

A Living Legacy

The Charles and M.R. Shapiro Foundation has been one of HUC-JIR's most stalwart supporters. For twenty-six years, the Foundation has generously provided scholarships for students enrolled in the College-Institute's Year-In-Israel program. The grants have supported ten or more rabbinical, cantorial, and education students each year. In naming the Shapiro Scholars, the Jerusalem School Dean and the Director of the Year-In-Israel program select those students who demonstrate outstanding potential as they embark on their journey to becoming Reform Jewish leaders.

Shapiro Scholars during their Year-In-Israel in 2008-2009: Amanda Winter (back row, 5th from left); David Levin (3rd row, 4th from left); Ari Lorge and Daniel Geffen (3rd row, 8th and 9th from left); Rachel Maimin (3rd row, 3rd from right); Jillian Cameron (2nd row, 1st on right); Lisa Berney (2nd row, 3rd from left), Joel Abramowitz and Adena Kemper (2nd row, 5th and 4th from right); and Alicia Stillman (2nd row, 1st at left).

The Year-In-Israel Program offers students an unparalleled opportunity to immerse themselves in Israeli society and culture. The core components of the program continue to be rooted in classroom learning, weekly community service projects, and educational seminars throughout Israel.

The relationship between HUC-JIR and the Charles and M.R. Shapiro began in 1983, and has continued to grow in strength. The original contact was made when Rabbi Frederick C. Schwartz, C '55, D.H.L. '60, of Temple Sholom in Chicago introduced Maurice Shapiro, a devoted and generous member of the synagogue, to fellow congregant Sydney Friedland, who was an enthusiastic supporter of HUC-JIR. Frederic S. Lane, currently a member of the Board of Governors, was also instrumental in establishing and maintaining the relationship over the years. It was Lane who suggested that the Foundation's support be directed to the Year-In-Israel Program.



The Shapiro family of seven brothers and sisters was in the cosmetics business in Chicago. None ever married, but all participated in the business. The sisters were especially good investors and realized that taxes would eat up most of their assets as each passed away. As there were no heirs, they established the Charles and M.R. Shapiro Foundation in 1958 after the business was sold. Maurice, a non-practicing attorney who was particularly knowledgeable about tax matters, became the first President. Originally the siblings were the Directors of the Foundation.

Norman Shubert, the current President of the Foundation Board, was appointed by Maurice Shapiro, who was the last survivor of the Shapiro siblings. Norman, a member of North Shore Congregation Israel in Glencoe, Illinois, speaks warmly and enthusiastically about his relationship with the College-Institute and the Year- In-Israel Program. Joan Pines, Chair of HUC-JIR's Cincinnati Board of Overseers and a member of the Board of Governors, agrees, saying, "I am so pleased to be a part of the Shapiro Foundation and extremely proud of our long relationship with HUC-JIR. We feel that we are contributing to the well-being of Reform Judaism in North America by supporting HUC-JIR's Year-In-Israel Program."

Each year, the Shapiro Scholars express their gratitude to Norman Shubert and Joan Pines. The following excerpted letters highlight how much the students value their first-year experiences, which are made possible by the generosity of the Shapiro Foundation.

With more thanks than I can find words for, I want to express to you how much I appreciate the generous contribution that your Foundation has provided for me to study at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion for this first year in Jerusalem. I remember the year I graduated from high school my mother commenting to me that she thought I should become a cantor, so I proceeded to do what any normal teenage girl would do – I ignored her. So twenty years, a career in musical theatre, child-birth, education, JCC Jewish professional life, husband and two sons, here I am, on the road to becoming a cantor.

Alicia Stillman

This Year-In-Israel has been an incredible experience. I have solidified my connection to Israel, and strengthened my skills in Hebrew. Moreover, the experience of studying the ancient and modern events that took place in Israel and shaped our people's history while living in the land has enhanced my understanding. I am more connected to that history and to this present having had these experiences.

Ari Lorge

From the bottom of my heart I would like to thank you and the Charles and M. R. Shapiro Foundation for awarding me this scholarship. To put it very plainly – without your support, I would not be here to experience all that Israel has to offer, nor would I have had the opportunity to learn from the brilliant faculty here at HUC-JIR/Jerusalem. Words cannot even begin to express my deep gratitude.

Daniel Geffen

Once again, I cannot tell you how much your assistance is helping me achieve my long awaited dream of becoming a rabbi. It is both uplifting and inspiring to know that there are people who support what we are reaching for, and I could not be at this place right now without your generosity. I hope to carry on the sacred memory of Morris and Charles Shapiro through the community work in which I will engage, and I am so honored to be the recipient of this scholarship.

Lisa Berney