



ArchivesSpace

Project Keshher records 11.MWalB02738

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English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Brandeis University

415 South St.

Waltham, MA

URL: <https://findingaids.brandeis.edu/>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Brandeis University
Creator:	Project Keshet
Title:	Project Keshet records
ID:	11.MWalB02738
Date [inclusive]:	1988-2015, undated
Physical Description:	29 Linear Feet 26 record center boxes, 2 document cases, 1 oversize box
Language of the Material:	English
Language of the Material:	The majority of materials are in English, with some written in Russian. Instances of Russian may be written either in print or cursive.

Preferred Citation

Project Keshet records, 1988-2012, undated, Robert D. Farber University Archives & Special Collections Department, Brandeis University.

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Scope and Contents

The Project Keshet records document the operations, activities, and programs of Project Keshet, an organization founded in 1989 in support of Jewish renewal throughout the former Soviet Union. Materials include correspondence, notes, printed and bound materials, press clippings, photographs, audiovisual materials, and born digital media. The bulk of the materials are in English, with some in Russian and Hebrew. The materials date from 1988-2015, with the bulk of materials dating from 1989-2012.

The extensive documentation of Project Keshet's programming work forms the core of the collection, arranged in Series 2: Events and Programs. Of particular note are the records of the International Conference of Jewish Women, which took place in Kiev in 1994. This conference was a landmark event both for Project Keshet and for Jewish women in the NIS (Newly Independent States), and the records include pre-conference planning and outreach, correspondence, programs, press coverage, post-conference feedback from attendees, photographs, and a video filmed of the event. Also of note in

the program records are the various iterations of the Women's Exchange programs, Mother/Daughter Retreats, Torah Return Project visits, and KeshetNet computer center openings.

Project Keshet's fundraising activities are also well represented throughout the collection, in both Series 1: Administrative Records and Series 3: Collaborator Files. These materials include budgets, expense records, marketing brochures, fundraising event records, and grant applications and reports. The collaborator files in particular highlight the fundraising work done with various organizations, foundations, and individual donors. Other administrative records of note include the documentation of Board activities from 1989-2012, which offer unique insight into Project Keshet's operations, and the extensive files of correspondence, mainly from Project Keshet's two founders, Sallie Gratch and Svetlana Yakimenko.

The Project Keshet records provide clear documentation of the administrative, programming, and fundraising operations of the organization and offer valuable insight into the process of Jewish renewal throughout the former Soviet Union, particularly in the context of women's lives. The collection is one of several Jewish feminist collections at Brandeis University.

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Arrangement

Arranged in three series: 1. Administrative Records, 1988-2012, undated; 2. Events and Programs, 1988-2012, undated; 3. Collaborator Files, 1988-2012, undated. For more information about each series please consult the series descriptions. A complete box and folder listing is available upon request.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Brandeis University

415 South St.
Waltham, MA

URL: <https://findingaids.brandeis.edu/>

Conditions Governing Access

Materials containing personal identification information have been restricted. All other materials in this collection are open for research. Access to the collection is in accordance with the policies of the

Robert D. Farber University Archives & Special Collections Department, Brandeis University. Please contact the department for more information.

Conditions Governing Use

Requests to reproduce or publish material from the collection should be directed to the Robert D. Farber University Archives & Special Collections Department, Brandeis University.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The collection was transferred to Brandeis in January 2018 directly from Project Keshet's headquarters.

Processing Information

Processed by Esme Rabin, March 2020.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Feminism -- Religious aspects -- Judaism
- Women in Judaism
- Jews -- Russia

Collection Inventory

Administrative Records, 1988-2014, undated

Date [inclusive]: 1988-2014, undated

Scope and Contents

Series 1: Administrative Records contains files related to the founding and running of Project Keshet. Materials include founding documents, meeting minutes, correspondence, press clippings, Advisory Board records, resources on running non-profits, personnel records, and financial and marketing records. Materials are arranged by subject, then chronologically.

Of particular note from Project Keshet's administrative records are the notes and drafts of their mission statement, as well as early founding documents. Materials from the Advisory Board further contextualize Project Keshet's early years, as well as the organization's evolution and the ways in which administrative decisions inform programming and fundraising. Also of note are the extensive correspondence files, mostly from founders Sallie Gratch and Svetlana Yakimenko, and also including Executive Director Karyn Gershon, who joined the organization in 1994.

Also included in this series are several years of records from the NIS (Newly Independent States) offices, mostly of a financial nature.

Arrangement

Arranged in two sub-series: 1. General Administrative Records, 1988-2012, undated; 2. Marketing and Financial Records, 1988-2012, undated. For more information about each sub-series please consult the sub-series descriptions. A complete box and folder listing is available upon request.

Conditions Governing Access:

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General Administrative Records, 1988-2012, undated

Date [inclusive]: 1988-2012, undated

Scope and Contents

Sub-series 1: General Administrative Records contains files related to the running of Project Keshet, excluding financial records. Materials include founding documents, meeting minutes, correspondence, press clippings, Advisory Board records, resources on running non-profits, and personnel records. Materials are arranged by subject, then chronologically. A complete box and folder listing is available upon request.

