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## **OurJewishCommunity.org Named One of North America's Most Innovative Jewish Nonprofits**

*Global Online Synagogue Based in Cincinnati Featured  
For Second Year in the "Slingshot" Guidebook*

CINCINNATI (November 5, 2012) – OurJewishCommunity.org has been named one of the nation's 50 most innovative Jewish nonprofits in *Slingshot '12-'13*, a resource guide for Jewish innovation. OurJewishCommunity.org was selected for this list because of its groundbreaking use of technology and social media to create an online Jewish community with a contemporary Jewish voice and philosophy

OurJewishCommunity.org is an online community integrating Judaism and social media to address the needs of modern Jews. Providing a spiritual home, a meaningful voice, and a resource for people worldwide seeking a contemporary Jewish identity and experience, OurJewishCommunity.org reaches out to unaffiliated Jews who desire a stronger, more meaningful Jewish connection. By leveraging technology to meet people where they are, OurJewishCommunity.org provides an opportunity to participate in a contemporary Jewish experience. Since its launch in 2008, OurJewishCommunity.org has reached over 325,000 people in 180 countries.

Rabbi Robert Barr, one of the rabbis of OurJewishCommunity.org, said, "we are proud of OurJewishCommunity.org's successes: the numbers of people we reach, the quality of the interactions participants have with our online community, the strong voice for liberal Judaism we're building, and the recognition we've received, including this most recent honor in Slingshot."

Rabbi Laura Baum, also one of the rabbis of OurJewishCommunity.org, added "being listed last year in Slingshot told us we were on the right track, and that others in the Jewish community who recognize the need for new methods of outreach value what we are doing. Being in Slingshot again this year shows that we continue to be a leader in the field of religion and technology, and that there's great promise for our organization as we continue to reach people who are not being reached by traditional Jewish institutions. We are hopeful that others in the Jewish community, including prospective funders, will also see value in what we are doing and invest in our new model of Jewish connection."



Slingshot organizations are selected from among hundreds of nominees based on their strength in four areas: innovation, impact, leadership, and organizational efficiency. OurJewishCommunity.org was chosen for the second year by an independent panel of 48 foundation professionals from across North America.

Slingshot organizations grapple with concerns in Jewish life such as identity, community, social justice, and tradition, each with different missions, perspectives, and strategies. The *Slingshot* resource guide is distributed to 7,500 funders, foundation professionals, and organizational leaders annually, in addition to tens of thousands of online downloads. Readers use *Slingshot* to identify the most inspiring and trail blazing organizations, projects, and programs in the North American Jewish community today. Since its inception, *Slingshot* has highlighted 173 innovative Jewish organizations in North America.

According to Julie Finkelstein, Program Director of Slingshot, “*Slingshot* is a celebration of those Jewish organizations and projects successfully breathing new energy into Jewish life. The guide highlights both newly formed organizations and innovative projects happening at established Jewish institutions, all making an impact by meeting the changing needs of today’s Jewish community. This year, we received more applications than ever before, making the evaluation and selection process highly competitive.”

Sarah Gelman Rueven, Slingshot Board member, shared, “The *Slingshot* Guide promotes organizations that are pushing the boundaries and negotiating what it means to be Jewish in the 21st century, while at the same time, promoting transparent business practices and strong leadership. The *Slingshot* Guide is important because by supporting Jewish innovation, we are really investing in the continuity of the Jewish people.”

*Slingshot* '12- '13 was released on November 2, 2012. The community will meet on May 6th 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 in the Jewish community.

### **About OurJewishCommunity.org**

OurJewishCommunity.org is the world’s first contemporary online synagogue. Launched on September 1, 2008, OurJewishCommunity.org has reached more than 325,000 individuals in all 50 states in the U.S. and in more than 180 countries. The online community features blogs, audio podcasts through iTunes, video podcasts through YouTube, streaming holiday services, discussion boards, holiday eCards, recipes, educational materials for all ages, and more. We have more than 3,000 followers on Twitter ([www.twitter.com/JewsOnline](http://www.twitter.com/JewsOnline) and [www.twitter.com/Rabbi](http://www.twitter.com/Rabbi)) and OurJewishCommunity.org has over 20,000 Facebook fans ([www.facebook.com/ourjewishcommunity](http://www.facebook.com/ourjewishcommunity)).



### **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 eighth 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 for free in hard copy and as a download at [www.slingshotfund.org](http://www.slingshotfund.org).



### **Laura Baum, Rabbi, OurJewishCommunity.org**

As a Founding Rabbi of OurJewishCommunity.org, Rabbi Laura Baum works to engage Jews through social media and other technology. Baum was named one of the 50 most influential female rabbis by the Jewish Forward and has been featured in the New York Times, CNN.com, the Wall Street Journal, and the Jerusalem Post. An expert on social media and the changing needs of the Jewish community, Rabbi Baum is a popular speaker on a range of topics.

Rabbi Baum was ordained by Hebrew Union College in 2008 and earned an M.B.A from Xavier University in 2012. She graduated from Yale University in 2001 Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, and with distinction in the Psychology major.



### **Robert B. Barr, Rabbi, OurJewishCommunity.org**

Rabbi Robert B. Barr, ordained by Hebrew Union College in 1981, is the Founding Rabbi of Congregation Beth Adam in Cincinnati, Ohio. Under his leadership for the last 30 years, Beth Adam has grown from 6 members to over 300. The congregation has a significant voice and is a resource for liberal Jews worldwide. Rabbi Barr first imagined the online congregation and has played a continuing role in its development, including his weekly podcasts ("Barr's Banter"), which are available on iTunes.

Rabbi Barr is active in the leadership of many Jewish organizations and has twice served as president of the Greater Cincinnati Board of Rabbis. Recognized by his peers as a leader in the evolution of modern, liberal Judaism, his writings have been published in journals, books, and web sites around the world.

***High Resolution Photos available upon request.***