

Facilitator's Guide





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Welcome to the Grandparents Circlesm!

hank you for your interest in bringing the Grandparents Circle to your community! The Grandparents Circle provides an important service to Jewish grandparents whose adult children have intermarried. These grandparents often feel unsure of how they can cultivate the Jewish identities of their grandchildren, especially when it is not always clear as to whether or not they are being raised as Jews. The Grandparents Circle is a comprehensive program that offers these grandparents skills and techniques to nurture, and in some cases help establish, their grandchildren's Jewish identities. It also provides participants with a supportive and open-minded environment to share their achievements, express their frustrations and acknowledge their challenges.

In this guide, you will find everything you need to begin implementing the Grandparents Circle in your community. Included is an explanation of your role as facilitator; guidelines for who is eligible for the course; tips for recruitment, marketing and finding funding; and details on how to run the program.

This guide works in conjunction with the Grandparents Circle curriculum, which you will receive separately, together with the professional support provided to all Grandparents Circle facilitators by the staff of the Jewish Outreach Institute. We thank you for joining the Grandparents Circle family and making a difference in the lives of so many individuals who seek to share their Jewish heritage and religion with their grandchildren.

Thank you,

Rebecca Gross

Program Officer/Grandparents Circle National Coordinator Jewish Outreach Institute BGross@JOI.org

Acknowledgements

Many people contributed to the creation of the Grandparents Circle curriculum, including Paul Golin, Liz Marcovitz, Rabbi Kerry Olitzky and Liz Stoll. We thank *The Forward* for the use of their article.

Introducing the Grandparents Circle

The Need:

With the intermarriage rate rising, more must be done to support intermarried couples and their families to raise Jewish children. This includes the parents of individuals who have intermarried. Often, Jewish grandparents question their role in regard to their grandchildren who are being raised in interfaith homes. The challenges that these grandparents face are often overlooked and must be grappled with by the Jewish community in a guided and supportive context.

Responding to the needs of these grandparents, the Grandparents Circle program:

- Offers free education in sharing Judaism in an interesting and engaging way with grandchildren;
- Creates a warm and supportive community of grandparents who seek to nurture Jewish identity in their interfaith grandchildren;
- Improves participants' relationships with their adult children and grandchildren.



The Grandparents Circle program is comprised of three components, all free to participants:

- **1** Grandparents Circle *The Course*
- **2** The Grandparents Circle National Listserve
- **3** Family Friendly Events for Grandparents and their Grandchildren

Grandparents Circle The Course

A five session course for 15-20 Jewish grandparents whose grandchildren are being raised in interfaith homes that:

- Meets weekly or biweekly in a setting that is comfortable for participants;
- Enables participants to join as couples or individuals;
- Provides skills and techniques to grandparents to enable them to share Judaism with their grandchildren in an interesting and engaging way;
- Creates a positive environment for grandparents to discuss their individual experiences and feelings in regard to their adult children and grandchildren;
- Connects participants to others who can relate to their experiences, and creates a supportive and understanding community of peers.

The National Grandparents Circle Listserve

A virtual conversation held via an email discussion list that:

- Enables Jewish grandparents from across North America who seek to nurture Jewish identity in their interfaith grandchildren to share their experiences with others who are in the same circumstance;
- Provides a forum for current course participants, course alumni and grandparents who have not yet taken the course or who live in a city without an available course;
- Allows participants to raise challenges and offer solutions and encouragement among their peers.

Family Friendly Events for Grandparents and their Grandchildren

A wide variety of one-time programs supplementing the course and involving more than just the grandparents enrolled that:

- Involve the grandparents and their grandchildren, often involve their adult children and their spouses/partners and sometimes are open to the entire community;
- Take place according to the schedules of potential participants and are dependent on the financial resources of the community;
- May occur during or close to Jewish holidays and during school breaks when grandchildren might be visiting their grandparents;
- Use JOI's outreach methodology to program around holidays and in secular venues;
- Enable grandparents to participate in engaging Jewish activities with their grandchildren.

The Grandparents Circle is a program of the **Jewish Outreach Institute** (JOI.org).

JOI is a non-denominational organization that promotes outreach to unaffiliated and intermarried families. Since 1987, JOI has been a leader in the development of Jewish community-based outreach programming. Through its national conferences, publications and informational resources, JOI has helped foster the creation of numerous Jewish outreach programs throughout North America. JOI research has garnered national attention on the opportunities for including the intermarried in the Jewish community.

