


<h1 style="margin: 0;">2016 Innovation Fund Grant Application</h1>	
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1. Applicant Information

Applicant Name/Organization	Address	
Temple Beth-El Rabbi Marina Yergin and Rabbi Mara Nathan	211 Belknap Place San Antonio, Texas 78259	
Telephone	Email	Website
(210) 733-9135 x102	myergin@beth-elsa.org	www.beth-elsa.org

2. Project Information

Project/Initiative Name
#MitzvahQuest (for Confirmation Class)

Applicant/Organization Mission
The mission of Congregation Beth-El (also known as "Temple Beth-El") is to create a welcoming and vibrant house of God that inspires a community of Reform Jews committed to meaningful worship, spiritual growth, <i>tikkun olam</i> , and outreach within and beyond our Congregation.

Project/Initiative Anticipated Run Dates	Grant Amount Requested	Percent of Project Budget
Beginning Fall 2016 and running indefinitely as we intend for this to be a sustainable program that will enhance our confirmation program for years to come.	\$4,000	

Target Population	Estimated Number of Participants Served
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confirmation Students at Temple Beth-El and their families - The larger Temple Beth-El Community - The larger San Antonio community 	About 15-20 Confirmation Students and their families per year (will vary based on enrollment in any given year)

Please indicate if you were a recipient of the 2015 Innovation Grant. If so, note the title of the project that was funded and the dollar amount granted.
Yes, we were awarded \$2,500 for our original #MitzvahQuest grant application in 2015.

3. Project Narrative/Goals

Describe the project or initiative for which you are requesting funding.
<p>Please consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your inspiration for this project? • What goals do you hope this project achieves?

- What is the issue or challenge that your initiative sets out to resolve? Or what is the absence of something that requires you to create this project/initiative?

#MitzvahQuest began as a B'nei Mitzvah revolution meant to encourage B'nei Mitzvah students to engage and participate actively on many levels with their families during the entire B'nei Mitzvah process. We are now about to expand this model of Jewish engagement to include our Confirmation students in the #MitzvahQuest process. We will continue to use #MitzvahQuest for our B'nei Mitzvah program with the idea of maintaining the momentum through the high school years and beyond.

Temple Beth-El's Confirmation program, taught primarily by our Senior Rabbi, Mara Nathan focuses on providing our students with the opportunity to create their own covenantal relationship with G-d and community through a series of interactive and multi-disciplinary lessons. Adding #MitzvahQuest to our program will provide opportunities for our students and their families to expand their sense of covenant and community connection both inside and outside of the class setting. As a Confirmation class, the students will decide on a group mitzvah project to be worked on together. In addition, by working through the #MitzvahQuest Board, they will include their families in the process as well. (The #MitzvahQuest Confirmation board will have different activities and opportunities than the one for the B'nei Mitzvah program. See attached draft.)

The main goal that the students will achieve is developing a hands-on understanding of Torah, *Avodah*, *G'milut Chasadim*, and *Kehilah* as they work through the board. As they complete the items on the board, they will build a strong sense of *Kehilah* within their class, Temple Beth-El, and the San Antonio Jewish community as a whole. We hope that as our students begin to use #MitzvahQuest during their B'nei Mitzvah process, they will be eager to continue that journey in their confirmation year.

In the past, successful completion of our Confirmation program was contingent on earning a certain number of points assigned to various community based activities in addition to class and retreat attendance. Rather than basing requirements for Confirmation on a punitive system, by using #MitzvahQuest, we can inspire greater community involvement for our Confirmands and share with the congregation and San Antonio Jewish community what it means for these students to confirm their commitment to the Jewish community.

Our current program is lacking in larger community engagement opportunities in many ways. We saw a need to meet the students where they are in order to engage them in the learning process and Jewish life. This program will introduce the use of social media to further one's Jewish identity and journey. By meeting the students where they are and using the platforms that they are using daily, we are acknowledging their wants and needs.

We are planning to incorporate #MitzvahQuest into our Confirmation retreat as well as add a field trip opportunity at another time for the students to directly work on their class mitzvah project together. As part of the 9th grade curriculum, they focus on what social action and social justice mean to us as a Reform Jewish community. Now they get to take what they have learned and put it into practice as a class.

Note: #MitzvahQuest for the confirmands was explained at the Confirmation Informational Meeting with parents in the late spring before 10th grade.

What makes your project unique?

While many congregations provide a traditional Confirmation program with classes for students and then a service on *Shavuot*, our program offers a unique approach. It is the first of its kind to involve *tikkun olam*, social media, synagogue community, larger city community, and a relationship with families of confirmands.

4. PROGRAM VIABILITY

How do you intend to measure the qualitative and quantitative results of your project?

