

Dear loyal Chicago supporter of the Jewish Student Union,

Thank you for your ongoing support, generosity and trust in our organization and mission. **This is not a solicitation** but an opportunity for us to share with you some **important and exciting organizational changes**. We know that you receive many pieces of email and ask that you take the time to read this through as there are **significant community issues** outlined in this letter.

As you know, for several years now, the Jewish Student Union (JSU) has been dedicated to helping students form **non-denominational, non-religious** Jewish clubs in their public high schools across Chicago. By hiring and training **diverse** educators from differing backgrounds and skill-sets, our organization provides a quality informal Jewish education experience and environment **that aims to not show preference for any particular brand of Judaism**. In a public school setting, we encourage our participants to grow in their respective “Jewish journeys” in life, and become proud participants in the ongoing dialogue of the Jewish people.

Historically, JSU has had many community partners in seeing this vision to fruition – but none more prominent than NCSY, the Orthodox Union’s wing of teen outreach. In a partnership that saw JSU provide oversight (**to ensure standards of programming diversity and excellence were being met in a public school environment**) and NCSY provide staff and some resources (to run programs), clubs operated successfully for quite some time. The tremendous investment of resources and time from NCSY to this effort cannot be understated.

However, as the success of JSU grew, local and national leadership became even more focused on creating a pluralistic organization: on our staff, on our board, and in our school programming. As demonstrated by our broad spectrum of community partners in staffing and overseeing JSU clubs across the country, our organization and leadership has **never been committed to any specific religious, cultural or political agendas**. As this shift occurred, NCSY’s support of this model dwindled considerably as a result of clubs not recruiting a “fair share” of teens to NCSY programs.

From an organizational perspective, ***our management’s commitment to a non-denominational, non-religious program in the public schools is absolutely non-negotiable***. As a result, unfortunately, our organization and NCSY are no longer jointly working together in Chicago or across the country.

We share this information so that you are fully aware of the practical implications here in Chicago.

First and foremost, this impacts the teen participants. There are currently 16 high schools in the Chicago area that have Jewish clubs. Because NCSY staff and personnel helped operate many of them in conjunction with our organization, there are ongoing negotiations as to who will continue to staff/oversee them for the 2012-2013 school year and beyond. It is our intention that most, if not all of these clubs, will wind up under the purview of our organization as a reflection of their original founding under the nondenominational mission of JSU. However, if they do not, they will wind up being operated by NCSY. If you have any questions or concerns that relate to your specific school, please feel free to email us at Chicago@jsu.org.

Secondly, it happens that in 2010, prior to these events unfolding, our organization embarked on a marketing/branding process resulting in an organizational name change scheduled for the summer of 2012. **The organization formerly known as Jewish Student Union will now be operating as Jewish Student Connection (JSC).** The intent of this process was to retire the name Jewish Student Union altogether, and early discussions with NCSY regarding our parting indicated that they too would retire the name so that there would not be confusion in the marketplace. It has come to our attention that NCSY may continue to use the organizational name "JSU," even after this split has occurred. Thus, we wanted to make sure you were aware that any clubs bearing that name, or any support to an organization bearing that name in Chicago, will go directly to the Orthodox Union.

If you are a prior (or future!) financial supporter of the organization previously known as Jewish Student Union, now known as Jewish Student Connection, please note that support made out to Jewish Student Union may be assumed to be for the NCSY run clubs. To ensure that your support goes the proper organization, please update your records to indicate checks should be made out to Jewish Student Connection and to reflect our new mailing address.

Lastly, we have moved and our website is moving soon as well. While we seek a new permanent office location, our mailing address is P.O. Box 13235, Chicago, IL 60613, and can be reached by telephone at 847-675-7331. Our present website www.jsu.org remains in effect, but later this summer we will be switching to myjsc.org. Our emails will soon take this new extension as well.

In the coming weeks we look forward to sharing with you our new look, and introducing some new staff. We look forward to sharing these exciting changes with you. In the meantime, should you have any questions with regard to the content of this letter, please feel free to contact us. It is always a privilege and responsibility to work with your children and look forward to continuing to do so with transparency and quality.

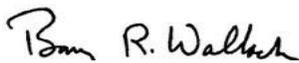
Have a wonderful summer.



Susan Holzman Wachsstock
Executive Director



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Director of Operations



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Andi Gutnik
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