Getting Started

The Facilitator

The facilitator is the person who takes the Grandparents Circle curriculum and brings it to life for course participants. S/he is a teacher and discussion leader who is sensitive to the needs of Jewish grandparents who want to share their Jewish backgrounds with their interfaith grandchildren.

The Facilitator must have a number of special qualities:

- Knowledge of Judaism and the ability to teach participants who may be at different levels of Jewish literacy;
- Experience with successfully engaging children in Jewish activities;
- Experience as a teacher or discussion leader;
- Knowledge of the local Jewish community;
- Openness, warmth, and a nonjudgmental attitude;
- Willingness to listen to participants' challenges and struggles when relating to their adult children and grandchildren;
- The ability to commit to two hours of preparation for every hour of class time as well as dedicate an additional hour each week to following up with participants on the phone or through email in between the sessions;
- Passion for working with the issue;
- The ability to set a positive tone for participants who may be dealing with complicated and conflicting feelings about a very sensitive subject.

The goals of the facilitator are to:

- Teach the course based on the Grandparents Circle curriculum and supplemental program activities;
- Facilitate a course that accommodates the needs of a heterogeneous group of participants that may have grandchildren being raised a variety of different religious contexts (as Jews, as Christians or other in other religions, with no religion, etc.);
- Conduct associated Family Friendly Events for Grandparents and their Grandchildren and manage alumni activities.

In short, the facilitator is the primary educator for the Grandparents Circle.

Administration

Implementing *The Course* also entails a small amount of administrative work, which may be undertaken by the facilitator or another Jewish community professional or lay leader. For example, if the Grandparents Circle is implemented under the auspices of a synagogue, JCC or Federation, an additional staff person may be available to help with the following tasks:

- Finding a location for meetings [see "Program Location" on page 11];
- Promoting and recruiting for The Course [see "Finding the Grandparents" on page 9].

Organizational Support and Requirements

JOI provides support to Grandparents Circle facilitators through:

- A dedicated staff person (the National Coordinator), as well as through additional staff that specialize in technology (website and listserve) and marketing;
- Sample marketing materials and recommended strategies for the most effective recruitment;
- A webpage for each Grandparents Circle host city and listserve administration for all participants;
- Quarterly conference calls and other consultations [see "Facilitator Training and Support" on page 17];
- Phone support from the National Coordinator whenever challenges arise;
- Development consultation to locate and solicit potential funders; JOI will help communities apply for grants—or apply on its own—to support the Grandparents Circle in communities where *The Course* is offered; however, it is impossible to guarantee that these applications will be successful.

Grandparents Circle facilitators agree to:

- Provide JOI the names and contact information (including email addresses) for all Grandparents Circle participants and facilitators;
- Collect and share participant feedback with JOI, including the pre and post-program questionnaires;
- Direct eligible grandparents to sign up for the free Grandparents Circle National Listserve;
- Credit JOI as the developer of the Grandparents Circle program and curriculum;
- Maintain regular contact with JOI to share facilitator feedback, provide information regarding course calendar, and send JOI copies of advertisements and promotional materials developed for the Grandparents Circle course and copies of articles written about the program locally.



Knowing Your Community

The better you know your community, the easier it will be to raise funds if needed, recruit participants for the course, and connect participants and their grandchildren and adult children to other programs in the Jewish community that might be of interest to them.

As the facilitator, you have the opportunity to help participants share the treasures of the Jewish community with their adult children and grandchildren. Some participants may already have adult children and grandchildren who are connected to the Jewish community, but others may have adult children and grandchildren who seek to be involved but have yet to find the right means. Even for participants whose adult children and grandchildren do not seek involvement with the Jewish community, you have the opportunity to make them feel welcome during holidays and other family times when they join in community events.

As an important connection to the Jewish community, you will help them find a welcoming place that meets their needs, by:

- Knowing which Jewish organizations welcome intermarried couples and which have less supportive atmospheres or discriminatory policies;
- Knowing the policies of local synagogues regarding: patrilineal/matrilineal descent; officiating at brit milah/naming ceremonies, b'nai mitzvah, etc.
- Knowing which Jewish organizations (summer camps, schools, synagogues, etc.) nurture the children of intermarried couples;
- Creating a "Referral File" of recommended organizations that will
 - welcome Grandparents Circle families into the Jewish community and meet their religious/ educational needs, and that offer relevant programming to those who approach you about participation but are not eligible for the Grandparents Circle;
- If you do not find such organizations in your community, become an agent of change!



