KOLOT: The Center for Jewish Women's and Gender Studies illuminates the traditions and texts of Judaism to provide new visions of gender roles in Jewish life. Founded by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in 1996, Kolot trains rabbinical students, advances scholarship, and develops and implements innovative programs.

Our national programs in 2001-2002 include Kolot's Rosh Hodesh: It's A Girl Thing! a program to build the self-esteem and Jewish identities of adolescent girls; Ritualwell.org, a website enriching Jewish life with innovative lifecycle and holiday rituals; and publication of our egalitarian Omer Counter, which marks the days between Passover and Shavuot, and Shabbat bentcher, a prayer book for the Shabbat table.

KOLOT FULFILLS ITS MISSION BY:

- Training rabbinical students in scholarship that recovers the voices and experiences of Jewish women and men and incorporates the insights of gender theory, social history, psychology, and other disciplines into Jewish studies;
- Creating, compiling, and making available liturgy, rituals, and educational materials that reconstruct traditional stereotypes and enrich contemporary Jewish life;
- Advancing scholarship in the fields of Jewish women's and gender studies through teaching, publications, and conferences;
- Offering a graduate certificate in Jewish Women's Studies, in conjunction with Temple University;
- Collaborating with local and national organizations on innovative projects that give voice to the issues and concerns of contemporary Jews.
This year, with your help, Kolot has “expanded the tale” and enriched Judaism by:

- educating rabbis to consider gender perspectives in understanding Judaism and creating the Jewish future,
- giving adolescent Jewish girls the gift of the Rosh Hodesh holiday,
- bringing contemporary Jewish ritual to women and men across the world with our new website, and
- delivering to Shabbat tables our egalitarian bentcher (prayerbook) with customs for celebrating Shabbat from more than 40 friends.

We thank and praise you for your partnership and generosity. Toda raba, many thanks.

At Kolot we are helping to create a Judaism that is pluralistic, inclusive, and embracing because it is our obligation to engage with Torah — in the broad sense of the word — to meet the needs of contemporary Jewish women and men.

We hope that this report will give you a better understanding of Kolot’s work. We are grateful to you for participating with us in “expanding the tale” by making Torah for our generation.

Lori Lefkovitz
Academic Director
Sally Gottesman
Chair
Deborah Meyer
Managing Director
Begun in 1996, Kolot: The Center for Jewish Women’s and Gender Studies has helped educate a new generation of rabbis to consider gender perspectives in understanding Judaism and creating the Jewish future.

Now, thanks to the generosity of the Gottesman family, Kolot’s future has been secured through the creation of the Kolot Chair in Gender and Judaism with a permanent endowment in honor of Sadie Gottesman and Arlene Gottesman Reff, two women remembered for their activism and love of learning.

“Sally Gottesman’s vision and energy, her appreciation for the women in her family and in Jewish history, and her commitment to gender inclusivity and meaningful Jewish experience have provided the foundation for Kolot’s success,” said Lori Lefkovitz of Kolot’s Advisory Board Chair. “Everyone associated with Kolot is inspired by Sally, and we are grateful for her leadership and grateful to the Gottesman family for this extraordinary endowment gift.”

Sadie, born in 1900, was a woman whose primary interests were the well-being of her family and her work with Jewish and community organizations. She was the mother of four children – Ed, Arlene, Jerry, and Harold.

Her granddaughter Archie Gottesman recalls, “Sadie had high standards and strived for excellence, and she spoke her mind. She was a woman ahead of her time.
KOLOT ACADEMIC DIRECTOR APPOINTED TO NEWLY ENDOWED CHAIR

Dr. Lori Lefkovitz, Academic Director of Kolot, has been promoted to full professor and appointed to the newly endowed Sadie Gottesman and Arlene Gottesman Reff Kolot Chair of Gender and Judaism.

“Lori is a wonderful first choice to hold the Chair in memory of my grandmother and aunt. She is a unique combination of scholar, teacher, doer, and leader. We are delighted,” said Sally Gottesman on behalf of her family. Jerry Gottesman, Sadie’s son and Arlene’s brother, echoed these comments, saying, “I studied the Book of Ruth with Lori. Of the hundreds of study sessions I have gone to, this was one of the best. She helped unfold the story in a unique way and added depth and understanding that I did not see before.”

Lefkovitz joined the RRC faculty in 1996. A graduate of Brandeis University, she received her M.A. and Ph.D. in English from Brown University, and was recipient of a Woodrow Wilson dissertation fellowship in women’s studies and a Golda Meir post-doctoral fellowship at Hebrew University. Before assuming the directorship of Kolot, Lefkovitz served for ten years on the faculty of Kenyon College.

