



**ALEPH
INSTITUTE**
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.



2014

Annual
Report



Message from our Leadership

Twenty-five years ago, I moved to Pittsburgh to visit the Jewish men and women who were incarcerated. Ultimately, I would travel fifty thousand miles a year, going to prisons all over the North Eastern United States. As a young man with little legal knowledge and little understanding of the US government system, it was an amazing educational experience. There were prisons with over a hundred Jewish inmates and those with only two; all were but a small percentage of the general population; all needed a Rabbi and an agency to ensure that their religious needs would be met.

And now twenty-five years later, those visits continue and a whole lot more.

The Aleph Institute provides programs for the families of inmates; with over eighty percent of the families going through divorce and an average of ten family members affected by each person incarcerated, their needs are great. We offer support groups and counseling for those re-entering society at our center. We also provide children's programming for the children of inmates, allowing them to have a few moments of respite from the chaos they have been plunged into. We offer visitation and religious services for those in state hospitals and a variety of programs for those in long-term medical facilities and group homes.

Among our many accomplishments for 2014, Aleph Institute:

- Visited over 2000 Jewish men and women in Western Pennsylvania in the Federal, state and local prisons.
- Provided re-entry services for 18 men and women, offering housing, counseling and supportive services.
- Expanded our correspondence courses for hundreds of inmates, which offer the opportunity to convert dead time while incarcerated into productive time.
- Developed the online Library catalog, for the library located on our third floor, allowing access to the library for the inmates in this region, through the interlibrary exchange.

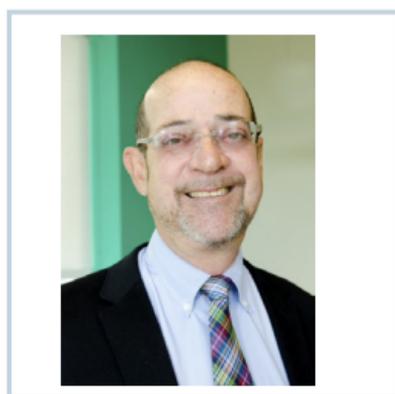
- Expanded our halfway house visitation program, helping with employment, spiritual, and living skills.
- Expanded our job training and development programs, better enabling those who are seeking employment.
- Expanded our training programs for the Rabbis and volunteers who work with this clientele, to help them to be better trained and knowledgeable of the issues and know how to deal with the concerns and obstacles.
- Developed phone and online resources for the families of inmates, people who are usually extremely stressed and overwhelmed with life's challenges.

The issues facing our clients and their families change continuously over time. After decades of double digit growth, this population is at an all time high. For healing to happen, it takes many hours of work and dedicated individuals to provide healing. We at Aleph Institute have been recognized as leaders and experts in this field and continue to provide the high rate of care and the resources to bring healing to the individuals we serve and their families.

Our successes, and the government and the academic recognition of our successes, is a direct result of the support and efforts of our donors, volunteers, community partners and funders, an incredible staff, and our dedicated Board of Directors. We are pleased to share with you Aleph Institute continued growth and progress, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with you to bring hope and tools to those men and women who so need us for the next 25 years.



Rabbi M. M. Vogel
President/CEO



Marty Davis,
Chairmon of the Board

Aleph Institute programs are divided into five categories: the In-Prison Programs, Re-Entry Programs, Family Programs, Community Programs and the Dorothy Programs.

In Prison Programs

Volunteer Visits

Hundreds of Jewish men and women spend months and some many years locked away from society. Through the efforts of the Aleph Institute, every prison now has a Rabbi to assist the inmates with counseling and to help them achieve their spiritual needs. Prior to 1991 most Federal, state and local prisons did not have a Rabbi on staff, all institutions receive volunteer visits a few times a year, many of the institutions have regular monthly visits. This gives the inmates the opportunity to look forward to a connection in the community other than the monthly visit by the Rabbi. Testimonials by the inmates to the effectiveness of those visits are received regularly.

