

# Solutions

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## MAP Consultant Helps Footsteps Meet Program Goals

**F**ootsteps is a nonprofit support group for young people exploring their options after leaving the Hasidic community and entering contemporary secular society. When founded almost three years ago, it was single-handedly run by Malkie Schwartz, who was then 22 years old.

### PROFESSIONAL NURTURING

“Footsteps had been in its nascent stages,” she said. “I wanted to take it to another level, expanding its programs and better managing it. But it was a huge responsibility to do this on my own.”

Ms. Schwartz contacted UJA-Federation of New York

the management ability, as well as the necessary interpersonal skills.”

Ms. Schwartz was put in touch with Judy Plows, a MAP consultant who volunteered her services to foster the development of Footsteps. Under her tutelage, a mentoring and coaching relationship soon went into effect and has continued for more than a year.

### TAKING IT FORWARD

“I worked with Malkie initially on the basics for starting an organization, like developing a budget and a fundraising plan,” noted Ms. Plows, co-founder and principal of Krasne/Plows, a management-consulting

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But it wasn't long before Ms. Schwartz, executive director of Footsteps, realized she could use assistance. “The organization, which offers a variety of educational, vocational, and social services for those joining the mainstream culture, has become too large for one person to handle alone,” said Ms. Schwartz. There is no organization similar to it in the United States currently, although there is an organization in Israel that addresses the needs of this population.

and was referred to its Management Assistance Program (MAP). Florence Broder, a program associate at MAP, along with her colleagues, recognized that nurturing by a professional familiar with nonprofit operations could be extremely useful to Footsteps at this stage of its organizational life.

“By bringing in a seasoned sounding board, we could help this fledgling organization grow,” Ms. Broder observed. “We decided that we should find someone who had

## MAP: Another Link To Israel

**The Management Assistance Program (MAP) has expanded its pro bono consultations to Israel with an initiative that brings lay leaders with expertise in a variety of business areas to UJA-Federation grantees who benefit from their advice and counsel. We have seen firsthand how vital these organizations are to the people of Israel. Now, more than ever, they need our support. Your contribution to the Israel Emergency Campaign will help ensure that their services are sustained in this difficult time.**

**Contact UJA-Federation of New York at 1.212.836.1486.**



Judy Plows (left) teams up with Malkie Schwartz

# With MAP's Advice, Jewish Council of Yonkers Develops Strategic Plan



Stan Selbst strategizes with Janice Lubin Kirschner

**T**he Jewish Council of Yonkers (JCY) was founded in 1919 as an umbrella organization to serve the thousands of Jews living in this then-thriving Westchester County city. But since that time, many things have changed, not least of which is the sharp reduction in the Jewish population of the city, from a peak of about 100,000 to around 6,000 today.

Nevertheless, the JCY still plays an important role in the community, helping approximately 1,500 people throughout the year with a wide variety of services, including some renowned intergenerational activities and collaborations through which older people help younger people — and vice versa. And its current leadership wanted to make the agency even more relevant in the future.

## NEED FOR A STRATEGIC PLAN

“We identified the need for a strategic plan, and so we contacted UJA-Federation for assistance about two years ago,” said Janice Lubin Kirschner, executive director of the JCY and a member of its staff since 1997. “We had worked with its Management Assistance Program on leadership training in the past and were eager to work with them again.”

Jill Mendelson, deputy managing director of UJA-Federation, asked Stan

## INFORMATION GATHERING

A strategic planning executive committee comprising a small number of directors was established by the JCY, with Mr. Selbst acting as facilitator. “The first thing was to make a situational analysis, gathering all of the information and reviewing the external and internal stakeholders of the council,” said Mr. Selbst. “Our agenda was to determine where we are now, where we want to go, and how we are going to get there.”

The committee met regularly, often biweekly, for about a year and a half in a strategic planning and assessment process resulting in the development of a mission statement and a plan to implement it over the next two years. The plan was formally presented to the board of directors and accepted.

A key paragraph in this statement says: “The JCY’s mission is to strengthen the

**“We will strengthen the relationships among the Jewish community and other ethnic, racial and religious groups.”**

Selbst to become a MAP consultant and undertake the assignment. Mr. Selbst — who founded and heads the Selbst Group of White Plains, which provides training and marketing support for companies in the financial services industry — immediately brought his skills and energy to the project.

Westchester community, to improve the quality of our children’s education, to enhance the quality of life for all members of the community, and to represent Jewish issues and concerns. We are a Jewish agency; we will expand our services from Yonkers to the entire Westchester County; our services will include all

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members of the family, from children through older adults; our services will include (and not be limited to) enriching the lives of the people through educational, cultural, recreational, and supportive activities; we will strengthen the relationships among the Jewish community and other ethnic, racial and religious groups.”

## **PEOPLE DRIVE THE PROCESS**

“Stan’s advice was invaluable in helping us concentrate on what makes sense for an organization that has been forced to change its mission,” noted Ms. Kirschner. “He was always direct, always supportive of our vision, always focused on the issues. He kept a group of individuals, some of whom

had been on the board for more than 20 years, together.”

Mr. Selbst decided to volunteer because he felt that it was more than time to give back to the community. MAP seemed like a good fit with his more than 30 years of consulting and training experience, primarily with financial service organizations. “What I learned in the process is that the issues facing nonprofits, even smaller organizations, are not all that different from the issues facing large for-profit organizations. People drive the process, and where there is commitment, change can take place,” he said. He called his involvement with the JCY

“very enjoyable.” So much so that he was happy to join the newly reconstituted board of directors that took office in July and that will continue working on such other strategic items as goals and objectives. The board also plans to develop a constitution and appropriate bylaws, as well as to strengthen its committee structure.