Lefkovitz is author of The Character of Beauty in the Victorian Novel (UMI Research Press, 1987), and editor of Textual Bodies: Changing Boundaries of Literary Representation (SUNY Press, 1997) and Shaping Losses: Cultural Memory and the Holocaust (with Julia Epstein, University of Illinois Press, 2001). She has written numerous articles and book chapters on literature, critical theory, and Jewish women’s studies.

KOLOT ANNUAL REPORT 2000-2001
This past year Kolot launched Rosh Hodesh: It's A Girl Thing!, a project that promotes self-esteem, leadership skills, and satisfying Jewish identities for adolescent girls by drawing on the tradition of Rosh Hodesh (new moon) celebrations. The Hadassah Foundation provided major support for the three-year pilot project.

During the 2000-2001 school year, four groups of girls met monthly in the Philadelphia area to celebrate the Rosh Hodesh festival, talk, and learn together under the guidance of an adult facilitator in a comfortable, non-congregational setting.

“It’s wonderful to watch the girls enjoy learning Jewish texts and values in a uniquely relaxed social setting that encourages them to speak their minds,” said Mindy Shapiro, Kolot’s Rosh Hodesh Project director.

“Each girl raises questions, explores the tradition, and finds her own place.”

The groups are inspired by Rosh Hodesh, an ancient Jewish observance traditionally regarded as a special gift from God to women and associated with prayers and rituals marking the new moon and the start of a new month.

“The Rosh Hodesh groups are strengthening the girls’ sense of self so that they are equipped to resist society’s negative images of women and girls and can instead form healthy attitudes towards their bodies, sex, and relationships,” said Debra Solomon, Kolot Advisory Board member and one of the project’s creators.

This fall Kolot added eight new groups in Baltimore, Chicago, New York, and Princeton to help test the curriculum. The Kolot Rosh Hodesh Sourcebook will be reviewed by a group of national experts, including among others Dr. Catherine Steiner Adair, with the Harvard Center for Eating Disorders; Penina Adelman, author of Miriam’s Well: Rituals for Jewish Women Around the Year; Susan Berrin, author of Celebrating the New Moon: A Rosh Chodesh Anthology; Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin, whose liturgical work includes Tears of Sorrow, Seeds of Hope; Blu Greenberg, author of On Women and Judaism: A View from Tradition; and Susan Weidman Schneider, editor of Lilith Magazine.
Kolot is planning to take the program to girls in communities across the U.S. “We’re creating a program that adolescent girls and their advocates across the country will own and help develop, thereby experiencing Judaism’s commitment to their growth and well being,” explains Lori Lefkovitz, Kolot Academic Director. “Kolot hopes to fundamentally improve the way Jewish communities serve adolescent girls.”

The potential for national impact helped attract support from The Hadassah Foundation, which selected Kolot and seven other organizations in the U.S. and Israel out of nearly 200 applicants for funding. “Hadassah was inspired by Kolot’s creativity in designing this dynamic project, and we are pleased that Kolot is creating a Sourcebook that will encourage easy replication of the program in communities throughout the country,” said Linda Altshuler, Director of The Hadassah Foundation.

In addition to $105,000 from The Hadassah Foundation, the project has received generous support from the Jewish Women’s Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago, the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, The Shefa Fund, and The Tuttleman Family Foundation.

For years Kolot has been answering questions like these for people lucky enough to be pointed in our direction.

“It became increasingly clear that we needed something better than responding to each call as it came in,” said Sally Gottesman, Kolot Advisory Board Chair. “The web is the best way to make our library of contemporary rituals available to every Jew, from the rabbi in New York to the new parent in Oklahoma.”

In April 2001, Kolot launched the website RitualWell.org in partnership with Ma’yan: The Jewish Women’s Project of the JCC of Manhattan, providing innovative, feminist lifecycle and holiday rituals to unaffiliated and affiliated Jews, across denominations.

“There has been a creative flourishing of new rituals and liturgy,” said Lori Perlow, Kolot Advisory Board member and one of the project’s founders. “When Kolot and Ma’yan have been able to respond to these requests – and many more – people have been delighted and moved. And we’re fulfilling our mission by expanding and enriching Jewish practices.”

Over the next two years we will post rituals for each of the Jewish holidays, baby namings, bar and bat mitzvah celebrations, egalitarian weddings and commitment unions, healing, mourning, and many more, with explanations and advice on how to create your own ceremonies.
RABBINICAL STUDENTS STUDIED GENDER AND THE ARTS IN 2000-2001 TURN TO MEN IN 2001-2002

At the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Kolot offers courses, faculty education, certification in Jewish women’s studies, and pastoral education on such topics as domestic violence and breast cancer’s impact on the Jewish community. Kolot-trained rabbis bring innovations to synagogues, day schools, Hillels, and Jewish communal organizations nationwide.