We will measure the qualitative results by witnessing significant participation of our Confirmation students and families. We will share our successes and experiences by including them in the Confirmation *Erev Shavuot* Service so that the entire community can learn about our students' experiences. As Temple Beth-El, we will become stronger as each family is able to better articulate their own reasons for being a part of our Temple community, Jewish community, and the San Antonio community.

The quantitative results will be measured by the number of students who are able to complete the #MitzvahQuest board. We will also see an increase in the number of people who come to the Confirmation *Erev Shavuot* service. This will show that congregants are inspired by our Confirmation students having followed the students' progress throughout the year based on the biographies, pictures, videos, and *tikkun olam* projects that are highlighted in our bulletin, weekly updates, and social media platforms. We will also expect a rise in Temple Beth-El social media participation.

Is it your intention to continue this project beyond the current year? If so, please describe your anticipated funding model/resources/needs for the next 2-3 years?

Yes. We hope that this will be a sustainable program with a large majority of our costs occurring in the first year or so as we tweak what we have used for our #MitzvahQuest program for B'nei Mitzvah students and include our Confirmation students. This year will serve as our pilot year and will allow us to begin many of the models that we will then continue in the future. We do expect to apply for additional funds in the future to help offset costs associated with pieces which cannot be reused year after year. Assuming the success of #MitzvahQuest, we will plan to apply for additional grants that may allow us to publish our program so that it can be a model program for other synagogues. In addition to grants, we will also utilize funds from other locations in our Temple budget.

If you were a recipient of the 2015 Innovation Grant, please indicate whether you received additional resources from other organizations.

We received a recent grant from Golden Manor Jewish Senior Services to add an element to #MitzvahQuest called *Zaken*. This program allows for our 6th graders to learn about working with seniors in our community as a preparation for their B'nei Mitzvah Process. We were awarded \$1000.

5. Community Impact & Connection

What impact do you anticipate your project will have on the target population? What impact do you anticipate your project will have on the larger San Antonio

Jewish Community?

This program will have a major impact on our students as it will allow them to see that becoming a confirmand is not just a box that is checked off. Instead, it allows them to truly discover what it means to confirm their commitment to the Jewish community. In doing so, they will be reminded that being Jewish can be fun and meaningful and that each one of us can find some way to relate to Judaism in our own unique way. The program will allow confirmation families to develop stronger relationships as a cohort as the students engage in this process together.

The larger San Antonio Jewish Community will also be impacted by this program because it will allow our students to recognize the rich resources that exist in our greater Jewish community. Specifically for *tikkun olam*, the students will learn about organizations, programs, grants, and communities that are in need of support and assistance in various ways. It will enable them to recognize the full spectrum of people in the Jewish community highlighting that we have people in our own community who are in need. This program has the potential to bring the entire Jewish community closer together by promoting helping others and highlighting important issues and institutions through social media.

If you were a recipient of the 2015 Innovation Grant, please share impact noted during this past year and how you determined the impact on the community.

We noticed an increasing excitement about this project and the ways our students can be involved on a deeper level. While, we have not had any students fully complete the #MitzvahQuest process, we have begun to work with the incoming 7th grade class who are now preparing for their B’nei Mitzvah in the coming months. While our official kickoff of the program was delayed while we developed our website, #MitzvahQuest has been presented at our Temple Board Meetings, Executive Committee Meetings, Staff Meetings, the 6th Grade Shabbaton, and our Information Session about Confirmation for our incoming 10th graders and their families.

How does your project align with the JFSA Community Priorities?

JFSA has many areas of focus that work well with #MitzvahQuest. This program serves to “build the Jewish community” while “securing a favorable Jewish future” as we educate our young Jewish adults about the importance of Judaism and how they can make it their own. Our program clearly focuses on *tikkun olam* as the students will develop a class mitzvah project. This process will incorporate both *tzedakah* and the ideal of *klal Yisrael* as we recognize what it means to stand up for what we believe in, find what we are passionate about, care about those around us, help the Jews in need and be the best people we can be every day. With all of these things and so many more, #MitzvahQuest holds very similar priorities as JFSA.

Please describe your involvement in the San Antonio Jewish Community.

Temple Beth-El is extremely involved in the San Antonio Jewish Community. It is the oldest and largest congregation in San Antonio. We strive to be involved on many levels of the Jewish community outside our walls.

Do you anticipate opportunities for collaboration? If so, with whom?