Who's Eligible?

The Grandparents Circle is intended to offer Jewish education and support to a specific population: Jewish grandparents of grandchildren who are being raised in interfaith homes.

The Grandparents Circle is therefore limited to that demographic group.

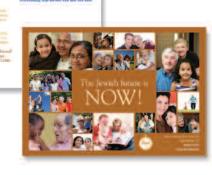
- The Course and the listserve are safe spaces for grandparents who may be experiencing difficulty with their adult children's decisions to intermarry;
- The Course and the listserve are therefore not appropriate places for grandparents with in-married children and Jewish grandchildren who happen to be unengaged or unaffiliated;
- The Course is not intended for potential grandparents of interfaith grand-children although they may be welcomed in certain circumstances; it is designed for those individuals who are already grandparents and seek innovative ways to share their Judaism with their interfaith grandchildren;
- However, the Family Friendly Events for Grandparents and their Grandchildren are purposely expanded to include a wider demographic group, including participants' adult children and their partners/spouses, grandparents not participating in the Grandparents Circle, and the community at large;
- You will almost certainly receive applications from individuals who are not eligible; luckily, other educational programs almost always exist for them. Be prepared to refer them to the appropriate resources within the local Jewish community [see "Knowing Your Community" on page 8].

Finding the Grandparents: Recruitment and Promotion

Recruitment should begin as early as possible and will become most intensive during the month or so before *The Course* begins; after that, it is much less time consuming. During recruitment, you may encounter grandparents who are eligible for *The Course* but are unable to make the time commitment. They should be encouraged to join the Grandparents Circle National Listserve.

The following strategies can help you recruit participants for Grandparents Circle *The Course*:

- Place a notice in synagogue bulletins;
- Post flyers/leave palm cards in JCCs, synagogues, and secular spaces that grandparents frequent, such as coffee shops, restaurants, book stores, grocery stores and libraries;



- Distribute flyers/palm cards at public Jewish events, especially those that attract mature members of the Jewish community, such as lectures and cultural events;
- Request that local synagogues and JCCs make announcements about the Grandparents Circle, especially during well-attended programs and services, such as those for the High Holidays;
- Notify the local Jewish press/send out a press release heralding the beginning of a new program, and if you have the budget place an ad in the secular [non-Jewish] press;
- If any organizations in your "Referral File" are willing to promote the Grandparents Circle, give them palm cards and flyers;
- Place a notice on local online message boards and event listings that might appeal to grandparents.

In addition, you have an ongoing opportunity to promote the Grandparents Circle on the JOI Grandparents Circle website, www. Grandparents Circle.org:

- Each Grandparents Circle city has its own webpage;
- The facilitator is encouraged to send the National Coordinator material to upload to the website:
- Ideal material for the website includes photographs of Grandparents Circle activities, accounts of alumni events, etc.;
- Updating your page on the Grandparents Circle website is important because publicizing your Grandparents Circle will help you recruit for the next course.

Expenses to Consider

No two Grandparents Circles will have exactly the same budget. Costs will vary depending on the resources available in your community. As you plan your budget, make sure that you confirm the cost of the following necessities:

- The facilitator [cost can be in hours instead of dollars if s/he is already on staff at the sponsoring institution and simply takes on the added responsibility; or if paid on an additional basis, can cost hundreds of dollars due to the extra responsibility of facilitating each session plus recruitment hours during the two months prior to the beginning of *The Course*];
- Administrative support [a few hours a week; again, cost depends on the relationship to sponsoring organization];
- Classroom facility [can be free if The Course takes place in your institution but can vary if you choose to rent a space];
- Supplies such as markers, photocopies, a flip chart or white/chalkboard [estimated \$50-\$100, depending what resources are already available in your institution];
- Refreshments [estimated \$100, but can vary depending on what you decide to serve; you may also ask participants to bring refreshments];
- Marketing [can be in the thousands of dollars if you decide to advertise in newspapers or almost nothing if only marketed through flyers, word-of-mouth and institutional communications, such as emails, bulletins and newsletters];
- Family Friendly Events for Grandparents and their Grandchildren [can be several hundred or even thousands of dollars if they are intended for the entire community and not planned in partnership with other program(s), but ideally can be done for a smaller expense through partnerships and innovation]:
- Training, consultation and curriculum [donated by the generous supporters of the Jewish Outreach Institute].