“We may also revisit the official name of the organization this year,” he observed. “It’s a transition period, and we want to move in the right direction.”

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### **MAP Consultant Helps Footsteps Meet Program Goals**, *continued from front page.*

firm that provides nonprofits with strategic-, financial-, and business-planning advice. “Then we moved on to plans for taking it forward.”

At the beginning of this MAP consultancy, Ms. Plows and Ms. Schwartz met about every two weeks, sometimes also with members of the Footsteps board of directors or participants in its programs. As other services were added and the organization became increasingly structured, meetings of the two were spread out to every month and then to every couple of months. Their association is ongoing, with the two women talking often to discuss different issues as they arise.

“Judy helped me understand what our organization was ready for and what the priorities were,” said Ms. Schwartz. “It was a matter of responding to the organization’s needs without neglecting the programs,

which are designed to access resources that give people practical, marketable skills.”

## **A MEASURABLE INCREASE**

For example, Ms. Plows aided Footsteps in determining what foundations should be approached in its fundraising activities and in what order. Partially because of her background in the nonprofit sector and her experience in dealing with potential funders, Footsteps was able to raise more than \$100,000 last year, compared with just \$15,000 when it was first established.

Another project to which Ms. Plows contributed her knowledge was the creation of a referral service for Footsteps’s clients. Those who contact Footsteps for help are now put in touch with a mentor, a person with the ability to guide them as they try to establish a new lifestyle.

In addition to working with Ms. Plows of MAP, Footsteps has also used a number of agencies in the UJA-Federation network, which have rallied around the organization. Among them are E.E.G.S. Health and Human Services System, which offered individual, vocational counseling, computer skills training, and job placement assistance; the 14th Street Y of the Educational Alliance, whose volunteers tutored participants in a range of elementary subjects to prepare them for a high-school equivalency certificate; and the 92nd Street Y’s Makor, which served as a venue for meetings.

## **KEEPING IT HEALTHY**

“I’m grateful to MAP for recognizing that we are addressing the concerns of an important population in the Jewish community as they make a transition and prepare

for college or a career,” said Ms. Schwartz. “Judy knows our organization quite well and has really helped us keep it healthy as we’ve advanced. If I have an important matter that I want to go over, I’ll still contact her.”

For her part, Ms. Plows is delighted at the successful results of her advisory relationship with Footsteps. “I love to coach and have found this work to be enormously rewarding,” she added. “And Footsteps has also been a window into a world that I knew very little about. I’d certainly like to take on more MAP projects in the future.”

**Editor’s Note:** Footsteps was recently awarded a capacity-building grant by the Soleim Fund of UJA-Federation of New York (for 2006 – 2007).

# MAP Assists Selfhelp In Enhancing Public Spaces

Selfhelp Community Services, a UJA-Federation of New York beneficiary agency that helps older adults live independent lives, operates six apartment buildings on three campuses in Flushing and Bayside, Queens. In addition to housing for more than 1,000 residents, these buildings provide social services, educational programs, as well as connections to home care and other community services that allow aging New Yorkers to maintain their health and safety.

At the beginning of this year, the agency contacted the Management Assistance Program (MAP) with a request for a consultant with an artistic perspective. MAP Project Manager Hilda Chazanovitz was given the assignment. “Selfhelp wanted to improve the public spaces at its buildings,” said Ms. Chazanovitz. “A donor had made a contribution to purchase 80 posters, and Selfhelp needed some outside professional expertise as well as an artist’s eye to make the best use of

the posters and the public spaces. Through the cadre of donors who are active in the UJA-Federation’s Women’s Campaign, we were able to identify the best possible MAP consultant for this project.”

## BEAUTIFY THE COMMON AREAS

Candice Koerner, a newcomer to the MAP program, agreed to aid Selfhelp in this project. An art historian with professional experience in management, budgeting, and planning, Ms. Koerner enthusiastically pitched in.

“The objective was to beautify the common areas for the benefit of the people living there,” she said. “We hoped to make an impact on the people coming in and out of the buildings by exposing them to art.”

Phyllis Tobin, Selfhelp’s assistant vice president for senior communities, noted that her organization had called on MAP for assistance on previous projects. On this occasion, she realized that a MAP expert



Phyllis Tobin and Mario Iankelevich review posters at Selfhelp

was required to shepherd the visual orientation of the buildings to a successful conclusion.

“Our staff consists largely of social-service providers,” she added. “We needed a person with the artistic vision to create an environment that would be aesthetic for seniors and enhance social interaction.”

Working with Mario Iankelevich, an interior designer who also offered his services pro bono, Ms. Koerner began with one building, choosing from an array of framed posters for the lobby and the public space opposite the elevators on all 12 floors. These posters were a donation from one of Selfhelp’s board members. They also recommended and designed large graphic numbers for each floor and a color code to provide a better way for the seniors living there to get their bearings.

## REPLICATE THE MODEL

Selfhelp plans to replicate this model at the other five buildings on the campuses. Also on the drawing board is a revolving art exhibit, featuring works from museums, along with the residents’ own art.

Candice Koerner displays artwork with designer Mario Iankelevich



MAP recruits business professionals who provide pro bono consulting services to UJA-Federation beneficiary agencies. For additional information about volunteering in your area of expertise, please call 1.212.836.1646.

Jill Mendelson, *Deputy Managing Director*  
Marcia Kublanow, *Senior Project Manager*  
Hilda Chazanovitz, *Project Manager*  
Florence Broder, *Program Associate*  
Sara Reef, *Program Coordinator*

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