Aleph Library

The Aleph Institute Library on the third floor at the Aleph Center now provides access to the inmates to browse the catalogue and borrow books at the institutional library. With thousands of Jewish subjects to choose from, inmates can now use their time wisely, learning and reading. Additionally, the library is assured the book will be returned. This is all possible through the inter-library exchange offered by all recognized libraries, which Aleph Institute is now a part of. Over the last year, hundreds of hours have been dedicated in making this project a reality.

Books and Religious Materials

Both for the Jewish inmates and the prison staff, material explaining Jewish holidays and the requirements are imperative in a secure facility. These materials are required months in advance, with times and details ready for inclusion in the institutions memos. For example, by mid-September, the Passover holiday food is in the works and has to be worked out in case there is a change of policy affecting it.

This year, we also expanded our weekly publication ('Torah Weekly') which began publishing in 2013 and has become a guide for both the inmates and the staff, with reminders and notes applicable to prison or halfway house life.

Chesed Mentoring Program

Mentoring in prison has now been recognized nationwide as the way to move forward. In fact, a study was recently completed in the Allegheny County Jail by the HOPE Foundation, which saw a decrease in recidivism from the

national rate of 76% to 8%. Aleph Mentors go into the prison, meet one on one with an individual and then work with them upon their release. These programs have proven their value. Over the next couple of years we will be seeking funds to develop this program more. Funding is required for the recruiting and training of volunteers, as well as providing the cost for travel and other ongoing expenses.

Holiday Based Programs

Our holiday-based programming provides the resources and availability for those in prison who wish to observe the holidays to be able to do so. We make matzo available for



the institutions and the inmates, as well as ensuring that any materials necessary to observe the holidays are in the inmates' hands. Last year alone, because of a last minute obstacle in the PA Dept. of Corrections, Aleph needed to provide

the holiday requirements for Passover, and was able to do so to make certain every inmate in Pennsylvania could celebrate Passover. Every incarcerated inmate or halfway house resident knows that their holiday supplies will be there for them to celebrate.

Torah Studies

Those incarcerated have an abundance of time, and without the right direction that time can be dead time, especially given that during the 90's most educational programs were ended in prison, with the ending of the Pell Grants. Aleph Institute provides the inmates with the opportunity to learn more about their heritage and offers over ten courses the men and women can take. These programs are continuously being improved with many hours dedicated to monitoring and grading. Plans are underway to develop this program and make it more accessible to the population we serve.

Jewish Burial

Every Jewish person deserves a Jewish burial in a Jewish cemetery. Unfortunately, without a next-of-kin unwilling to pick up the remains of an inmate who has passed away, the prison system will cremate the inmate and bury the ashes. The Aleph Institute will act as the next of-kin for these inmates, ensuring that someone will give them the final Judaic dignity they deserve.

Re-Entry Programs

Aleph House

Although Aleph Institute does not have its own facility, it does subcontract and work in tandem with many local facilities to house the men and women re-entering society. There are hundreds of men and women every year returning to the general public, many after being arrested and spending a short time in jail, while others spent an extended time in a State or Federal facility. For most, housing is imperative and the right housing can make all the difference. With the help of the Jewish Family Assistance Fund and the SOS fund, Aleph Institute can work to ensure that the men and women find the right housing requirements.

Job Placement

Although the economy is so much better than it was just a couple of years ago, finding employment for anyone is a challenge – and how much more so for those with a felony conviction? Over the years the Aleph Institute has developed connections and a resource book to help these individuals find employment. Many businesses have been kind and opened the doors, even if at minimal wage, allowing the individual to begin life in a most productive way.

Religious Counseling

As any transition in life can be challenging, it can be much more so to be transitioning to freedom with little to no resources and family contact. Because doing it alone can be challenging, it is therefore imperative the young men or women have a Rabbi to turn to for help in dealing with the daily grind. With over 150,000 people on parole and probation in Pennsylvania (and a few thousand of those being Jewish men and women), it is imperative these individuals be paired with the right person to help them as they navigate freedom after their time of punishment.



Mission

The Aleph Institute is a not-for-profit Jewish religious, educational, and humanitarian organization serving the Jewish community. We offer a multitude of services to Jewish men and women confined and their families, focused on the premise that “no Jew is forgotten” and that “no Jew is alone.”



