

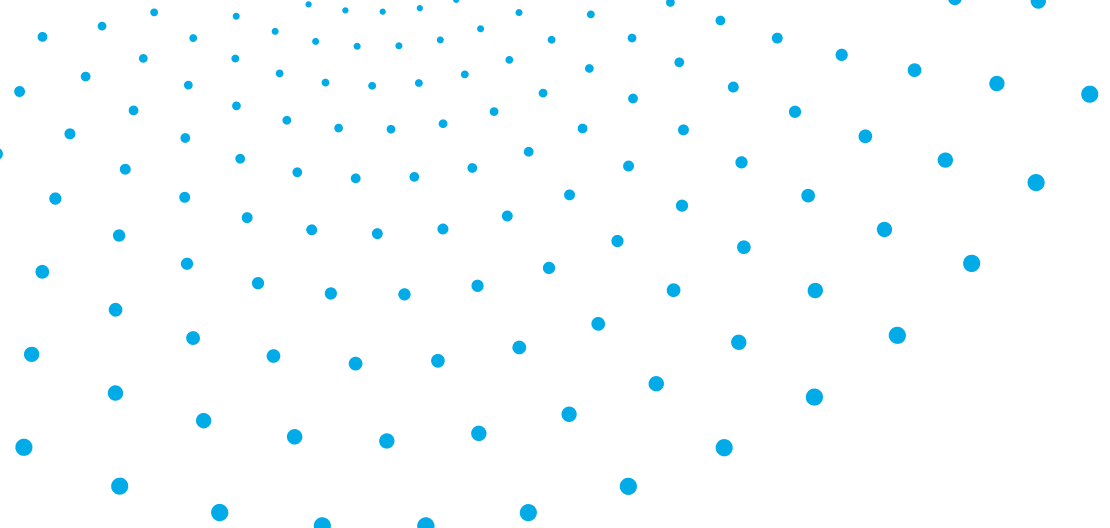


# Lighting the Way: Leading High-Impact Entrepreneurship

Quarterly Report | February 2019

## UPSTART

Bring Bold Jewish Ideas to Light



As the Jewish community grows increasingly diverse and more globally connected, dynamic leaders have emerged to meet our changing needs. From rabbis to artists and everyone in between, these leaders are expanding the picture of how Jews find meaning and how we come together.

The UpStart network of programs has been at the forefront of guiding these bold leaders and their ventures for the last two decades. Whether they need support to get an idea off the ground, or aren't sure how to take their organization from local to national, UpStart provides the resources, tools, and network they need to build the Jewish community of the future.

Over the last year, we focused on developing a clear and targeted pathway to take our community's best initiatives from idea to reality, in a sustainable and collaborative way, and with additional resources flowing to the field.

We recently made significant enhancements to our flagship program, the Venture Accelerator, which supports the community's most promising ventures in growing their impact. We're also piloting new offerings—Labs and Sprints—which will help people build and test new ideas, in order to cultivate the highest-impact organizations for the Venture Accelerator. Over the next six months, we'll also be piloting new initiatives to support the sustainability of second-stage

organizations, with a focus on alumni of UpStart's most intensive programs.

We're committed to making sure high-impact entrepreneurs and their ventures are thriving, creating more Jewish programs that are relevant, and with more people participating in Jewish life. In FY18 and FY19 to date, we've worked with **340 entrepreneurs** and **237 ventures** across our entrepreneurial program suite.

We're going deep with these ventures and individuals—helping them solve the organizational challenges that they can't tackle alone. In turn, their work affects thousands of people in the Jewish community and beyond.

Read on to see how we're fueling these entrepreneurs as they pursue new frontiers of Jewish life. We can't wait to see what they do next.



**Taylor Epstein**  
Senior Director, Design Strategy

# Program Overview

Many of our community's most talented scholars, educators, rabbis, and artists have great Jewish ideas, but lack the business know-how to get them off the ground. These leaders understand their constituents' needs and may even be building out bold programs to meet them, but are missing a space where they can safely and realistically test those ideas before fully launching.

Entrepreneurs ready to run with an idea don't always know where to look for training and resources. They're often isolated, either geographically or from other people who are experiencing the same challenges. Once they've built these new initiatives, they struggle with limited funding, infrastructure, and technical knowledge, as well as resistance to change.

Even funders and philanthropists don't always know which leaders or ideas will break through successfully.