Of particular note are the extensive correspondence files, mostly from founders Sallie Gratch and Svetlana Yakimenko, and also including Executive Director Karyn Gershon, who joined the organization in 1994. These correspondence files range in topics from administrative functions to coalition-building to program planning, and they offer unique insight into the organization and its founders. Also of note are materials from the Advisory Board, which contextualize both Project Keshet's early years and its evolution over the following decades, and which include meeting minutes, correspondence, and planning.

Conditions Governing Access:

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Marketing and Financial Records, 1988-2014, undated

Date [inclusive]: 1988-2014, undated

Scope and Contents

Sub-series 2: Marketing and Financial Records contains all materials generated by Project Keshet related to the organization's finances, fundraising, and marketing. Materials include budgets, expenses, tax documents, marketing materials generated by Project Keshet, fundraising mailers, records from fundraising events, newsletters, and correspondence. Materials are arranged separately within the two overarching subjects of financial records and marketing materials, then chronologically within each subject. A complete box and folder listing is available upon request.

As a non-profit, Project Keshet is funded entirely by fundraising and donations. Of particular note in this sub-series are the records related to annual budgets and expenses, which provide insight into how the organization managed their finances to accommodate their programs, events, staffing, and travel costs. Also of note are the fundraising events and mailers created to encourage donors, which are divided chronologically by Project Keshet itself as a way to look at their fundraising strategies over several decades. Included in this sub-series are Project Keshet's newsletters, both in English and Russian, which serve to market the organization in a different way. Please note that files detailing individual donors and foundations are located in Series 3: Collaborator Files.

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Events and Programs, 1988-2015, undated

Date [inclusive]: 1988-2015, undated

Scope and Contents

Series 2: Events and Programs contains records from the wide variety of programs run by Project Keshet, all in support of connecting Jewish women in the NIS (Newly Independent States) with their Jewish traditions and with each other. Materials include correspondence, photographs, audiovisual materials, event programs, press clippings, notes, and travel documentation.

Project Keshet's programming work first came to the forefront of the public awareness through the International Jewish Women's Conference in Kiev in 1994. This conference was quickly followed the next year by the beginning of their global holiday celebrations, which sought to connect Jewish women across the world through concurrent holiday celebrations, most notably Pre-Passover seders and Sukkot. Project Keshet's programs in NIS communities also grew in the early 1990s through their Women's Exchange seminars and mother/daughter retreats. By the early 2000s, they had begun the Torah Return Project and the KeshetNet project, both of which are detailed more fully in Sub-series 1: General Program Files. In addition to their work in support of Jewish renewal in the NIS, they have also created educational programs centered around women's health issues, domestic violence, and sex trafficking.

Arrangement

Arranged in four sub-series: 1. General Program Files, 1988-2012, undated; 2. Conference Records, 1988-2012, undated; 3. Global Holiday Celebrations, 1995-2012, undated; 4. Educational Program Resources, 1988-2012, undated. For more information about each sub-series please consult the sub-series descriptions. A complete box and folder listing is available upon request.

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

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Archives & Special Collections Department, Brandeis University. Please contact the department for more information.

General Program Files, 1988-2015, undated

Date [inclusive]: 1988-2015, undated

Scope and Contents

Sub-series 1: General Program Files contains records on all Project Keshet programs, excluding conferences and global holiday celebrations. Materials include correspondence, meeting minutes, photographs, event programs, and ephemera. Materials are arranged chronologically. A complete box and folder listing is available upon request.

Project Keshet has created and run a wide array of programs, which are often repeated in different locations and with different groups of women. These main programs include: Women's Exchanges, in which American women visit women in the NIS (Newly Independent States) to connect them with their Jewish traditions; the Mother/Daughter Retreats, which focus on connecting multiple generations with their Judaism; and the Torah Return Project, wherein Project Keshet presents a Torah to an NIS community who no longer had one. Also of note is the KeshetNet project, started in 2001 to establish computer centers in communities throughout the NIS as a way to increase access to information and ways of connecting to the global Jewish community.

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

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Conference Records, 1989-2007, undated

Date [inclusive]: 1989-2007, undated

Scope and Contents

Sub-series 2: Conference Records contains materials connected to five core conferences held by Project Keshet: the International Jewish Women's Conference in 1994, the Women's Exchange USA conferences in 1999 and 2001, the Voyage on the Volga in 2004, and the Summit on the Black Sea in 2007. Materials include correspondence, photographs, meeting minutes, speeches, and audiovisual recordings. Materials are arranged chronologically by conference, then loosely by subject. A complete box and folder listing is available upon request.