Vision

Aleph Institute is a beacon of hope for those incarcerated their families and those returning to society by compassionately guiding people to becoming productive members of society, where the inherent value of each person is cherished, and opportunities abound.

Religious Counseling

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Tyler

Tyler is a student at Alderdice High School. Even though he stands at 6'2, Tyler seemed half his size when he first met the

Aleph Institute staff. He walked with his head down and did not interact with other students or teachers. The school staff sensed something was wrong and reached out to Tyler.

His school found out that his father was in prison and he was suffering and it was him with his mother alone, there was no family support available.

They got him involved with Aleph Institute programs, which included professional help and family supports. Over time, Tyler changed. He began to smile, socialize and walk and talk with purpose.

At the end of the school year, Tyler met with the Aleph Institute team to thank them. He shared that at the time of his introduction to the program he was considering committing suicide. Tyler now has a new outlook on life. Tyler is a happy, confident student leader whose life has been transformed by The Aleph Institute.



In 2014 Aleph Institute also added the Phone Support Program for Teens – Promoting health among teens. The phone support program is an 8-week program focused on giving young people the tools needed to navigate the system and gain tools and strength whilst their parent is incarcerated.

Youth that finish the program and show leadership potential are given the opportunity to become peer mentors and help teens that are in similar situations.



Community Transition Programs

Medical Care

With help from the Jewish Family and Childrens Service and our in house professionals, the Aleph Institute is dedicated to helping our clients with necessary social services, including medical care. In conjunction with local agencies, the Squirrel Hill Health Center has been extremely generous with helping to provide the medical needs of our men and women, as it can sometimes take up to six weeks for any insurance (government or private) to take effect, during which time the individual receives medical care and medication.

Food

Clients can also receive food stipends, especially until their benefits begin or they begin working, and the Squirrel Hill Food Bank (JFCS) has been very helpful with assisting these individuals.

Clothing

As inmates leave prison with just the clothes on them, a grant from the National Center of Jewish Women – Thriftique provides essential clothes for these young men and women.

Emergency Funding

Sometimes traveling across the city in seek of employment is essential to moving forward. Through our close ties and partnering with Gateway Rehabilitation, we are able to direct those leaving the jail with the right care when they need it, including monthly bus passes to travel to job interviews.

Job Training and Assistance

Resume writing services are provided by our staff, who are trained and have the tools to help with preparing all necessary for employment. Computer Training with our ICDL computer-training program is also available, providing the men and women with essential tools for the workplace.

Employment Preparedness

With many factors now being used prior to hiring, it is essential for the individual to know how to act wisely both with their personal social media sites as well as to understand how to address other discrepancies that may arise with the individual's personal behavior or online profile. Staff at the Aleph Institute is now preparing a new training group to educate those returning to society, that they understand the ramifications of their online choices and understand how to prepare themselves for a job interview.

Terry

Terry first came to the Aleph Institute to request emergency food. By accident he wandered into the offices. Rabbi Vogel asked if he needed assistance.



This unplanned interaction saved

Weekly health checks are keeping Terry on track!

Terry's life. Rabbi Vogel realized that Terry was in need of so much more than food.

He assigned him a case manager through the Family support program and invited him to come for lunch provided by the ALEPH INSTITUTE. His case manager connected him with doctors who discovered that he needed a liver transplant and got him on the waiting list.

Since coming to ALEPH INSTITUTE and connecting to health providers, Terry has stopped consuming alcohol. Before coming to ALEPH INSTITUTE, he spent countless hours alone in his home. Now, ALEPH INSTITUTE is his daily destination for support, socialization and counseling. His depression is in check and he is on the right path to improved health. His daily, 6 block walk to the ALEPH INSTITUTE is transforming Terry's life.

Support Groups and Meetings

With studies indicating that over 60% of those who are arrested suffer from addiction, it became necessary for the Aleph Institute to host meetings. These meetings, which began to meet at Aleph, include groups for narcotics, alcohol, sex, gambling etc. Over 350 people per week come into our center to attend daily and/or weekly meetings and other support programs being offered.

