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## Foreword

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# Foreword

*Nancy K. Kaufman*

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The “Haifa–Boston Connection” began twenty years ago under the auspices of Combined Jewish Philanthropies as a way to deepen the connections between people in the Greater Boston community and Israelis from the City of Haifa. The Mayors of Boston and Haifa signed a formal Memorandum of Agreement between their cities in 1999. The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston (JCRC) was charged with the responsibility of developing projects that would promote social justice and advance civil society, making Haifa a model for all of Israel. Working with the emerging nonprofit sector in Haifa, JCRC worked with the Council of Volunteer Organizations to forge partnerships between nonprofits in Boston and Haifa as a way to close social and economic gaps and to deepen the relationship among social justice organizations in the two communities. After a very successful NGO trip to Haifa in January of 2005 the idea for an ongoing “Learning Exchange” emerged.

The volume you hold in your hands represents just one of the remarkable — and unforeseeable — fruits of the seeds we, along with our partners in Boston and Haifa, have planted over these past two decades. As the culmination of the first five years of the Learning Exchange Network, it offers a taste of the deep learning the relationships among leaders in Haifa and Boston have engendered. It also stands as a foundation for a new stage of our Learning Exchange Network, which has gained new partners as it has grown to more than thirty participants each year engaged through visits, video conferences, and regular e-mail exchanges.

JCRC is indebted to the many lay leaders, professionals, and organizational partners who have made the Learning Exchange Network — and this special issue of the *New England Journal of Public Policy* — a reality. In addition to JCRC, the Boston–Haifa Connection of Combined Jewish Philanthropies, University of Massachusetts Boston, the Boston Center for Community and Justice, the Council of Volunteer Organizations (Haifa), and Shatil have all been instrumental in the growth of this unique program. They have all played an important role in modeling the difficult task of building an international learning network. We thank everyone who contributed to this Journal and, most particularly, Professor Donna Haig Friedman for her vision and commitment to this project.