While Project Keshet was founded in 1989, they achieved more widespread attention and engagement from the global Jewish community through their International Jewish Women's Conference, which took place in Kiev in 1994. Of particular note in the 1994 conference records are the correspondence and evaluations from presenters and attendees, many of whom remained involved with Project Keshet afterwards. The 1994 conference records also include individual files on each presenter, arranged alphabetically by last name. In 1999 and 2001 respectively, Project Keshet hosted two conferences in Illinois for their Women's Exchange program. In 2004, the ten year anniversary of the 1994 Kiev conference, Project Keshet conducted the Voyage on the Volga, in which attendees traveled by boat up the Volga River and took part in various events along the way. In 2007, Project Keshet held the Summit on the Black Sea, which continued their programming work and focused on fundraising.

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

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Global Holiday Celebrations, 1990-2013, undated

Date [inclusive]: 1990-2013, undated

Scope and Contents

Sub-series 3: Global Holiday Celebrations contains materials related to Project Keshet's global celebrations of Jewish holidays, a key part of the organization's programming. Materials include notes, correspondence, logistics, photographs, and bound haggadahs. Materials are arranged chronologically by year, then by holiday. A complete box and folder listing is available upon request.

Beginning in 1995, Project Keshet has worked with women around the world to organize global celebrations of major Jewish holidays. The first Global Women's Holiday Celebration was a pre-Passover seder conducted on the same day in countries all over the world, featuring Project Keshet's newly created women's haggadah. Later that same year, they celebrated Sukkot on a global scale as well, bringing together women all over the world in a uniquely Jewish context. Materials in this sub-series stretch from early brainstorming notes in 1990 to global celebrations in 2013. Of particular interest are the wealth of photographs from the 1995 and 1996 seders, as well as the annual haggadahs created and reworked for each new seder.

Educational Program Resources, 1990-2011, undated

Date [inclusive]: 1990-2011, undated

Scope and Contents

Sub-series 4: Educational Program Resources contains materials related to Project Keshet's educational programs centered around women's health, domestic violence, and sex trafficking. Materials include reports, press clippings, bound volumes, statistics, and correspondence. Materials are arranged by subject. A complete box and folder listing is available upon request.

In the course of Project Keshet's educational programming work on women's health issues and gender violence, the organization has collected a wide variety of resources spanning over two decades from 1990-2011. Of particular interest is the Women's Health Resource Book created by Project Keshet in 1998. The sub-series also represents Project Keshet's involvement with 16 Days Against Gender Based Violence, an international initiative run by the Center for Women's Global Leadership designed to bring attention to gender-based violence as a human rights issue.

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Collaborator Files, 1988-2012, undated

Date [inclusive]: 1988-2012, undated

Scope and Contents

Series 3: Collaborator Files contains records of Project Keshet's engagement with various organizations and individuals, both of a financial and programmatic nature. The files include grant applications and reports, correspondence, donor records, program planning, and press clippings. The series is divided into 2 sub-series, one for organizations and one for individuals. Files are arranged alphabetically within each sub-series.

As an organization dedicated to connecting Jewish women throughout the NIS (Newly Independent States) and the world, Project Keshet has worked collaboratively with numerous other organizations and individual people throughout their history. Of particular note in this series are files from organizations particularly dedicated to helping Project Keshet, including the Nathan Cummings Foundation and Ma'yan. Also of note are files of individuals who became closely connected with Project Keshet. Please note that these files only contain financial information related to grants and donors; for other financial records, please see Series 1, Sub-series 2: Marketing and Financial Records.

Arrangement

Arranged in two sub-series: 1. Organizations, 1988-2012, undated; 2. Individuals, 1988-2012, undated. For more information about each sub-series please consult the sub-series descriptions. A complete box and folder listing is available upon request.

Conditions Governing Access:

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Organizations, 1992-2000, undated

Date [inclusive]: 1992-2000, undated

Scope and Contents

Sub-series 1: Organizations contains collaborator files for organizations, foundations, and all non-individual collaborators. Materials include correspondence, grant applications and reports, pamphlets and ephemera, press clippings, and donation records. Folders are arranged alphabetically by organization name. A complete box and folder listing is available upon request.

As a non-profit organization, Project Keshet depends upon collaborative relationships with other organizations, particularly in the context of grants from foundations. Of particular note are the files on the Nathan Cummings Foundation, Winrock International, the Moriah Fund, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Conditions Governing Access:

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Individuals, 1988-2012, undated

Date [inclusive]: 1988-2012, undated

Scope and Contents

Sub-series 2: Individuals contains files on individual collaborators, particularly donors. Materials include correspondence, program planning notes, marketing materials, and press clippings. Folders are arranged alphabetically by last name. A complete box and folder listing is available upon request.

The individual collaborator files feature a number of people who have been involved with Project Keshet on an ongoing basis. Of particular note are Merle Feld, Blu Greenberg, Rabbi Goldie Milgram, Alice Shalvi, and Andrea Waldstein. Several of the individuals in this sub-series are also represented in the presenter files from the 1994 International Jewish Women's Conference, located in Series 2, Sub-series 2: Conference Files.

Conditions Governing Access:

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