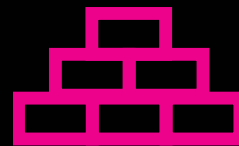
UpStart's programs are geared to meet our community's boldest entrepreneurs wherever they are in the process—whether they have the seed of an idea, or are already piloting a new venture. Highly-experiential, cohort-based trainings allow participants to build skills and a network. Targeted coaching for specific areas of organizational development means ventures grow their impact sustainably, and tackle challenges head-on.

As these bold leaders create new expressions of Jewish life, UpStart's directed support ensures that the highest-impact initiatives thrive.



## DREAM

**Labs** spark ideas and craft solutions to communal challenges.



## BUILD

**Sprints** guide entrepreneurs in demonstrating the viability of their initiative—and then building it.



## GROW

**The Venture Accelerator** provides ample training, connections, and funding for the most promising ventures to create—and act on—a sustainable plan for success.



## SUSTAIN

**Incubation Services** fill in the gaps as ventures move from stage to stage, offering fiscal sponsorship, human resources, IT support, financial services, and more.

# The Numbers

## Last Year and This Year to Date

Entrepreneurs and Ventures served in FY18 and FY19 to date<sup>1</sup>

**340**  
individuals

**237**  
organizations

Our 24 UpStarters have reach! In 2018 alone, they served

**149,395**  
participants<sup>2</sup>

### Where We're Bringing Their Bold Jewish Ideas to Light



The map indicates the locations of our hubs (in larger circles), the UpStart Venture Alumni Network (UVAN), current Venture Accelerator Cohorts 9, 10, and 11, as well as coaching clients, fiscal sponsees, and Community Workshops.

## What It All Adds Up To

These trailblazing organizations are making waves across the globe, engaging more participants across the spectrum of Jewish life. UpStart's intensive curriculum and wide network of funders, alumni, and experts helps attract more funding for experimentation—setting up our participants to create long-lasting impact.

<sup>1</sup> As of December 2018  
<sup>2</sup> Cohorts 8, 9, 10



**UpStart has been wonderfully responsive...this has been very helpful because rather than offering generic programs, workshops and support, that support has been tailored to what we need.”**

**— Rebecca Minkus-Lieberman**

Founding Director of Orot: Center for New Jewish Learning



## Spotlight on Chicago: Accelerating Growth

In 2015, we accepted five Chicago-based organizations to UpStart’s Venture Accelerator. These organizations were ready to scale their impact, but needed the resources and network to take their organizations to the next level.

Over three years, we tracked a series of key quantitative metrics that are critical to their success and community impact. Their growth was incredible, and shows that with the right training, connections, and funding, the ideas that our community needs can succeed.

The organizations:

- **Jewish Enrichment Center**
- **KAHAL: Your Jewish Home Abroad**
- **Mishkan Chicago**
- **Orot: Center for Jewish Learning**
- **SVARA: A Traditionally Radical Yeshiva.**

<b>OVERALL GROWTH FOR CHICAGO VENTURES DURING THE ACCELERATOR</b>			
	<b>2015</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>3-YEAR GROWTH</b>
<b>Participants per year</b>	2795	7593	<b>172%</b>
<b>Full-time employees</b>	13.75	28.75	<b>109%</b>
<b>Number of board members</b>	24	59	<b>146%</b>

By the final year of the program, these five Chicago ventures increased the foundation funding they received by nearly 90%.

**\$470,000**

**\$884,947**

**There are more resources flowing to the field.  
The ventures completed the program with**

**1,141**  
individual donors, who gave

**\$960,386.**

## How We Kindled The Spark



### Training

Convenings and coachings focused on getting organizations to their goals



### Connections

Access to our network of consultants, advisors, funders, and alumni, as well as a cohort of ambitious peers



### Funding

Financial resources to use on experimentation towards scaling growth and impact

# Snapshots of Impact



**As we expand the picture of how Jews find meaning and come together, we want to illustrate that picture, too. Here are a handful of stories that show how we're giving more people the tools to affect change across the Jewish community:**

## Scaling Impact at The Open Temple

Rabbi Lori Shapiro is on a mission to re-enchanted Judaism through ritual space and the creative arts. She's the founder and leader of The Open Temple in Venice, CA, a spiritual community composed of "co-creators", who come together for experiences ranging from Jewish "sound baths" to wedding officiant training. When The Open Temple joined Cohort 10 of our Venture Accelerator in 2017, they had a growing and enthusiastic base of participants, but weren't sure how to expand beyond their intimate community.

In just the first year of the program, UpStart supported The Open Temple as they developed an earned revenue model, managed a growing staff, and leveraged validation from press and new funders to spur sustainable growth. Now The Open Temple is serving over 2,000 enthusiasts and redefining what it means to "do Jewish" in modern America.



