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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

Series I: General Correspondence, 1914-1969, undated.

Sub-series A: Alphabetical, 1914-1965, undated.

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Jewish Community Centers of Cleveland, 1958.





# Jewish Community Centers OF CLEVELAND

2049 EAST 105th ST. • CLEVELAND 6, OHIO • RAndolph 1-0880

SERVING CLEVELAND'S JEWISH COMMUNITY THROUGH SOCIAL, RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

**President**  
GEORGE V. GOULDER

**Vice Presidents**  
MORTON BARRISCH  
LEONARD KRONENBERG  
HARRY L. WOLPAW

**Treasurer**  
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**Secretary**  
MRS. HERMAN DAVIDSON

**Executive Director**  
HERMAN A. EIGEN

**Director of Branch Operations**  
ABE BONDER

**Director of Community Services**  
HOWARD F. ROBBINS

October 27, 1958

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver  
The Temple  
Ansel Road & E. 105 Street  
Cleveland 6, Ohio

Dear Rabbi:

George Goulder has notified our Board of your gracious consent to present closing remarks at the Tenth Annual Meeting of the Jewish Community Centers on Wednesday evening, November 12th at 8:15 in the Luntz Auditorium of the Temple.

I know that I speak for the entire board, membership and staff when I say we will be deeply honored by your presence and look forward with great anticipation to your message.

George has mentioned the possibility that the three of us get together for lunch some day next week in order to bring you up-to-date on our plans. May I suggest next Monday, November 3d, Thursday, November 6th or Friday, November 7th at whatever place is convenient for you.

Todah rabah.

Sincerely,

Herman A. Eigen  
Executive Director



Affiliated with:

Welfare Federation of Cleveland  
Jewish Community Federation  
National Jewish Welfare Board



P. S. I am enclosing rough notes for my 10-minute report at the annual meeting . . . also an outline of the program.



Jewish Community Centers of Cleveland

ANNUAL MEETING PROGRAM OUTLINE  
Wednesday, November 12, 1958

1. Welcome by President
2. Greetings from Jewish Community Federation
3. Business:
  - Nominations and Elections
  - Revision to Code of Regulations
  - Treasurer's Report
  - Citation to Volunteers
4. Executive Director's Report
5. Program PM's "CENTERAMA" (A visual aid program featuring Bud Wendell of Station KYW)
6. Summary Remarks - Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver





Rough Outline

"THE WAY WE HAVE COME . . . AND THE ROAD AHEAD"

The life cycle of an agency is in some ways like the life cycle of a person. There is birth and childhood, adolescence and maturity and sometimes, unfortunately, senescence.

Tonight we are 10 years young . . like a pre-adolescent preparing for an intensive period of study leading to his Bar Mitzvah in a new home a few years hence.

We were born in 1948 following a 4-year courtship in a Group Work Study culminating in the marriage of 4 predecessor communal agencies. Judging from the life and vigor of its offspring, this "shidach" was legitimate . . and not of the shotgun variety which sometimes characterize organizational mergers.

When this sturdy child was born, he was presented with a 5-point guide to his future. These recommendations were bestowed by Judge David Ralph Hertz's committee under the watchful parental guidance of the Jewish Community Federation.

. . . . .

This evening I should like to review briefly some of the progress we have made in these 5 recommendations and to outline some of the things we will need to do in the immediate future to assure continued healthy growth.

The first recommendation of the Group Work Study was to establish an overall agency that would merge four existing services under one coordinated administration. This we have done - with many dividends in economy of effort and qualitative service.

Today, our agency is administered by a central board of trustees with decentralized branch and division operations - each with its own advisory committee. The central board is responsible for agency-wide budgeting, facility planning, membership and program policies and each advisory committee has the responsibility of developing its own program of activities. In order to reflect grass root thinking and needs, each advisory committee is represented on the Central Board of Trustees.

Fidelity Union Skin



The second recommendation emphasized our purposes as a group work agency within a Jewish framework. Group work is based on faith in the healthy relationships of people of all ages in organized groups in an environment that is free and under trained leadership. We have relied upon this concept. As a Jewish agency we have accepted a sense of responsibility toward the Jewish community and the total community. We know that the person who is most secure is the one who feels most identified with his group - whose personal roots are linked to the history, tradition and culture of his people. There is self-appreciation and strength in such roots. We have found that this heightened "sense of belonging" makes for greater identification not only with one's own group but with other ethnic groups as well.

The third recommendation called for the establishment of two kinds of recreational, cultural and informal educational services: (1) Direct services to members in all age ranges, in all neighborhoods and (2) Consultative services to other youth-serving and adult organizations.

In our program we have tried to provide an environment where personality can be strengthened through the democratic process of actual living experiences in Center groups. We have been concerned about Jewish life - its history and culture; its values and ethics; its development in America and Israel and its integration into the stream of American life.

