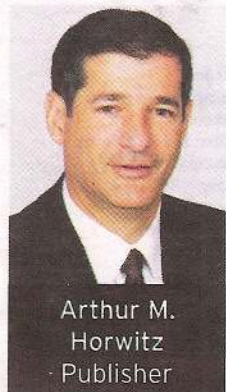


Making Jewish Detroit 'Immigrant' Friendly

Armed with convincing data about job creation, entrepreneurship, educational attainment and productivity, Global Detroit recently unveiled its Welcome Mat initiative to reach and attract immigrant populations to the Detroit metropolitan area.



Arthur M.
Horwitz
Publisher

Spearheaded and authored by former state House leader Steve Tobocman, himself a descendent of Polish-Jewish immigrants, the New Economy Initiative-funded effort makes a compelling case for attracting and retaining immigrants and channeling their energy into revitalizing our depressed Detroit and Southeastern Michigan economy.

The Global Detroit study contains many stunning data points, including:

- 62 percent of all Michigan residents possessing a doctorate in engineering are foreign born;
- 33 percent of all high-tech startup companies formed in Michigan have at least one immigrant founder;
- 10,000-plus immigrants from India have settled in Metro Detroit in a recent five-year period, almost double that of any other country and almost all for economic opportunity.

The Global Detroit playbook is chock full of ideas and methodology, from marketing and communicating to prospects to securing volunteer "cultural ambassadors" to helping immigrants build social networks and navigate government bureaucracies. This playbook should be the inspiration that stimulates our Jewish community to craft its own bold, compelling and sustainable plan to attract Jewish "immigrants" ... from Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and other American cities ... and stabilize our declining Jewish population.

Where to begin? Here are some initial thoughts for you, our loyal readers, to discuss, debate and refine with friends, family and community leaders:

A Bold Vision

Envision and capture what would make Detroit and Southeastern Michigan the best Jewish community in America. Dream a little!

A Measurable Plan

Develop a rolling five-year strategic plan with measurable goals and commit our community's considerable resources to its implementation. Since our community's population has declined to approximately 62,000 from 72,000 since 2005, let's assume a population floor of 60,000. And, let's set a five-year Jewish community "immigration" goal of 1,000 family units (200 per calendar year.)

Aggregate And Expand Umbrella Services

Aggregate and expand umbrella services provided by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and its affiliated agencies to include:

- A "job czar" who works directly out of the office of the Federation CEO and owns, lives, eats, breathes and sleeps jobs and identifying job opportunities exclusively for Jewish community natives and "immigrants." Employment must be the No. 1 priority for our community in deeds, not just words.

- Relocation loans for new "immigrants" that become outright grants if they stay for at least five years (other Jewish communities, including little Dothan, Ala., have done this successfully).

- A venture capital fund to invest in the entrepreneurial ideas of community natives and "immigrants" (The Chaldean community is currently assembling a venture capital fund to support its entrepreneurs).

- A volunteer corps of cultural ambassadors who, based on age, family status, religious affiliation and social interests, are matched with "immigrants" to ease their transition.

- Welcome Mat vouchers that "immigrants" can utilize to sample Jewish goods and services, including synagogue and JCC memberships, Jewish Ensemble Theatre tickets, Florence Melton Adult Mini-School mini-school tuition, *Jewish News* subscriptions, admission fees for CommunityNext-sponsored basketball and kickball leagues, etc.

- A professional and properly funded marketing plan that packages the attributes of living, and living Jewishly in Detroit and Southeastern Michigan and communicates them to potential "immigrants."



Steve Tobocman, author

Synagogue Commitment

As Federation's umbrella of current and expanded services takes shape, convene the rabbinic and lay leadership of our synagogues. With inspiration from Young Israel of Southfield's recent success at recruiting families to the area, secure pledges from each synagogue to mobilize its congregants and resources to identify and recruit "immigrants" (many of these recruits could be the children and grandchildren of members who have moved away). With an annual goal of 200 new family units, each congregation must take responsibility for a portion of that number.

