natural world and/or social justice
- (c) How the program and its values will be communicated to the organization's members, staff, and the wider community
- (d) How The Gendler Grapevine Project network will be addressed and promoted as part of the program's execution
- (e) How members will be encouraged to continue to support or spread the project

- (f) How the project could be supported or continued after funding ends
 - (g) A proposed budget for the project contemplated, with some indication of how this fits into the organization's overall annual budget
 - (h) For past grant recipients only: Indicate how this project is new or different from your previously funded project. If it is a continuation of a previously funded grant, explain the successes of the past project and how it has been replicated by others.
- Questions may be directed to: gendler.grapevine@gmail.com
- Applications should be submitted in attachment form (.doc/.docx is preferred, .pdf / will also be accepted) to gendler.grapevine@gmail.com

The Gendler Grapevine Project is a six-year initiative designed to celebrate Rabbi Everett Gendler's inspirational leadership and to perpetuate his life's work. It seeks to establish roots of change in the Jewish community, which – like grapevines – will grow and connect, providing sustenance and inspiration for future generations.

The Gendler Grapevine Fund is a Donor-advised Fund housed at the Jewish Communal Fund of New York. It is not an independent 501(c)(3) organization.