

*Celebrating 115 years of service to the Jewish community as its paper of record*

## Bonding with Israel

New leaders for regional Israel Development Corp.



PHOTO: BRETT M. RHYNE/TJA

Jeffrey Davis, left, and Jonathan Lang

**By Brett M. Rhynne**  
*Advocate staff*

BOSTON — The State of Israel's astonishing economic success of late does not relieve it of the need to seek financial support from Diaspora Jewry, and Jeffrey Davis, the incoming New England chairman of the Development Corp. for Israel — commonly known as Israel Bonds — is putting his considerable marketing skills behind a renewed effort locally.

Davis' love of Israel and zeal for supporting it is evident. "I grew up very secular, in Montreal," recalls the affable Davis, seated at the head of a conference table with Jonathan Lang, Israel Bond's New England executive director, in

their Union Wharf offices. "I went to Israel for the first time when I was in my early 20s, because my girlfriend was going and I was scared I was going to lose her.

"When I spent an extensive amount of time traveling in Israel," he says, "I realized I was very much a product of thousands of years of a developmental process, that I was one of many, that I was part of a culture that has evolved. To love that culture, to love those people, wherever they are in the world, it's essential that there be an Israel. Israel is what connects all of us."

"Jews have made great strides in the world since the beginning of Israel," Davis notes. "It's an important part of us. I believe that

when Israel does well, there's a place for all Jews."

Lang points out that while Israel Bonds sends \$1.1 billion annually to the Jewish state — dwarfing other Diaspora-based organizations — he anticipates Davis and Greater Boston chairwoman Jone Dalezman will supercharge the New England effort.

"I was in sales and sales training early in my career at Johnson & Johnson," Davis says. "They used to say to us, 'You never sell anything to anybody that they don't want, or they'll never buy from you again. Always figure out what they want.' Which is the good marketing approach.

"I want to find out what people want," he continued. "What they want their legacy to be, what they want their image to be within their family, within their community, how they want to make an impact. My goal is to find out what they want in their hearts and minds at the purest level."

"The people I meet want to support Israel," Davis says. "They like seeing Israel successful. It's important to them, either because that's how they grew up, or it's their religious background, or that's their political belief, or that's what they've learned in their synagogue or their church. They believe Israel is important.

"I want to find out what it is about Israel that's important to them, and I want to help them support Israel, which makes them feel good," he adds.

Davis and Lang describe how the business of selling Israel Bonds has changed. "Sure, you can still buy a \$36 bond," Davis says. "But the community has gotten wealthier. I went to an event with Jon a couple of weeks ago; some guy bought a \$5 million bond. It blew me away!"

The buyer wasn't even Jewish, Davis notes, which highlights the other big change: Israel Bonds appeal to non-Jews, too.

"Wealthy people see the advantages of bonds," he says. You can give money to Israel, he says, and still get your money back — with interest.

For those who want to give a lot to Israel but don't have the resources, Davis and Lang describe another approach offered by Israel Bonds. "I can finance a \$1 million bond for \$7,000," Davis says.

Lang explains how, for two annual payments of \$3,500, a donor can finance a bank loan to buy an Israel Bond worth \$1 million. Israel repays the bank loan directly, with interest.

"When you can keep a dollar and give a dollar to Israel, that's a great way to support the Jewish state," Davis says. "People can give, and still keep. If you want to give \$36, or you want to give \$36 million, you can keep your money and still support what happens in Israel."

*Contact the Development Corp. for Israel team at (800) 752-5651, [boston@israelbonds.com](mailto:boston@israelbonds.com) or [www.israelbonds.com](http://www.israelbonds.com).*

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