In 2000-2001, Kolot complemented its training with experiential programs on “Gender and the Arts.” Guest artists led workshops on writing, performance art, and painting. Poet Merle Feld taught workshops on Poetry and Liturgy and Writing Spiritual Autobiography, and she read and discussed her poetry at a Kolot-sponsored public event.

In 2001-2002, Kolot will explore “Gender Inclusivity and Jewish Men.” Speakers and workshops will consider how Women’s and Gender Studies help create a more meaningful and inclusive Judaism. Students will examine concerns specific to men living active Jewish lives.

Kolot has played a critical role in helping to make our rabbinical school curriculum responsive to the needs of contemporary Jewish women and men. Kolot’s students and faculty decided to focus this year on gender inclusivity, extending this educational effort to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered Jews. These diverse voices that have been forced to be small generation after generation increasingly will be heard and receive the kavod (respect) they are due.

DAVID DUNN BAUER, Rabbinical student and Chair of the Kolot College Programming Committee

KOLOT ANNUAL REPORT 2000-2001
This past year Lori Lefkovitz crisscrossed the country speaking and teaching about Torah, gender, and the work of Kolot. From the Association for Jewish Studies in Chicago, where Lefkovitz chaired a panel on “Gender, Jewishness, and National Discourses,” to the University of Delaware, where she taught a semester-long course, to the Miami JCC, where she delivered a keynote address, Lefkovitz challenged and delighted those who came to learn.

Taking the example of the decimation of European Jewry during the Nazi era, in her recently published book, *Shaping Losses* (co-edited with Julia Epstein), Lefkovitz explores the effect of traumatic loss on identity and confronts the problem of transforming trauma into cultural memory.

**Shaping Losses: Cultural Memory and the Holocaust**

Published by the University of Illinois Press
Edited by Julia Epstein and Lori Hope Lefkovitz
264 pp. Cloth cover $49.95
Paper cover $21.95.
Preparation for Kolot’s April 1 benefit honoring Judith Stern Peck and Anita Diamant included publication of a Kolot tribute journal in the form of an egalitarian bentcher (Shabbat table prayerbook), continuing the tradition begun last year with Kolot’s egalitarian Omer Counter, which marks the days between Passover and Shavuot.

Kolot Managing Director Deborah Meyer presented the Kolot Egalitarian Bentcher as “an example of the way we implement Kolot’s mission – to provide new visions of gender roles in Jewish life.” She said, “When we use feminine prayer language, we expand the ways in which we imagine God, making it more natural to attribute authority to women as well as to men.”

KOLOT ANNUAL REPORT 2000-2001

KOLOT PUBLiSHES EGALITARIAN SHABBAT BENTCHER

Havdalah Miriam Haneviyah

This song, focusing on the Prophet Miriam, is a meaningful addition to the havdalah service.

Miriam hanevi’ah oz vezimrah beyadah.
M’iriam tirkod itanu lehadli zimmrat olam.
M’iriam tirkod itanu letaken et hashlam.
Bimherah ve’eyameynu hi tevi’eynu
El mey hayeshuah.

Miriam the prophet will dance with us at the waters of redemption.

From A Kolot Egalitarian Bentcher
Kolot Honors Judith Stern Peck and Anita Diamant

Anita Diamant thanked Kolot “for giving me this honor – my first from the Jewish community and a shehehianu moment.”

Sally Gottesman, Kolot Chair.

After studying texts about Biblical heroines and tambourines, the almost 300 people at Kolot’s benefit decorated Miriam’s timbrels, a recently recovered ritual object.

“My interest in the role of women as leaders in the Jewish community has been at the heart of all of the work I have done over the years,” said Judy Stern Peck.

Kolot’s April 1, 2001 lunch-eon at the City University of New York Graduate Center honored Judith Stern Peck, community leader and philanthropist, with the presentation of our Kol Isha “Women’s Voice Award,” created to celebrate a Jewish woman whose voice has made a significant difference in the public sphere.

“Since the 1970s, Judy has worked tirelessly as a committed lay leader, making sure that the voices of women are heard in some of our community’s most established organizations,” said Sally Gottesman, Kolot Chair.

An experienced family therapist and business consultant, Judith Stern Peck has held top leadership positions with many Jewish organizations, including the Israel Policy Forum, UJA-Federation of New York, the Board of Overseers of the Rabbinical School at the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Jewish Continuity Commission, Partnership 2000, the 92nd Street Y, the Jewish Community Center of the Upper West Side, the Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA), and the United Jewish Communities.

The afternoon event also featured the presentation of the Kolot Award to Anita Diamant, best-selling author of the novel The Red Tent, an extended midrash on the biblical story of Dinah which The Forward suggests “may be the country’s most widely studied Torah commentary.”

