

MATANEL FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: ECJS

Year: 2012

Please present your activity report according to the following lines. The whole rapport will not exceed 2 or 3 pages (as word document).

Name of the Program: European Center for Jewish Students (ECJS)

Year of activity: 2012

Name of the report's writer: Sara Ives

Function of the report's writer: Program Director

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Give the actually state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines): Over the year 2012, ECJS has continued its programs which are popular among our demographic of European Jews ages 18-35. These students and young professionals depend on ECJS activities for the opportunity to be part of the European Jewish community. Most of these participants had little to no involvement in Jewish life on a regular basis prior to their involvement with ECJS. We have created a close nit network between these young adults and have bridged the gap of physical distance with the emotional closeness of an extended family. The main ECJS achievements in 2012 include European conventions, summer trip to Israel, conferences, and local Jewish life activities.

European Conventions – each follows a city trip/conference model which ECJS has established through years of experience; ECJS organizes plans and tailors each event to the local city and to the specific time of year. Each event includes a traditional Shabbat, lectures on contemporary Jewish issues, and touring of the local city with an emphasis on the Jewish history and historical sites. Details attached.

Other Activities:

- Local events including Shabbat services and meals, Jewish festival celebrations including: Shavuot cheese-cake party and 10 Commandments, a Simchat Torah buffet celebration, Sukkot 'Pizza in the Hut' party, Chanukah candle-lighting, sufganiot decorating and sivivon game with gifts. Judaic classes, twice weekly morning prayers and breakfast, etc. Approximately 800 people participate in these events over the course of the year.
- Jewish festival packages including distributing chanukiot for Chanukah, mishloach manot for Purim and matzah and Pesach. Approximately 1500 people benefit from these activities.

- Assist in locating local synagogues, organizations, services and meals for people traveling all over Europe. Approximately 500 people benefit from these activities.

The evaluation (methodology, results, comparisons with the precedent year, conclusions for the future...):

Hosting Jewish events which are popular and attract European students and young professionals is no easy feat among our target group. ECJS has succeeded in creating an atmosphere that combines a homey, welcoming feeling within large and diverse groups. Events have an abundance of unity, friendship and pride. The balance of fun outings, tours, and parties together with Jewish traditions, education, and culture are part of what makes the events so popular. Attendees are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the program, but there is no pressure to do so. This facilitates internal development and exploration of Jewish values.

26 couples that we know of got married in 2012 who met through ECJS events. Results are displayed through positive feedback from participants. After participants attend their 1st ECJS event there is a major increase of Jewish friends on facebook. Turnover at events is approximately a third to half new participants. New participants are constantly needed to replace those who have met their significant other, moved out of Europe and those who have passed our age limit.

One of our conclusions for the future is that we need strong headquarters; where we can host monthly European weekend getaways as a regular follow up to the large ECJS events. We now have the location and are preparing the infrastructure. We hope it will be ready in the next few months. We also have concluded that there is a strong need for funding participants from broken homes and in need of financial assistance to enable them to attend ECJS events. We need to focus on individuals who are currently prohibited financially from participating in ECJS activities.

Provisional guide lines for the advancement of the program in the next year:
Due to the success and popularity of ECJS events, we do not suggest making any changes to the organization of the programs. Unfortunately, we are currently limited to the number of programs we are able to hold per year due to limits in financial backing.

More follow up needed with monthly get-togethers.

Due to lack of funding “The Kindness Project” was not yet launched. If donations in 2013 make it possible, we will launch this project which will channel the values learned and inspiration received at the European events into participants taking an active role in initiating their own programs for the benefit of local Jewry and/or that of the wider community.

In 2013 we plan to implement projects in which ECJS participants can fundraise for specific groups within the Jewish community and wider world. One such project is fundraising to prevent human trafficking. We feel that it is important to teach young people the value of giving.

A summary table – as **PDF document** – specifying the progress in the program since the beginning of the encouragement by the Matanel Foundation according to the main parameters and objectives such as: N/A Matanel Foundation has been supporting ECJS activities from the start. We consider Matanel to be a full partner in all ECJS achievements since its inception.

Number of events:

Number of participants:

Number of beneficiaries:

New Year's 2012 in Athens, Greece

December 30- January 2

4 day event

Participants in hotel 293

Total participants that attended the event: Shabbat, parties etc 340

Purim in Rome, Italy

March 8-11

4 day event

Participants In hotel 513

Total participants that attended the event: Shabbat, parties etc 1200

Summer Porto Portugal

July 12-15

4 day event

Participants In hotel 307

Total participants that attended the event: Shabbat, parties etc 320

Annual Brussels event

November 9-11

3 day event

Participants In hotel 244

Total participants that attended the event: Shabbat, parties etc 800

Other...

Please join the Evaluation Report, the Financial Report and the list of the participants to the program (as **PDF documents**)

Please join photos – as **photos** – and any link or any other document connected to the program which will seem to you relevant – as **PDF document**.