**"In the past, I've been invested in as a leader and a rabbi. UpStart has given me the tools to be a fearless entrepreneur."**

**— Rabbi Lori Shapiro, The Open Temple**

## Radical Rebrand with ZABS Place

ZABS Place, part of Cohort 9's Venture Accelerator, needed to update their brand and identity; their powerful mission—to empower Jewish young adults with special needs through training and work experience—wasn't coming through clearly in their communications to customers

or program participants. Although they have plenty of customers who come to their storefront, they knew it was crucial to convey the significance of their organization to people outside their immediate circle.

Rochel and Bentzion Groner, the founders, worked closely with their UpStart coach to clarify that their mission needed to shine through in everything that they do, from their thrift boutique to their employee trainings. They zeroed in on the reputation they aspired to build, and did the hard work of updating their brand and visual identity to live up to their mission. Now they have a fresh website, logo, social media, and communications to engage with their audience. UpStart's coaching helped ZABS Place deepen their impact, and they've amplified their game-changing work of empowering young adults with special needs. In the first few months alone, they've seen a 17% increase in sales and approximately a 10% increase in community engagement online, and have received positive feedback from the people who matter most: their customers.



### **Eshel's Bold Risk-Taking at the Collaboratory**

Miryam Kabakov founded Eshel in 2012 to create inclusive Orthodox communities for LGBTQ+ individuals. After a year of growing Eshel's impact in the UpStart Venture Accelerator, Miryam decided to attend The Collaboratory, UpStart's annual convening and the largest gathering of Jewish community visionaries in North America.

Inspired by the dynamic Collaboratory network, Miryam found the courage to share a new idea at the intersection of technology and LGBTQ+ Jewish life, and solicit the right partners to get it off the ground. In front of hundreds of attendees, Miryam announced her intention to launch a dating site that is Orthodox and LGBTQ+ friendly, to rounds of encouraging applause. Her courage reflects the power of The Collaboratory network to fuel Jewish leaders—and to amplify their impact—as they build the Jewish community of the future.

“

**“The Collaboratory both gave me big vision ideas for the future and where Eshel is headed, while also providing on-the-ground help...I felt supported in taking the risks we take every day in creating Orthodox LGBTQ+ inclusive communities.”**

**— Miryam Kabakov, Eshel**



# Looking Forward

In 2018, UpStart enhanced our flagship program, the Venture Accelerator, combining our best attributes from past years, mixed with new opportunities for growth. In order to empower ventures, we're providing an increased financial **investment** (up to \$100K in unrestricted funding), a rigorous needs-assessment and **goal-setting process**, more individualized **coaching**, and more formal connections with our robust alumni **network**. We also refined our eligibility criteria to ensure that all participants are at the same stage of growth readiness.

## Welcome Venture Accelerator Cohort 11!

### **BaMidbar Wilderness Therapy**

#### **Denver**

guides Jewish young adults on individualized journeys of self-discovery and healing through nature-based therapy

### **jGirls Magazine**

#### **New York**

amplifies the voices of Jewish teenage girls, cultivating the next generation of committed Jewish female leaders

### **Judaism Your Way**

#### **Denver**

offers innovative opportunities for Jews and their loved ones to connect on their Jewish journeys

### **Museum of Jewish Montreal**

#### **Montreal**

provides an accessible gateway to learn about and interact with Montreal's Jewish community

### **Sacred Spaces**

#### **National**

a cross-denominational initiative to address abuses of power in Jewish institutions

### **Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom**

#### **National**

builds trust, respect, and relationships between North American Muslim and Jewish women

### **Tivnu: Building Justice**

#### **Portland, OR**

inspires teens and young adults through hands-on service, advocacy, education, and communal living in a pluralistic Jewish context

### **Tkiya**

#### **Brooklyn, NY**

uses participatory music experiences to help people of all ages find their unique connection with Jewish culture

### **Tzedek America**

#### **Los Angeles**

strengthens Jewish identity in young people through immersive social justice experiential education



“

**Within the first year of joining the Accelerator, we doubled in every conceivable metric from participants to dollars to staff. That trajectory has only continued, and now we are poised to serve thousands more students across the world.”**

**— Alex Jakubowski**  
Founder and Executive Director of KAHAL

## Be in touch

**We're so grateful for your support of these groundbreaking leaders and ventures. To learn more about our work or to explore collaboration with UpStart, please reach out to Linda Gerard, Chief Program and Innovation Officer ([lindag@upstartlab.org](mailto:lindag@upstartlab.org)).**

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