Program Location

If possible, choose your program location based on the composition of your group. The best location is a place where participants will feel welcome and relaxed, so if many of your participants are already involved in the Jewish community, it is appropriate to hold the Grandparents Circle in a synagogue, JCC, Jewish Family Services, etc. If many of your participants are newcomers to the Jewish community, consider holding the program in a secular space, such as a library, coffee shop or a community meeting room. These rooms are usually available for little or no cost, though some legwork will be required to find them and reserve them.

Grandparents Circle Timeline: Countdown to the First Day



months before The Course:

- Find a facilitator;
- Secure the support of your board, if applicable;
- Create a budget;
- Inform the JOI Grandparents Circle National Coordinator of your decision to hold *The Course*;
- Create a "Referral File" of local Jewish organizations and synagogues that welcome interfaith families. [see "Knowing Your Community" on page 8] A Jewish Community Center may prove particularly valuable because it offers a variety of programs and attracts a variety of people;
- Find and reserve the location for the The Course;
- Look into advertising and listing deadlines for secular newspapers and community bulletins;
- Ask to be included in JOI's next conference call of Grandparents Circle facilitators.

months before The Course:

- Contact the organizations and synagogues in your "Referral File." Begin to establish good relations;
- Create marketing materials such as ads, posters, and palm cards (postcards that don't get mailed);
- Create a list of publicly accessible bulletin boards—physical (e.g., at the public library) and virtual (e.g., Craigslist.com).
- Contact the National Coordinator at JOI to discuss marketing strategies.

months before The Course:

- Distribute palm cards to organizations and synagogues in your "Referral File" and ask them to help you recruit for the program;
- Begin placing ads, if possible, to continue until The Course begins;
- Distribute flyers through synagogue bulletins and mailing lists, etc.;
- Send press releases describing the Grandparents Circle to both Jewish and secular local media;
- Ask secular venues about placing posters or flyers in their establishments [See "Finding the Grandparents" on page 9.] and begin posting.



month before The Course:

- Continue posting flyers at public venues on your list and using other recruitment techniques;
- Begin planning your Family Friendly Events for Grandparents and their Grandchildren, including choosing locations;
- Field emails and phone calls from grandparents interested in *The Course*;
- Remain in touch with the National Coordinator at JOI to help work through any difficulties in recruitment;
- Begin a contact list of Grandparents Circle participants.

weeks before The Course:

- Contact the National Coordinator at JOI with an estimated number of participants;
- Begin to review the curriculum to prepare for the first class:
- Send the National Coordinator at JOI your projected schedule of sessions, including any supplementary activities.

week into The Course:

- Send the participant contact information to the Grandparents Circle coordinator at JOI:
- JOI will add participants to the National Listserve:
- JOI will not sell the contact information to a third party;
- Send the National Coordinator copies of the completed "Preprogram Questionnaire" from the first session.

Implementing The Course

About the Curriculum

The Grandparents Circle The Course curriculum is provided by JOI free-of-charge and outlines in detail all five sessions as well as supplementary activities:

- Each session offers notes to the facilitator providing content and recommending activities;
- The curriculum is normally sent to the facilitator in parts well before the corresponding sessions as email attachments in printable, PDF format; however they can be sent through the U.S. Postal Service, if requested;
- Some circles begin with an information session [see "The Information Session" on page 14] that precedes Session 1, thus making a total of six sessions;
- There is flexibility in the order of some sessions of the curriculum to account for varying needs of participants—some participants may need additional support building relationships with their adult children, for example; however a number of sessions must be offered in sequence for the sake of continuity; the Grandparents Circle National Coordinator will help you create the optimal schedule of session topics for your group. [See "Adapting the Curriculum" on page 14 for more information about using the curriculum to best meet the needs of participants.]

Using the Curriculum

The curriculum will provide the structure for The Course using several icons and visual cues to guide the facilitator through the activities. Each session of the curriculum includes:



- Objectives;
- Materials needed;
- Handouts to distribute;
- Recommended activities.
- Directions to the facilitator are bolded and preceded by an arrow. These directions will cue the facilitator to pass out materials or begin activities. They can also help the facilitator prepare for discussions by alerting her/him to possible answers to the questions asked.

