



The Associated

Inspiring Jewish Community

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The Darrell D. Friedman Institute Presents Jewish Community Awards

Baltimore, MD - The Darrell D. Friedman Institute for Professional Development at the Weinberg Center (DFI), a program of The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, presented two prestigious Jewish communal awards at its annual professional leadership summit, May 28 at Temple Oheb Shalom. According to Cindy Goldstein, Executive Director of DFI, "each year a diverse group of Jewish communal professionals, representing a wide array of organizations and synagogues in our community, select their esteemed colleagues from a number of deserving nominations."

Debra S. Weinberg, executive director, ACHARAI: The Shoshana S. Cardin Leadership Development Institute, received the Daniel Thursz Distinguished Jewish Communal Service Award. This annual award recognizes an individual who has worked in the field of Jewish communal service for at least 20 years, serves the greater Baltimore community and demonstrates leadership and exemplary professional skills.

In addition, Erica Bloom, assistant director, Jewish Volunteer Connection (JVC), received the Outstanding Jewish Communal Professional award for demonstrating exceptional promise and a commitment to a career in Jewish communal service.

A certified leadership coach and graduate of the Georgetown University Leadership Coaching certificate program, Weinberg joined ACHARAI in 2005. Prior to ACHARAI, Weinberg served for 10 years as the Director of The Darrell D. Friedman Institute for Professional Development (DFI), known formerly as the Baltimore Institute for Jewish Communal Service, which cultivated and trained professionals for work in the Jewish community.

"Debs has raised the bar on what it means to be a Jewish leader. She models for all of us the ways to invest in individuals in order to impact the institutions that are the vital fabric of Jewish communal life," says Beth Gansky, Baltimore Jewish communal leader and incoming executive director, ACHARAI.

Meanwhile, Bloom was recognized for her innate ability to connect with people to bring them into closer connection with the Jewish community. Under her leadership, JVC launched new VolunTeams, groups of friends and/or family members who volunteer on an ongoing project. Team members participate individually or in groups. She also established two "Grandfriends PlayDate Together" programs, a service project that brings young children together with grandparents or special friends. Together, they visit residents at Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center and Hospital.

“Erica is a dedicated professional with a lens that allows her to see the perspectives of people who aren’t yet connected to the community and to understand their barriers to participation,” says Ashley Pressman, executive director, JVC.

The Daniel Thursz Distinguished Jewish Communal Service Award posthumously recognized Dr. Daniel Thursz for his achievements as former dean of the University of Maryland School of Social Work and co-founder of the Darrell D. Friedman Institute for Professional Development (formerly BIJCS). He also had served as former executive vice president of B’nai B’rith International.

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The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore strengthens and nurtures Jewish life by engaging and supporting community partners in Greater Baltimore, Israel and around the world.