

January 2014 | Shevat 5774

Dear Friends,

Food seems to be a common thread in much of our work so perhaps it is no surprise that these days, we find our attention turned to the kitchen. Sometimes a place for experimentation, sometimes guided by tested recipes, in the kitchen we produce concoctions that tantalize, surprise, and every so often disappoint, but through trial and error eventually delight.

The kitchen is the heart and soul of any home where the traditions, smells, stories and flavors of our past come together with the promise and magnificent unknown of our future. Kitchen creatives are thus challenged to source the right ingredients, know when to beat rapidly or fold gently, when to add a dash of this and a sprinkle of that, constantly tasting and adapting, tasting and adapting. In the kitchen, the process and the learning are as important as the outcome. Often, we learn more from our mistakes than our successes.



Strategic Framework

No kitchen is complete without the worn, stained, and ever-used recipe book (or iPad). For the Leichtag Foundation, our strategic framework is our compilation of recipes: ideas, tips and lessons learned. The framework is a dynamic document that reflects experimentation and adaptation, a cycle of trying and trying again in a quest to achieve our mission. Here, as always, we are inspired by our founders Lee, Toni and Joli Leichtag who, following the directive of ancient Jewish tradition, every day sought to repair the world. Their lives and legacies are our enduring source of inspiration and energy.

As we do each year, our Board and staff completed a review of the Foundation's strategic areas and reflected on our opportunities for maximum impact in real time. Based on this reflection, and on our experience and learning to date, **the Leichtag Foundation Board recently approved an update of our Strategic Framework to more clearly communicate our priorities.**

The kitchen is one kind of laboratory; the communities we care so deeply about are another. The Leichtag Foundation focuses our efforts on North County San Diego and Jerusalem, and we often compare these regions to vibrant, gritty and spectacular laboratories—demonstration grounds for the development of new ideas to address evolving social challenges, places where diversity drives creativity.

The Ranch



Just over a year ago, in December 2012, the Leichtag Foundation acquired the former Paul Ecke Ranch in Encinitas. **The Ranch is a physical platform that advances, amplifies and aligns the four strategic focus areas of the Foundation.** It is the nexus to bring them together with a focus on agriculture as a tool for sustainable community development. The Ranch

is also home to the North County Jewish Hub where hub members from ten organizations and social ventures are cooking up creative and collaborative community connection and engagement opportunities.

Any modern kitchen worth its salt these days needs fresh and locally sourced ingredients. We are actively engaged in planning and design for an urban farm at the Ranch that draws on the richness of Jewish agricultural traditions and values. We plan to launch this educational community farm in 2014. In the latest iteration of our strategic framework, we have refined our self-sufficiency strategic area to include a strong focus on fresh food access and food and nutrition security. While we will continue to support and advance a variety of economic opportunity advancement projects in Coastal North County, we will particularly seek out opportunities that contribute to a healthy, sustainable and equitable local food system.

Jewish Food Justice Fellowship

Despite the old adage that too many cooks spoil the broth, **we are focused on bringing bright new talent to our communities** and around our stoves. Our Jewish Food Justice Fellows have helped draw us and others in the community quite literally into our kitchen. The pilot fellowship kicked off in September and brought seven young community activists from Israel and across the United States to North County San Diego. The Fellows will be with us for another year, as active members of the community and the Leichtag team (and many of them are great cooks!). In addition to holding professional positions at partner nonprofits working in the areas of food security and access, urban agriculture and poverty alleviation, the Fellows work on projects at the ranch, host programs at the ranch, and will be involved in launching the farm.



Our revised strategic framework provides a loose recipe for how the Foundation will evaluate our lifespan in real time. The last iteration of the framework anticipated a termination year of 2025, 18 years after the death of our founder Lee Leichtag. While we continue to look at our work from the lens of a limited-life foundation, the acquisition of the Ranch has caused us to re-examine what termination means in the context of the ownership of this asset which holds such great potential for the community. Over the next two to four years, as we develop the master plan for the Ranch, our board will consider the short and long term needs for the property and develop an approach to maintain a urgent and aggressive ethos for our granting function while ensuring a vibrant and secure future for the Ranch. During this time period, we plan to continue robust granting at similar levels to our prior years. **Ultimately we will articulate a plan for our future as a grantmaking foundation and for the Ranch.**

A New Chapter

The framework also announces a new stage in our relationship with the Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego. Partnering with the JCF allowed us to robustly and quickly evolve and develop after we became an independent foundation. Having outsourced most of our staffing to the JCF to get to this point, the Leichtag Foundation will now manage its own staff but continue to work with the JCF on some key common goals, particularly for building philanthropy in Jewish North County.

There are two key ingredients that weave through all our plans and goals for 2014: **integration and partnership.**

1. Integration: We will place more emphasis on integrating and connecting our four strategic areas, looking to break down silos wherever we can. The work and talent we support in Jerusalem can be brought to bear to advance our efforts in North County and vice versa. There are many opportunities for creative exchange and joint learning.

We have also been exploring the concept of “Jewish integration” and will continue to delve deeply to this idea in 2014. We all have multiple identities, interests and passions. How can we further help Jewish community members integrate their interests and identities, including but not restricted to their identities as Jews?

2. Partnership: We are ever engaged and inspired by our partners on the ground in Jerusalem and in North County. Their talent, passion and leadership guides and drives our efforts. For both regions, it is critically important to pay attention to diverse, durable funding for our grantees and to help build their networks in order to bring others into the joy of working with these amazing social entrepreneurs. We also actively seek partners for projects at the Ranch.

From our Kitchen in Encinitas, we wish you all the best for a happy, healthy and delicious 2014.

With warm gratitude for your support and inspiration,



James S. Farley
President and CEO, Leichtag Foundation



Charlene Seidle
Executive Vice President, Leichtag Foundation