Adapting the Curriculum

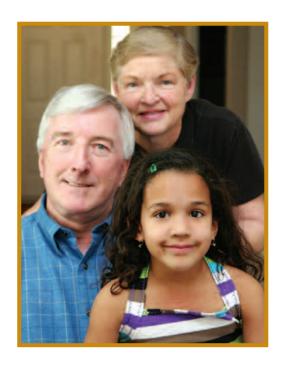
The Course curriculum can be adapted in a variety of ways to accommodate the needs of your participants:

- Sessions can be placed in a different order depending on the needs of participants; for example, facilitators may find that some groups will need more assistance learning about their grandchildren's interests than learning about methods of communication, in which case Session 3 would precede Session 4;
- Session 1 should remain the introductory session in all cases. and Session 5 as the final session;
- Each session is set for one and a half hours, but we recommend that sessions are scheduled to take place in a two hour time period. The extra half an hour can be used to allow more time for each activity or provide for more unstructured time for general support and conversation;
- The curriculum is intended for groups of 15 to 20 participants to allow time for personal disclosure. For larger groups, we recommended dividing participants into multiple smaller groups when facilitating discussions and activities:
- Supplementary activities and handouts can be used to address the specific issues of your group.

The Information Session

In addition to the five curriculum sessions that make up the Grandparents Circle, some courses begin with an information session.

- The facilitator to outline the program and introduce it to participants;
- The facilitator to set a tone of optimism for participants and create an environment of openness and disclosure;
- Additional time for participants to share their backgrounds and experiences with the group;
- Participants to complete the "Preprogram Questionnaires" prior to Session 1, so that the facilitator can evaluate their needs, and in turn, appropriately adapt the curriculum to them.
- Please consult the Grandparents Circle National Coordinator for more information about this introductory session.



Preprogram Questionnaire

The "Preprogram Questionnaire" should be completed by participants during the first session of the Grandparents Circle. You may also choose to mail the "Preprogram Questionnaire" to all participants about two weeks before the course with a letter welcoming participants to the Grandparents Circle. In addition to your welcome, you may choose to share with participants:

- A brief introduction of yourself and your contact information;
- A request for participants to bring the "Preprogram Questionnaire" with them to the first meeting of the Grandparents Circle;
- Information regarding the date, time and location of the first session.

Collect the "Preprogram Questionnaires" during the first course sessions, and please mail them to the Jewish Outreach Institute. You should bring extra copies of the questionnaire with you to the first session for participants who were unable to fill them out in advance. In addition to the questionnaire, which will provide you with profiles of who your participants are and help you to begin to evaluate their needs, you may choose to distribute blank index cards to participants at the end of each session. Participants can use the index cards to share anonymous feedback about their impressions of each session and its activities. Please share these with JOI if they are relevant to the program and the curriculum.



Post-Program Questionnaire

The "Post-Program Questionnaire" will help you and JOI evaluate the success of the course in terms of the participants' level of comfort engaging their grand-children in Jewish activities and make improvements on it. It is integral that the questionnaire is distributed and COLLECTED at the end of the final session of the Grandparents Circle. Please mail completed questionnaires to the Jewish Outreach Institute.

Recommended Supplemental Reading





Some participants may benefit from reading accompanying sections from Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky's and Paul Golin's Twenty Things for Grandparents of Interfaith Grandchildren to Do (And Not Do) to Nurture Jewish Identity in Their **Grandchildren** (Los Angeles: Torah Aura Productions, 2007) following each session of The Course. We recommend you suggest the following chapters with each session, should you decide to include supplemental reading with the curriculum.

Chapter

SESSION 1

Welcome to the **Grandparents Circle** Introduction (page 1)

- 1. Be the best Jew you can be (page 3)
- 2. Assess the situation wisely (page 9)
- 18. Don't confuse support for your intermarried family members with support for intermarriage itself (page 89)

SESSION 2

Refining Your Approach

- 4. Wear your own Jewish identity proudly (page 21)
- 5. Model a welcoming attitude toward all (page 27)
- 6. If your son-in-law or daughter-in-law is helping to raise a Jewish child, celebrate those actions (page 31)
- 17. Keep the holidays focused on celebration, not confrontation (page 83)