Diamant recounted her dream of creating “an inclusive, welcoming community mikveh (ritual bath), kosher in every respect” in the greater Boston area “as a place, as an idea, as a mitzva.”
Kolot gratefully acknowledges the commitment of the individual and institutional funders who supported our work during our fiscal year September 2000-August 2001. Your gifts, from $18 to $180,000, have helped Kolot enrich Jewish experience through new understandings of gender and Judaism.

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Janet Zolot
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Myra & Matthew Zuckerbraun

*Of Blessed Memory

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Perlow Family Charitable Fund
Charles & Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation
The Shefa Fund
Syms Corporation
Tides Foundation
United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh
Wachovia
West End Synagogue
Wolfensohn Family Foundation
### Statements of Financial Position

(UNAUDITED) AS OF AUGUST 31, 2001

**ASSETS**

Operating and Restricted

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<td>Investments - Endowment Funds</td>
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</table>

**Total Assets** $1,801,927

**LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund Balances</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liabilities</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating and Restricted Funds</td>
<td>$209,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment Funds</td>
<td>$1,591,949</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Liabilities and Fund Balances** $1,801,927

**NOTES**

1. The Pat Barr Restricted Fund was established in 2000 with $180,000 to support Kolot’s national programs.
2. Includes $848,000 in pledges to Kolot’s endowment funds.
3. Kolot is grateful to those who established the following endowment funds:
   - The Marie Barr Fund promotes student-led Kolot activities at RRC.
   - The Kolot Operating Endowment supports Kolot programming.
   - The Sadie Gottesman and Arlene Gottesman Reff Kolot Chair in Gender and Judaism funds the Professorship and Academic Directorship of Kolot.
In 2000-2001 Kolot raised a total of $979,332 in operating and endowment funds. The first two charts below show Kolot’s growth in the past year, and the second chart shows how Kolot dedicated its $494,187 operating funds in 2000-2001.

**Program Growth**

- Fiscal Year 2000: $225,000
- Fiscal Year 2001: $450,000

**Endowment Growth**

- Fiscal Year 2000: $250,000
- Fiscal Year 2001: $500,000

**Operating Expenditures 2000-2001**

- **22%** Training Rabbinical Students
- **9%** Institutional Support
- **6%** Administration and Management
- **17%** Other Educational Programming
- **29%** Rosh Hodesh Project
- **17%** Ritualwell.org

Kolot’s Financial Picture

Kolot Annual Report 2000-2001
OUR NEW STAFF

KOLOT CREATES POSITION OF MANAGING DIRECTOR

Having enjoyed remarkable success in its early phase of growth, Kolot this year created the position of Managing Director to professionalize all aspects of our program.

“Kolot had reached a new stage in its organizational development, and it was essential to have a skilled professional serve as co-director and help make our vision a reality,” said Kolot’s Chair, Sally Gottesman.

Deborah Meyer came to Kolot in September 2000 with more than 20 years of experience in management, development, and public relations, primarily in the non-profit world of women’s and Jewish organizations. Meyer received a B.A. from Connecticut College in 1980, and an M.A. in Communication from Emerson College in 1983.

ROSH HODESH PROJECT DIRECTOR

Our project for adolescent girls, Kolot’s Rosh Hodesh: It’s A Girl Thing!, took off with the hiring in August 2000 of Mindy Shapiro as Project Director. A seasoned leader in Jewish programming, Shapiro also works as a papercut artist and is the Judaic editor for First Cut, a Guild of American Papercutters’ publication. She received a B.A. from the University of Maryland in 1982, and an M.A. in Women’s Studies and Public Policy from George Washington University in 1986.

KOLOT ASSISTANT

We were also pleased this year to welcome Kolot Assistant Stephanie Nachum, who brings with her years of office management experience. Nachum has written legal abstracts and trained abstractors, supervised a production staff of 32, administered databases, performed cost analyses, and managed the books for a group of stores. She received her B.S. in Secondary Education and English from Penn State University in 1973.
Kolot Advisory Board

Sally Gottesman, Chair
David Dunn Bauer
Barbara Dobkin
Dr. Janice Goldman
Joyce Goodman
Linda Herskowitz
Rabbi Linda Holtzman
Lori Perlow
Debra Solomon
Rabbi Jacob Staub
Rabbi Margot Stein

Kolot Staff

Lori Lefkowitz, Ph.D.
Academic Director

Deborah Meyer
Managing Director

Mindy Shapiro
Rosh Hodesh Project Director

Stephanie Nachum
Kolot Assistant

Special Thanks to

Dr. David Teutsch, President, and Don Shapiro, Chair, of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and to the College’s Board, administration, staff, and faculty for sustaining Kolot’s vision and work.

For more information, please contact Kolot at kolot@rrc.edu or (215) 576-0800 x152.