Family and Community Programs

The Other Innocent Victims of the Criminal Justice System

When a Jewish parent goes to prison, an innocent spouse and children serve a sentence too. Hearts stop, relationships change, and dreams begin to die. The psychological effects of having a parent or spouse in prison can cause severe damage.

It is a horrible fact that children of a parent who goes to prison are statistically more likely to end up imprisoned themselves. Such children, despite their own innocence, are alienated, looked down upon and shamed in their own community. Their natural inclination is to consort with others who suffer the same and follow their path.

Aleph helps break this painful and destructive cycle by providing support and hope for these families.

We offer family support groups for the families and programs for the children, which include the 'Chanukah Gelt Program', Jewish holiday programs and ongoing family visitation, teaming them up with other families in the community and individuals to help them through this ordeal. In addition, there are support groups for mothers with children in prison, for fathers of children, and spouses. This year we covered the cost for families to visit their loved one, including hotel fees and transportation. We provided funds and resources to have children of broken homes visit the parent in prison with an adult chaperone. We were able also to help a family whose breadwinner was in prison, and give families who were being evicted the funds and assistance to find housing.

Community Programs

Over the past year we have dedicated valuable resources developing an alternative to prison program, which would allow the individual (usually the breadwinner of the house) the opportunity to stay home and remain productive members of the community, supporting the family while being punished in creative ways, thus allowing the family to remain intact, while not being a burden on society.

Educational programs within the community, teaching the public of the consequences of crime and the ills in society is important – if it will save one life or motivate one person to seek help before the damage is done. At the same time teaching the public of the ills of prisons, and the importance of offering a helping hand with the development of programs to support these individuals and their families, is important for those in trouble to be able to offer them relief.



Dorothy Program

Dorothy Schwadron lived for 87 years in a state mental hospital without a single relative coming to visit her. She was buried in the Chesed Shel Emeth Cemetery in Shaler Township with only two mourners present; Rabbi Vogel who officiated, and the mortician who made the arrangements.



Dorothy Schwadron

In the end, Dorothy exemplified how some people can be lost to their family, friends and community once they become wards of the state.

The ALEPH INSTITUTE thinks that should never happen again.

There are thousands of Jewish men and women in state hospitals and group homes in Pennsylvania. For the most part they are detached from the Jewish community. In 2005 the Aleph Institute began visiting those in the state hospital, and when possible in the group homes in and around the Pittsburgh neighborhood. For many in the Pittsburgh area, these services are covered by the Jewish Residential Services. However, there are many Jewish men and women who are in facilities which are disconnected and detached from the community. The Aleph Institute seeks to maintain contact with and offer services to these people.



Joy Flowers Conti
Chief Judge

United States District Court
Western District of Pennsylvania
5250 U.S. Post Office & Courthouse
700 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219

Telephone: (412) 208-7330
Fax: (412) 208-7337

January 15, 2015

Allegheny Health and Human Services

Re: Letter of Support for the Concept Paper
submitted by the Aleph Institute

Dear Sir or Madam,

During the last year our Probation Office, with the support of my court, initiated a program to identify community resources to assist in the reentry of federal ex-offenders in the Western District of Pennsylvania. The impetus for this program was a meeting with Rabbi Vogel, the Executive Director of the Aleph Institute. When we learned about the services to the ex-offender offered by the Aleph Institute we concluded that having those services available to federal ex-offenders would be beneficial. The expansion of the Aleph Institute's programming, which is envisioned by the proposal it submitted to you, would help many ex-offenders who opt to participate in those programs.

With the increasing number of individuals who are incarcerated and the decreasing budget for the Federal Bureau of Prisons, our court needed to identify community programs to support the successful reentry of ex-offenders into our community. The community's safety is enhanced by programs like those offered and proposed to be offered by the Aleph Institute. I wholeheartedly support the concept paper it submitted to you. If you have any questions, please call me at 412-208-7330.