SESSION 3

Everyday is a Jewish Day

- 11. Discuss age-appropriate Jewish current events with your grandchildren (page 57)
- 12. Make sure that your home is "obviously" Jewish (page 63)
- 13. Communicate regularly with your grandchildren (page 67)

SESSION 4

Making Jewish Memories

- 9. Share stories and mementoes from your Jewish past (page 45)
- 10. Throw the best holiday parties ever (page 51)
- 16. Stay focused on the goal: raising the level of your grandchildren's Jewish activity (page 79)

SESSION 5

Bringing It Home

- 14. Provide financial incentives (page 71)
- 15. Find Jewish destinations when you travel, and bring your grandchildren with you (page 75)
- 19. Don't go it alone, it takes a community to raise Jewish grandchildren (page 95)
- 20. It can work. It does work (page 101)

Sensitivity Needs

Participants will come from a wide variety of backgrounds and will be subject to different family situations. Please keep the following issues of sensitivity in mind:

- Participants will be at different levels of Jewish literacy (some may not be Jewish at all and attending *The Course* with their partners/spouses); lower the literacy barrier by explaining Jewish/Hebrew terms and rituals and not making assumptions about participants' levels of knowledge;
- Participants will be at varying levels of Jewish involvement; the Grandparents Circle is not an opportunity to "quilt" participants into attending synagogue and increasing their Jewish involvement;
- Be aware of participants using disparaging language toward those who aren't Jewish and blaming other participants for their adult children's choices, level of Jewish involvement, etc.;
- Some participants may have very negative attitudes about their adult children's choices and the possibility of engaging their grandchildren in Judaism; be prepared to set a positive tone for the group and defer any negativity that might come up;
- Be prepared to table an individual's challenge if you find it has reached an impasse in the class and instead offer to meet with that individual right after the session:
- Participants' grandchildren will have varying needs based a variety of criteria including age, status of their parents' marriage (divorce), special needs, etc.

Facilitator Training and Support

As the facilitator, you come to the Grandparents Circle with your own knowledge and experience in implementing programs or teaching courses. JOI offers additional training and support in working with this unique target audience:

- JOI's Grandparents Circle National Coordinator and other staff members are available for ongoing consultations before, during, and after you run The Course to help ensure your success;
- Consultation topics include Grandparents Circle marketing, recruitment, fundraising, program development, program location, troubleshooting, and creating affiliate relationships with other Jewish communal professionals in your community, among other subjects;
- Quarterly training conference calls are an opportunity to learn from JOI staff members and from experienced Grandparents Circle facilitators who have successfully piloted the program in Los Angeles and elsewhere, as well as to connect to other Grandparents Circle facilitators from across North America;
- A facilitator and coordinator listserve is a venue to learn from other's experiences and ask questions.

After the Course

The Grandparents Circle creates a warm and supportive community of grandparents. The most common comment after The Course is over is, "I don't want it stop. Let's do more." Rather than allow the group to dissipate, the facilitator is encouraged to create a group for alumni.

The Alumni Group

Grandparents Circle Alumni Groups meet once a month in informal meetings where participants can:

- Engage in discussion about Jewish books and current events;
- Advocate on behalf of the intermarried for inclusion in the Jewish community;
- Take part in family friendly Jewish holiday programming for grandparents and their grandchildren;
- Become members of the Grandparents Circle National Listserve;
- If they are comfortable speaking in public or to the press, alumni should be encouraged to promote The Grandparents Circle by sharing their experiences with synagogues and other Jewish organizations.

Recruiting the Next Group

Congratulations! You have implemented a successful Grandparents Circle program. Now you have the advantage of experience and a track record. In addition to the recruitment tips offered earlier, you may consider the following strategies:

- The Grandparents Circle alumni are your best recruiters; ask them to invite their friends to join the program;
- Ask your contacts from the "Referrals File" if they will invite you, one of the alumni or both to speak to synagogue, JCC and interfaith groups, etc., and distribute advertising material promoting The Course;
- If you have a good relationship with any of the organizations in your "Referrals File," ask them to include a Grandparents Circle information table at any of their events that attract large numbers of people;
- Update your page on The Grandparents Circle webpage with photos and testimonials, and then invite your contacts and potential participants to visit the page.

QUESTIONS?

Contact:

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Grandparents Circle National Coordinator

Also, feel free to contact the JOI Grandparents Circle team anytime:

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The Jewish Outreach Institute is an independent, national organization that provides programs and services to intermarried families and unengaged Jews.