Here's a suggested allocation:

- Temple Israel - 30 units;
- Shaarey Zedek - 15 units;
- Adat Shalom - 15 units;
- Shir Shalom - 10 units;
- Beth El - 10 units;
- Chabad - 10 units;
- Young Israel/Southfield - 10 units;
- Young Israel/Oak Park - 10 units;
- B'nai Moshe - 5 units;
- Beth Ahm - 5 units;
- Beth Shalom - 5 units;
- Temple Emanu-El - 5 units;
- Birmingham Temple - 5 units;
- Temple Kol Ami - 5 units;
- Shir Tikvah - 5 units;
- Other congregations - 5 units.

A JARC Opportunity

Other Jewish community organizations can play significant roles identifying and recruiting "immigrants." For example, Farmington Hills-based JARC is widely recognized as one of the country's best providers of services for people with developmental disabilities and their families. Its model cannot be replicated. Equipped with the Federation-provided umbrella of services, JARC can recruit families who have children with developmental disabilities to relocate here ... and not just from gateway cities.

Put Out Your Own Welcome Mat

Reach out to family and friends who live elsewhere and communicate the attributes of living, and living Jewishly in Detroit and Southeastern Michigan. Promote Federation's current and expanded umbrella of services. Be a goodwill ambassador. Set your own goal, perhaps in tandem or with your book club, bridge partners or Torah study partner, to recruit one Jewish family a year.

We have the economic tools and the talent to change the alarming demographic decline of our Jewish community and assure its future vitality. By sharing ideas, engaging in discussion and debate, and demanding accountability, we can stimulate our leadership to embrace a culture that welcomes ideas and challenges status-quo thinking.

The Global Detroit initiative will help stimulate the repopulation and revitalization of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan. It can stimulate parallel efforts by our own Jewish community ... if we open our minds and envision the possibilities. □

Southeastern Michigan Jewish Declaration

Add your name to this recent declaration advocating a vibrant, vital future for Jewish Detroit and Southeastern Michigan. The declaration is the handiwork of an independent group of 14 young Jewish leaders convened by the *Jewish News*. Go to: www.thejewishnews.com/declaration

kfarber@renmedia.us

Account Executives: Ann G. Abrams, Jan Haskell, Melissa Litvin, Heidi Martin, Rick Nessel, Dharlene Norris
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Creative Director: Deborah Schultz

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Manager: Scott Drzewiecki
Designers: Jeffrey Meyer, Pam Sherevan, Michelle Sheridan

Editorial

Editor: Robert A. Sklar
rsklar@thejewishnews.com
Associate Editor: Alan Hitsky
ahitsky@thejewishnews.com
Story Development Editor: Kerl Guten Cohen
kcohen@thejewishnews.com
Arts Editor: Gail Zimmerman
gzimmerman@thejewishnews.com
Senior Writer: Shelli Liebman Dorfman
sdorfman@thejewishnews.com
Senior Columnist: Danny Raskin
dannyraskin@sbcglobal.net
Columnists: George Cantor, Robin Schwartz, Steve Stein

Copy Team:

Senior Copy Editor: David Sachs
dsachs@thejewishnews.com
Copy Team Assistant: Sy Manello
smanello@thejewishnews.com

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Executive Editor: Gail Zimmerman
gzimmerman@thejewishnews.com
Contributing Editor: Lynne Konstantin

Teen2Teen:

Executive Editor: Kerl Guten Cohen
kcohen@thejewishnews.com

Southeast Michigan Jewish Alliance

Program Manager: Rachel Lachover

Published by: Jewish Renaissance Media

Chairman: Michael H. Steinhardt
President/Publisher: Arthur M. Horwitz
ahorwitz@renmedia.us
Chief Operating Officer: F. Kevin Browett
kbrowett@renmedia.us
Controller: Craig R. Phipps
Editorial Director: Robert A. Sklar
IT & Circulation Director: Deanna Spivey

Fulfillment

circulationdesk@thejewishnews.com
Customer Service Manager: Zena Davis

Departments

General Offices: 248-354-6060
Advertising: 248-351-5107
Advertising Fax: 248-304-0049
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