

Progressive Jewish Alliance

The Progressive Jewish Alliance (PJA) was founded in 1999 by Jewish Angelenos seeking to assert an authentic progressive Jewish presence in the campaigns for social justice in Southern California, home to the nation's second largest city and second largest Jewish community. PJA educates, advocates and organizes on issues of peace, equality, diversity and justice, as a progressive voice in the Jewish community and a Jewish voice in the progressive community. Over the past six years, PJA has created a new model of Jewish community organizing, and has reinvigorated the progressive Jewish landscape in Los Angeles. In February 2005, PJA opened a San Francisco Bay Area chapter—our first expansion.

PJA is a new kind of Jewish organization, one that serves as a vehicle connecting Jews to the critical social justice issues of the day, to the life of the cities in which they live, and to the Jewish tradition of working for *tikkun olam*. We believe that to *kvetch* is human, to act...divine. We fight for economic justice by educating Jews about our obligation to stand with the working poor, and then we organize the Jewish community to join in campaigns to improve working conditions and secure a living wage for low-wage workers. We work to reform the criminal justice system and to promote a more just and humane—and yes, “kosher”—system of restorative, rather than retributive, justice through a ground-breaking program that trains volunteers to mediate between non-violent juvenile offenders and their victims throughout Los Angeles. We work to promote understanding and tolerance by facilitating several tracks of Muslim-Jewish dialogue, the only formal open lines of communication between LA's enormous Jewish and Muslim communities. We work to ensure Jewish continuity through our two-year Jeremiah Fellowship, an innovative project that trains twenty-somethings to be the next generation of Jewish social justice leaders. And we build a vibrant, creative and engaged community through education programs and quarterly holiday events that explore the intersection of art, culture and politics.

Through organizing around the values of *tikkun olam*, through encounter with Jewish sources and learning, and through strategic social justice work, we work to create a Jewishly-literate membership that examines core Jewish values in a new way, and to “bring back” to Jewish communal life many individuals who would be otherwise disconnected. Under the rubric “*tikkun ha ir, tikkun olam*” (repair of the city, repair of the world), we also participate in the broader community coalitions working to build a better California (and America) for all of its inhabitants.

<http://www.pjalliance.org>

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Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

The Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism assists congregations in establishing social action committees that will help them to apply ethical Judaic principles to contemporary issues. It oversees the work of Reform Judaism's Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC) in Washington, D.C. which pursues social justice and religious liberty by mobilizing the American Jewish community and serving as its advocate in the capital of the United States.

The Commission on Social Action and the Religious Action Center implement the policy positions of the Union for Reform Judaism and CCAR.

<http://rac.org/>

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