Very truly yours,

Joy Flowers Conti
Chief U.S. District Judge

Belinda M. Ashley
Chief U.S. Probation Officer

John A. Puglino
Deputy Chief U.S. Probation Officer

Demetrius L. Hatley
Assistant Deputy Chief U.S. Probation
Officer

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA
Probation and Pretrial Services Office



700 Grant Street
Suite 3330
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Telephone: 412-395-6907
Fax: 412-395-4864

January 13, 2015

Rabbi Moishe Mayir Vogel
Aleph Institute
5804 Beacon Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

RE: Letter of Support

Greetings, Rabbi Moishe Vogel;

The U.S. Probation Office is committed to facilitating long term positive change in defendants and offenders through proactive interventions including reentry services. Our approach has been to embrace and partner with community agencies that are striving to reintegrate individuals returning to their communities to become productive citizens. With over 18 years of experience in the U.S. Probation Office, I relocated to Pittsburgh in 2011 where I have continued to broaden my impact by joining with community leaders in providing re-entry services. Within a short time of my arrival, I met Rabbi Vogel and became aware of the great work of the Aleph Institute.

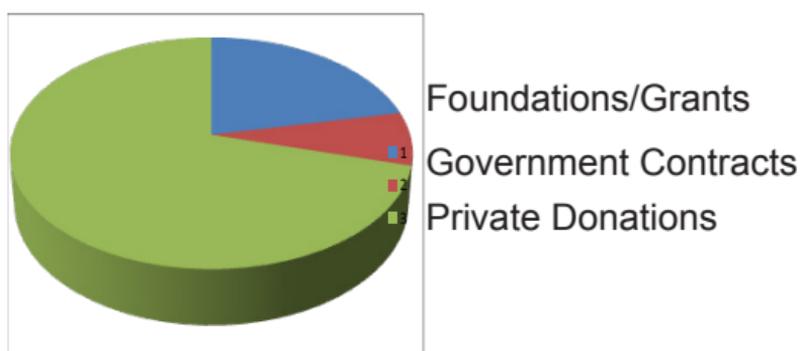
For the past several months, I have met with Rabbi Vogel in planning for an alternative sentencing program in the U.S. Courts. Needless to say, there is great excitement surrounding the prospect of positively impacting recidivism and incarceration rates by increasing resources and providing a continuum of care to this population. We wholly support this proposal and look forward to working with Rabbi Vogel as this program materializes.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

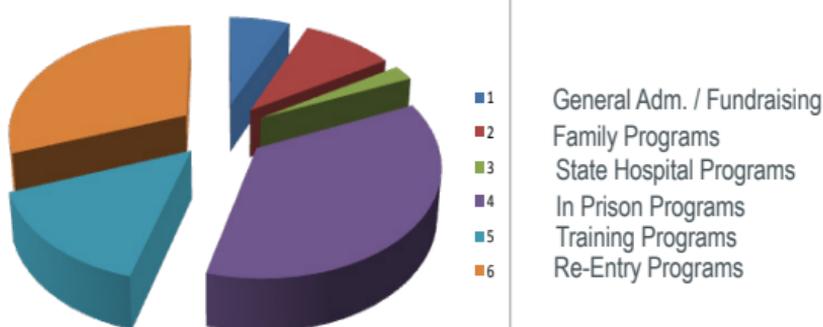
Belinda Ashley
Chief U.S. Probation Officer

Financials – 2014



REVENUES

Private Donations	\$143,930.90
Foundations/Grants.....	\$48,509.00
Government Contracts	\$45,614.25
Total	\$238,054.15



EXPENSES

No One Alone and No One Forgotten;

Family Programs	\$23,478.68
Hospital Programs.....	\$5,449.35
In prison programs	\$86,740.87
Training Programs (Rabbis & Volunteers)	\$39,523.84
Re-Entry Programs	\$74,287.07
General admin & Fundraising	\$15,472.66
Total	\$244,952.47



Community Support

Aleph Institute is grateful to all of our donors and supporters.





Thank You

INDIVIDUALS

Abrams, Richard and Marilyn
Anouchi, Abraham and Yoel
Askin, C. Daniel and Ronna
Ash, Harry
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The Aleph Institute



**ALEPH
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No One Forgotten.

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