During the past 10 years, many thousands of members have come through our doors to participate in varied group work services. It is not possible in this brief report to detail these services nor to begin to relate the many ways in which some measure of happiness, security and new learning have come into the lives of participants.

The fourth recommendation sought to establish close working relationships with other organizations, especially with Jewish schools, temples and synagogues. Cleveland is blessed with an excellent Jewish school system, fine synagogues and temples. We



in the Center have learned the importance of working together with these and other institutions to help children and adults accept with joy their Jewishness and to enable them to draw upon their heritage in meeting the problems of contemporary living.

The final recommendation called for the construction of a central building and new branch facilities. It has taken us 10 years to realize our major goal of a central building. In the coming year we will be well on our way towards its construction.

This new building will provide attractive and dignified facilities to provide more and better service to larger numbers. It will be built on a firm foundation of sound community planning:

- - - Scores of people were initially involved in planning the kinds of facilities to be included in this new building.
- - - Hundreds of center participants, board members, advisory committee members and many associate groups worked enthusiastically on the truly community-wide campaign for funds.
- - - Last summer Center parents and teen-age members demonstrated their loyal devotion to the Center by organizing a whirlwind 3-day petition campaign when they secured 5000 signatures requesting city officials to rezone our building site.
- - - Currently, our architects are completing preliminary floor plans and will soon start work on final drawings. The important work in connection with approving final drawings, construction and equipping the building will be coordinated by a New Building Committee of experienced community leaders.
- - - During the next few months we will embark upon an intensive year long self survey to plan the initial program of activities and administrative procedures for the new building. I am confident that the many hundreds of people who will work on this audit will continue the rich tradition of community planning.



It is impossible to call the long roster of people who have given leadership to the Center during its first 10 years of operation but I must mention a few:

Myron Guren, our first president, who was the social architect behind the successful merger;

Morton L. Mandel, former president, who spearheaded the new building campaign and who is now giving dynamic leadership to the New Building Committee;

George V. Goulder, our new president, whose contagious enthusiasm, devotion and imagination has inspired all of us;

And my two associates - Abe Bonder and Howard Robbins - who are a bulwark of staff support.

On this 10th birthday we are strong in some ways, limited in others. Our major strength lies in the closeness of lay and professional leadership; our unity around common purposes, the sense of developing experimental approaches in social service. But we have some limitations too.

We need more diversity and depth in the creative arts, in the enrichment of Jewish cultural programs, in citizenship education and in the more effective utilization of volunteers.

We need to develop a widespread program of public relations to better interpret these services and to command greater community support.

We need an organized program of social research to re-examine our methods and effectiveness and to undertake cost analyses.

Here are rich fields yet to be cultivated if we are to fulfill a communal responsibility - a responsibility that goes beyond the provision of new buildings or the development of new techniques. These are means to an end, and what is that end?

The 1957 annual report of the Twentieth Century Fund notes that "Next to the abundance of things the citizen has, the abundance of time at his disposal is perhaps the most striking characteristic of the present American scene . . . Work no longer appears as the only road to virtue and salvation. Outside the job lies the world of family and cultural pursuits and attainment of satisfaction in these areas become more and more significant . . . Leisure is promised for all . . . The consequences must . . . affect . . .



. . . the whole quality and texture of the country's living".

Our task in the Jewish Community Centers is to help translate "the raw material" of free time into fruitful and satisfying leisure time pursuits. In our complex society where great social forces engulf the individual, his family and his neighborhood, we must help individuals and groups understand basic social values, restore and heighten the sense of their own worth, to help them to assume responsibilities and to teach the skills needed to influence the tide of events. Most of all we need to transmit the convictions that the person, his family and his intimate social group are important.

10/27/58

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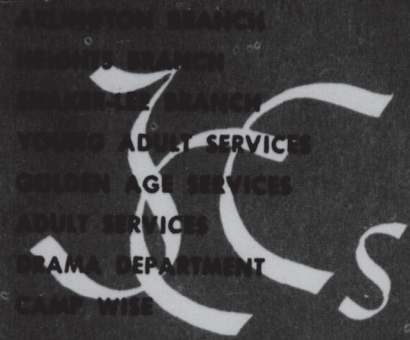


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HOWARD F. ROBBINS

November 14, 1958

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver  
The Temple  
E. 105th & Ansel Road  
Cleveland 6, Ohio

Dear Rabbi:

I should like to take this opportunity to thank you for taking time out of your demanding schedule to share in our Tenth Anniversary program.

The Abe Luntz Auditorium provided a lovely setting for our meeting. It is a beautiful room in a beautiful House of Worship.

While I have a very deep respect for the point of view you expressed concerning today's challenge to Jewish social agencies in general and to the JCCs in particular, there were some nuances raised by your speech which I hope we can assuage to your satisfaction in the days that lie ahead . . . by actual mitzvot!

Thank you most sincerely.

Sincerely,

Herman A. Eigen  
Executive Director



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