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May 21 2012

**For Immediate Release**

## **Jewish Foundation Invests in Innovative New Initiatives at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Jewish Family Service**

*\$8.5 million in grants will establish groundbreaking programs to connect HUC-JIR to community, partner with Jewish Federation and individual donors to launch cutting-edge Jewish Family Service Vital Support Center for underserved Jewish population.*

**CINCINNATI, OH:--**The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati announced two new significant investments in the Cincinnati Jewish community: a transformative five-year, \$5.225 million grant that will enable Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) to enhance its rabbinical student curriculum and to focus more of its resources on serving the Cincinnati Jewish community; and a ten-year, \$3.2 million grant to Jewish Family Service of Cincinnati (JFS), which, in partnership with the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati and generous support from individual donors, is intended to secure a \$10 million total community investment to expand and sustain JFS's food pantry and case management center over the next decade.

Together, these investments represent the Foundation's ongoing commitment to supporting a more integrated and vibrant Jewish community, and helping local Jewish agencies meet our community's unmet basic needs.

HUC-JIR will use a portion of its grant dollars to develop the **Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati Fellows Program** – an advanced service learning curriculum that will dispatch rabbinical students to help build capacity and serve community needs through paid internships at local Jewish institutions. Additional grant funding will be used to create a new Cincinnati-based **Office of Recruitment and Community Engagement**. This office will function both to increase rabbinical student enrollment in Cincinnati by approximately 50% over the next five years, as well as across the College-Institute generally, and to serve as a clearinghouse for the deployment of HUC-JIR's resources to serve local Jewish needs. Senior HUC-JIR professionals will work with counterparts at Jewish communal agencies to develop creative partnerships, programs and events that are designed to bring the community on to the campus and bring the campus out into the community.

These new programs at the College-Institute – both of which will be launched by September, 2012 – will provide Cincinnati's Jewish community and its various institutions with an infusion of young Jewish leaders to work in the areas of basic needs, Jewish education and engagement, leadership development and Israel connection as they pursue their rabbinic studies on the historic Cincinnati campus. Foundation dollars will also be used to leverage the expertise of more seasoned HUC-JIR faculty and administrators, many of whom are already serving as key resources in local Jewish Day Schools, congregations and UC Hillel.

Rabbi David Ellenson, HUC-JIR President, stated, "The College-Institute is enormously grateful to The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati for its visionary commitment to sustain Jewish leadership and learning by ensuring the vitality of our institution and the larger Cincinnati Jewish community. This grant will have an extraordinary impact on our Cincinnati campus, our entire institution, and on the next generations of Jewish leaders for the Reform Movement and the Jewish people throughout North America, Israel, and around the world."

The transformation occurring at HUC-JIR's Cincinnati campus coincides with a unique partnership which involves the Foundation, the Jewish Federation, Jewish Family Service and local Jewish philanthropists co-investing in JFS's work towards eradicating poverty in the Cincinnati Jewish community. The new Vital Support Center will provide a holistic approach to addressing client needs and serve as an entry portal to safety net services for the most vulnerable members of the Jewish community. JFS's existing Food Pantry will be re-located to HUC-JIR's campus, and housed in the former Gymnasium Building, which will be renovated for this new purpose. Foundation support for this initiative will combine with a lead \$1 million gift from Bernie and Pam Barbash. In addition to securing the lead gift, the Jewish Federation will provide ongoing funding for what will be known as the Barbash Family Vital Support Center. Jewish Family Service will support the center's day-to-day operations with revenue it earns from United Way, Jewish Federation, private foundations, and individual and corporate contributions.

Primarily through the work of this Center, JFS intends to more than double its current number of clients served by 2020. Its vision is to establish the Barbash Family Vital Support Center as a new anchor for Jewish social services, and to increase JFS's capacity to not only meet immediate needs but also to address the long-term challenges of identifying and helping more people in the areas of poverty and mental illness.

"The opening of this new center will enable the Jewish Family Service Food Pantry to move to a campus where operations will be expanded to include an array of programs and services that address the entire spectrum of hardships that accompany hunger and poverty," said Beth Schwartz, Executive Director of Jewish Family Service. "This new center on the HUC-JIR campus will help us meet the growing demand in our community for case management services and improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable members of our Jewish community." The new Barbash Family Vital Support Center will open in early 2013.

"The Jewish Foundation's core mission is to invest in high-impact initiatives that will strengthen the Cincinnati Jewish community," said Michael R. Oestreicher, President of The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati. "Our investments in HUC and JFS were conceived to attract top rabbinical students from around the world and enhance the Cincinnati

campus' importance to our community as well as within the HUC-JIR system, leverage the natural synergies between and among Jewish agencies, and bolster the Jewish community's ability to address Jewish poverty.”

Dr. Jonathan Cohen, Dean of HUC-JIR’s Cincinnati campus added, “The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati’s support will strengthen our ability to recruit individuals with the intellect, spiritual depth, vision, and compassion required for leadership. It will renew our engagement with the larger Cincinnati community through programs accessing our renowned resources, including our world-class faculty, the Klau Library (the second largest Jewish library in the world), the American Jewish Archives, and the Skirball Museum. Furthermore, this grant will enhance our rabbinical students’ professional development by implementing a groundbreaking new program of advanced service learning through placements at JFS’s new Barbash Family Vital Support Center and throughout the Cincinnati community’s Jewish agencies, educational institutions, and organizations.”

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*The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati* invests in high impact, transformational initiatives in the areas of Unmet Basic Needs, Jewish Educational Opportunities, Leadership Development, Continuous Jewish Involvement and Israel Connection. Since its founding in 1995, the Foundation has significantly enhanced the cohesiveness and culture of the Cincinnati Jewish community and has invested nearly \$70 million in a vision to make Cincinnati one of America’s great cities for Jewish life.

Founded in 1875 in Cincinnati, *Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion* is the nation's oldest institution of higher Jewish education and the academic, spiritual, and professional leadership development center of Reform Judaism. HUC-JIR educates men and women for service to American and world Jewry as rabbis, cantors, educators, and nonprofit management professionals, and offers graduate programs to scholars and clergy of all faiths. With centers of learning in Cincinnati, Jerusalem, Los Angeles, and New York, HUC-JIR's scholarly resources comprise the renowned Klau library, the American Jewish Archives, research institutes and centers, and academic publications. In partnership with the **Union for Reform Judaism** and the **Central Conference of Rabbis**, HUC-JIR sustains the Reform Movement’s congregations and professional and lay leaders. HUC-JIR’s campuses invite the community to cultural and educational programs illuminating Jewish history, identity, art, and archaeology, and fostering interfaith and multiethnic understanding.

*The Jewish Federation of Cincinnati* develops and connects leaders, contributors, organizations and ideas to build an inclusive Jewish community that helps people in need, supports Israel and assures a vibrant Jewish future. Visit [jewishcincinnati.org](http://jewishcincinnati.org).

*Jewish Family Service of Cincinnati* strengthens lives and our community by providing professional social services to families and individuals in times of need. Visit [www.jfscinti.org](http://www.jfscinti.org)