#MitzvahQuest provides many opportunities for collaboration as our students experience hands-on mitzvah projects all over San Antonio, the nation, and the world. We have already collaborated with The Mitzvah Bowl, Golden Manor Jewish Senior Services, and JFSA for our currently running

#MitzvahQuest process for our B’nei Mitzvah Students. We hope that by adding Confirmation to #MitzvahQuest, we can find more opportunities to connect with the San Antonio Jewish community and the wider San Antonio community. We hope that #MitzvahQuest for Confirmation will continue long-term and in-depth collaborations with many organizations.

Provide the names and brief profiles of key leaders responsible for project execution.

<i>Names</i>	<i>Profile</i>
Rabbi Marina Yergin	Assistant Rabbi, Temple Beth-El - http://www.beth-elsa.org/MarinaYergin
Rabbi Mara Nathan	Senior Rabbi and Teacher for Confirmation Class, Temple Beth-El - https://beth-elsa.org/RabbiNathan
Robin Kressbach	The Robin’s Nest Founder (The company hired to make www.mitzvahquest.org .) http://www.robinkressbach.com/

6. Supplemental Attachments

Please include the following with your completed application:

- Project Budget, (in Excel spreadsheet)
- 501c3, Tax Exempt Letter

Application Submission:

- Deadline for all applicants is May 27, 2016
- Completed applications and all supplemental attachments must be submitted electronically to Caitlin Strayer, strayerc@jfsatx.org
- Notifications of grant decisions will be made on or around July 1, 2016.

For any additional questions or information on the 2016 Innovation Fund, Grant Application process, please contact Caitlin Strayer, Office Manager at the Jewish Federation of San Antonio, strayerc@jfsatx.org or 210-302-6960

IN PROCESS 4/27/2016

#Mitzvah Quest

Confirmation

www.mitzvahQUEST.org



Attend Confirmation Class on Sundays	Participate in Shabbat, Festival or High Holy Days at Temple Beth-El, GFC, other URJ Camp or another synagogue	What does it mean to Confirm Your commitment to the Jewish community?	Volunteer to bring snack for the class	Help create and lead a SAFTY Club Shabbat Experience
Attend a Jewish Life Cycle Event (e.g. brit milah, wedding, funeral, shiva minyan)	Help to plan/organize a Confirmation Class Mitzvah Project	Volunteer to Staff a Jr. SAFTY or k-6 th grade TYG event	Create Your own	Participate in J-Serve for the full six hours
Create Your Own	Attend Confirmation Retreat (Shabbat PM & AM services included)	Free Space Selfie w/Rabbi Yergin	Help to run Fri. PM Family Shabbat Activities	Volunteer to set-up, break down or run a booth at the Purim Carnival
Lead part of a Shabbat or Festival service at Temple Beth-El	Participate in a SAFTY event	Create your own	Volunteer as a madrich or madricha	Do community service or social action/justice work other than J-Serve
Create Your Own	Do a "screen free" activity with your family outside of your home.	Attend a Jewish youth group weekend event	Read Torah on the Anniversary of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Temple Beth-El	Attend an adult Jewish education learning session

Torah- study & teaching	Avodah- worship participation & leadership
G'milut Chasadim- acts of loving kindness	Kehilah-community building



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Dear Parents of Confirmation Class of 2017:

As we anticipate your child's completing Grade 9/Pre-Confirmation studies, we eagerly look forward to working with him/her in preparation for Confirmation, which will take place on the Eve of Shavuot, **Tuesday night, May 30, 2017.**

Confirmation year is a milestone moment for your 10th grader and an especially important time in their personal Jewish development. Each of them will have an amazing opportunity to dig deeper than ever before, exploring important questions about life, Judaism and God, with their fellow Confirmands as partners in discovery. Confirmation classes will take place on Sunday mornings from 10:30 am – 12:00 pm at the Temple, beginning **September 11, 2016.**

While this sounds so far away, there are things you can do now to begin preparing for this momentous occasion.

1. The tradition at Temple Beth-El is for the current Pre-Confirmation class to serve as ushers during the Confirmation service. This year's Confirmation Service is **Saturday, June 11, 2016** beginning at 7:00 pm in the Wulfe Sanctuary. Students are asked to volunteer to help families find their assigned seats and distribute prayer booklets. Volunteers need to be at the Temple by **6:45 pm on Saturday, June 11.** Please complete the enclosed response card to let us know if your child is able to usher for the service.
2. As part of our Confirmation curriculum, your child is encouraged to help strengthen our congregational community through a variety of learning, worship, social action and community building activities throughout the year.
3. Reserve the weekend of **December 2-4, 2016** for the required Confirmation Class Retreat and put it on your calendar now to avoid possible conflicts.

A detailed schedule for the Confirmation program will be sent to you as the new school year approaches. Many thanks and good wishes.

L'shalom,

Mara S. Nathan
 Senior Rabbi