

FORWARD 2016

A First Year in Review

THE FORWARD MISSION

Forward is tasked with helping individuals who have left their ultra-Orthodox and hasidic communities with education, support and integration services to allow them to become happy contributing members to communities of their choice.

Why Are We Doing This?

We recognize a need.

Some of us are ex-Hasidic ourselves. Others have worked on issues relating to what we are doing and recognized an at-risk community.

But more than that, we see the potential in brave young men and women who have rejected their communities, even though the alternative they choose is incredibly difficult. We see people who are driven, ambitious and can accomplish incredible things with very limited resource.

We know we can make the transition easier on them.

A Few 2016 Highlights

- ❑ Registering as a NPO
- ❑ Forming a board and advisory
- ❑ Hosting a screening fundraiser
- ❑ Numerous media events
- ❑ Hosting well over a dozen member focused events, brunches, dinners

And more than anything else; helping individuals who needed, on a one-to-one basis, get the coaching, mentoring, support, services and so much more.

Getting Organized

From an organizational perspective we reached several important milestones;

- ❑ We established an official board of directors (and informal advisory board)
 - ❑ **Hershy Moskowitz: Entrepreneur, ex-Belz**
 - ❑ **Levi Riven: Clinical Psychologist, ex-Lubavitch**
 - ❑ **Yasmin Michaeli: Lawyer, community advocate**
 - ❑ **Joey Tanny: Marketer, ex-Lubavitch**
- ❑ Forward officially registered as a non-profit organization (July 2016)
- ❑ Website is launched
- ❑ Established regular communication, newsletters, blog posts, membership surveys
- ❑ Met with many local organizations with an interest working together.

Working With the Public

To establish ourselves as an organization, we had several public events;

- ❑ We hosted a screening of Leaving the Fold at the Rialto, with 250 guests in attendance.
- ❑ Abby Stein came into town and we had events at the Temple Emmanuel and Mile End Chavura
- ❑ The Media was kind to us; we had appearances on CBC's Homerun, Radio-Canada, CJNI, La Presse and segment on Banc Public.
- ❑ Numerous brunches, lunches and dinners.

All these events led to very positive outcomes, most importantly volunteers and public support.

Serving Our Members

Everything we do as an organization is done with a singular mission: help our individual members. Here are a few concrete ways we were able to in 2016:

- ❑ Math tutoring
- ❑ French tutoring
- ❑ Legal conversations
- ❑ Business plan writing
- ❑ General mentorship
- ❑ Medical checkups
- ❑ Mental health services & support
- ❑ Delivering food packages
- ❑ Visiting a sick member
- ❑ Donation of a bike
- ❑ Donation of a laptop
- ❑ An apartment for a month
- ❑ Paid gigs for several members
- ❑ Social support in many forms

Forward Events, Workshops, Meetups

According to surveys conducted on the ex-hasidic community, social support is shown to be high priority. Here are several ways we accomplished this:

- ❑ Workshop on sexuality - with plenty of interesting questions.
- ❑ Member holiday party...with a DJ, gift bags, and plenty of candy.
- ❑ A Workshop dinner led by a UN expert on Internally displaced people.
- ❑ Several regular, Forward sponsored casual meetups.
- ❑ Regularly hosted dinner parties at patrons' houses.

This has provided our members regular opportunities to socialize in supportive and healthy environments.

Financials

Nira, whom we consider affectionately as the grandmother of our organization, gave us great advice when we were starting out:

“Turn the pyramid upside down. Start small”

We did. Our focus has been on grassroots and volunteering, with little priority on fundraising.

Throughout 2016 we raised: \$4,800

This doesn't included the 100s (if not 1000s) of volunteer hours we relied on to get us going.

LOOKING TO FORWARD 2017

More For Our Members

We need to expand and provide consistent services to our members:

- ❑ Consistently deliver monthly workshops.
 - ❑ We have mentorship nights, farm outings, tenant right workshops in the works already.
- ❑ Ensure a monthly member only meetup
- ❑ Hold a weekend long members retreat
- ❑ Create a process dedicated to finding and serving member needs
- ❑ Establish scholarships and grants to lighten the financial burden many of our members face.
- ❑ Develop a more formal intake process

Organizational Goals

To achieve our member goals, we are aiming for the following:

- ❑ Gain charitable status to encourage donations
- ❑ Work towards better organized, decentralized committees, with focussed mandates
 - ❑ Volunteering - Events & Workshops - Educational Services - Fundraising - Health & Social Support
- ❑ Build a consistent communications pipeline to keep patrons and members informed
- ❑ Hire a part time administrator
 - ❑ Ideally this can be a member.

Fundraising Targets

To help us achieve our goal, we are setting a 2017 fundraising goal of:

\$100,000

We expect this to come from a combination of private and public money, including government and institutional grants.

This money will go to the following:

- Scholarships and grants
- Hiring an administrator
- Filling our event and workshop calendar
- Daily operations
- Renting a space to serve as a headquarters and emergency member housing

Wrapping It Up

“This is the first time an adult has ever listened to me and I felt it was honest”

“I wish I had access to a similar organization when I was leaving my community 15 years ago”

- Quotes from members.

We look forward to growing together, and being able to provide our members with more tools, better services, and build a community

THANK YOU!

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