



SLINGSHOT

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Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life Named One of North America's Most Innovative Jewish Nonprofits

Seventh Annual "Slingshot" Guidebook Names 10 Standard Bearers and 50 Most Innovative Jewish Nonprofits in America

(Jackson, MS) – October 18, 2011 – The Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) has been named a Standard Bearer by *Slingshot* '11-'12, a resource guide for Jewish innovation.

For the past seven years, *Slingshot* has featured the 50 most innovative Jewish projects in North America. In order to be listed in *Slingshot*, organizations are selected from among hundreds of nominees across North America. After seven editions, ten organizations have risen to the top again and again as leaders within the community and mentors to other organizations. These ten projects, now called Standard Bearers, have been listed in at least five editions of *Slingshot*. In conjunction with *Slingshot's* evaluators, Standard Bearers were chosen not only for sustainability but also because they continue to achieve *Slingshot's* core criteria of innovation, impact, leadership and organizational efficacy.

According to Will Schneider, Executive Director of Slingshot, "Seven editions of *Slingshot* ago, Jewish innovation was still largely undefined and unexplored, and 66% of the organizations listed in this year's guide weren't even founded yet. Over the years, the Standard Bearers consistently set, exceeded and reset the high standards that emerging organizations and projects in Jewish life aspired to match. In truth, we had trouble selecting a name that would set them apart as examples of ongoing excellence without placing them on an "emeritus" list or implying that their innovative days were behind them. We settled on Standard Bearers because these groups set benchmarks for the field and led by example with ongoing innovation and relevancy."

Slingshot is used by philanthropists, volunteers, not-for-profit executives, and program participants to identify path-finding and trailblazing organizations grappling with concerns in Jewish life such as identity, community, and tradition. ISJL was chosen by a panel of 36 foundation professionals from across North America. This was ISJL's sixth time being featured in *Slingshot*.

Based in Jackson, Mississippi, the ISJL promotes Jewish life in the South through partnerships with Southern Jewish communities. Founded in 2000, the ISJL supports religious school education, rabbinic services, Jewish culture, community engagement, history and the arts in underserved communities as well as larger population centers. The independent, trans-denominational Institute currently partners with more than 100 diverse Jewish congregations and community groups across 13 states: Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia, South

Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Texas, Oklahoma, and the Florida Panhandle. Through this unique model, the ISJL encourages communities large and small to assume the shared responsibility of promoting Jewish life and tradition region wide.

“The ISJL implements innovative solutions to deliver Jewish programming and resources to communities across the South,” explains ISJL president Macy B. Hart, “our inclusion in *Slingshot* '11-'12 as a Standard Bearer reaffirms the impact of our work and allows us to continue building our capacity. We see that we are helping create a rich Jewish life for this next generation.

Jonathan Raiffe, the Chairman of Slingshot shared, “The Slingshot guide makes a statement to the Jewish community and beyond that next gen funders embrace change, innovation, and evaluation when meeting the needs of our community. Slingshot promotes organizations that hold themselves accountable to all their stakeholders and up to the same scrutiny as for-profit organizations, while pushing the boundaries of how to solve the most pressing issues. Slingshot is about making a statement as to what we believe are the greatest needs and what organizations are doing the best job to fulfill those needs. Organizations that receive grants from Slingshot clearly identify an unmet need and offer proven models and solutions that can have a far-reaching impact.”

Slingshot '11/'12 was released on October 18, 2011. The community will meet on March 14 in New York City at the annual Slingshot Day, where over 250 not-for-profit leaders, foundation professionals, and funders of all ages will engage in candid conversations about philanthropy and innovation.

About *Slingshot*

Slingshot was created by a team of young funders as a guidebook to help funders of all ages diversify their giving portfolios with the most innovative and effective organizations and programs in North America. This guide contains information about each organization's origin, mission, strategy, impact and budget, as well as details about its unique character. Now in its seventh edition, *Slingshot* has proven to be a catalyst for next generation funding and offers a telling snapshot of shifting trends in North America's Jewish community. The book, published annually, is available in hard copy and as a free download at www.slingshotfund.org.

About the ISJL

Based in Jackson, Mississippi, The Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) is dedicated to providing educational and rabbinic services to Southern Jewish communities, documenting and preserving the rich history of the Southern Jewish experience, and promoting a Jewish cultural presence and community engagement throughout a thirteen state region.

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