



OPEN, WELCOMING, AND GROWING:

Findings from a 2022 jHUB User Study

Rosov
CONSULTING

Information
Insight
Impact

JHUB

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BACKGROUND

jHUB is an initiative of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland (JECC) and the Jewish Federation of Cleveland (JFC). jHUB provides new ways for interfaith couples and families to comfortably explore, discover, and personalize the meaning of Jewish culture and values in the modern world. Originally launched in 2014, jHUB is currently estimated to reach more than 4,000 community members, most of whom are less engaged in Jewish life. jHUB's reach did not wane even as COVID-19 halted in-person gatherings and required creative rethinking of all its activities—in part through new programming for young professionals and couples without children.

In 2017-18, JECC first partnered with Rosov to evaluate jHUB's outcomes. One of that evaluation's key findings was that "jHUB offers [participants] the resources and support to introduce Jewish practices, values, and customs into their home life while assuring users that all cultural or religious traditions within the family are acknowledged and respected." According to the 2018 findings report, "Many find in jHUB a supportive community of intermarried couples and families with whom they can comfortably share their stories and challenges."

In 2022, JECC and Rosov Consulting partnered once more to reexamine jHUB's impact and to find out:

- 1 What is the current demographic profile of jHUB users, and in what ways has it changed since 2018?
- 2 How is jHUB meeting (or not meeting) its users' needs? Specifically, when and how does jHUB support its users to:
 - feel valued and welcomed by Jewish Cleveland?
 - feel empowered to "do Jewish" in their homes or in other spaces?
 - connect and engage with other Jewish communal organizations and programs?
- 3 What kinds of Jewish engagement/programming are jHUB users seeking, and what additional programs, resources, and engagement opportunities could/should jHUB offer?



jHUB'S OFFERINGS: AN OVERVIEW

Since its inception in 2014, jHUB has developed a wide array of programmatic offerings, including more than 60 programs and activities offered every year. These programs include:

- **Holiday celebrations and learning opportunities** for families with children and young professionals.
- **Couples and parent workshops** that offer a safe space for interfaith couples to gather with their peers to discuss issues unique to being an interfaith family.
- **Resources for grandparents** about how to navigate family relationships in the context of multiple backgrounds and faith traditions.
- **Honeymoon Israel trips** that send 20 young couples from the greater Cleveland area to Israel each year through a national partnership with Honeymoon Israel.
- **Conversations with jHUB** staff to support personalization of Jewish customs and practices in a way that is meaningful to each family.
- **Helping couples and families find their community** through social interactions and intentional connections.
- **Introductions and referrals to local clergy** who officiate weddings, partnerships, and counsel interfaith couples.
- **"Jewish Cleveland concierge,"** allowing couples and families to connect to other Jewish programs and organizations based on their needs.
- **Online resources and guides** for Shabbat and other Jewish holidays and customs.

KEY FINDINGS

1 jHUB's audience and offerings have evolved over the past five years.

- jHUB's audience in 2022 includes more young adults with no children and more individuals who live in the city of Cleveland.
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2 jHUB's impact on its most committed users is substantial, especially when it comes to:

- familiarity with Jewish customs and practices
 - feeling welcomed and included by the Cleveland Jewish community
 - exploring and experimenting with creating Jewish life at home
-

3 For about three in 10 users (30%) jHUB offers a bridge to further engagement with the Cleveland Jewish community, including participation in communal events, connecting with Jewish organizations, and enrolling children in Jewish education.

4 Users who have been involved with jHUB for the past four years demonstrate substantial growth in terms of:

- strengthened relationships within their immediate families and with their parents and in-laws
 - experimentation with, and adoption of, new Jewish practices at home
 - connection to Jewish Cleveland organizations and programs
 - offering formal and informal Jewish education to their children
-

5 jHUB's users express interest in programming directed explicitly at:

- families with pre-teen (9-13) children
- users who identify as LGBTQ+
- users who identify as Jews of Color

A photograph of a young couple smiling and looking at a smartphone together. The woman is wearing a grey t-shirt, a black baseball cap, and blue mirrored sunglasses. The man is wearing a maroon t-shirt with 'CLEVELAND' printed on it. They are standing in front of a wall covered in colorful graffiti.

jHUB REACHES MORE YOUNG ADULTS WITH NO CHILDREN FROM THE CITY OF CLEVELAND

Over the past four years (since the previous evaluation was conducted), jHUB has expanded its programmatic offerings to include more targeted offerings for young professionals who do not have children. This is reflected in changes to jHUB’s user composition, as shown in Figures 1 and 2 on the following page.¹ Users who first engaged with jHUB before 2018 were much more

likely to be couples with children, in their 30s and 40s (Figure 1) and to reside in the suburbs to the west, east, and southeast of the city of Cleveland (Figure 2). By contrast, users who have engaged with jHUB for the first time over the past three years are more likely to be younger (in their 20s and 30s), have no children, and reside in the city of Cleveland.

NOTES

¹As represented by the users who responded to the evaluation survey. While we have no way to assess whether these statistics fully represent all jHUB’s users, we have no reasons to suspect that on these attributes—age and residential area—there would be much, if any, sampling bias.

Figure 1: Recent jHUB Users More Likely to Be Under 40 And Have No Children

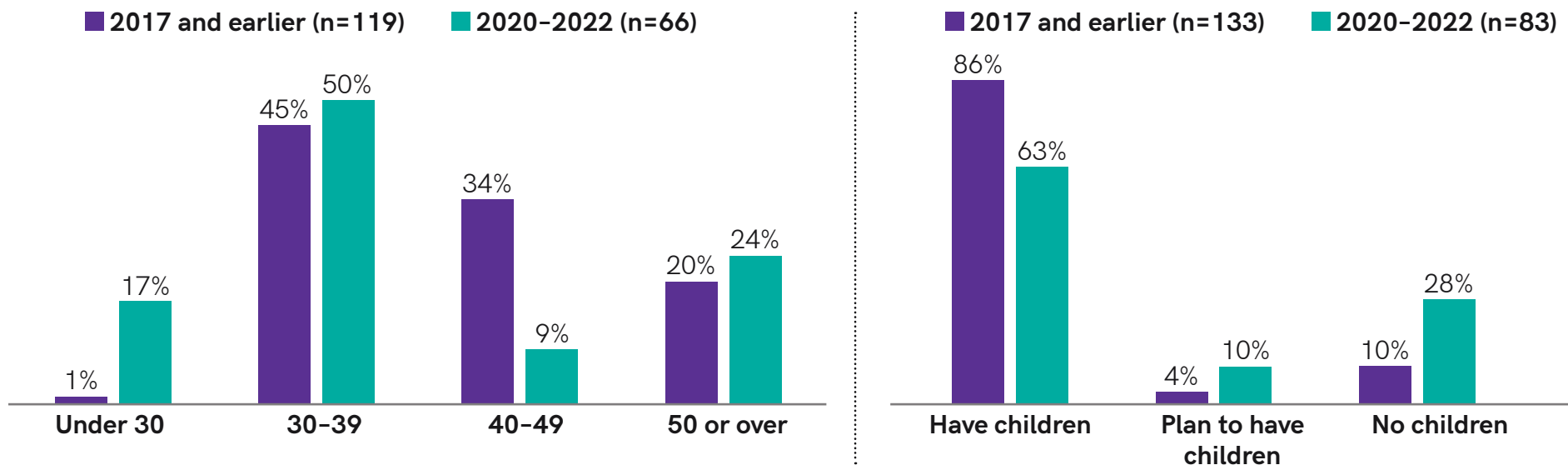
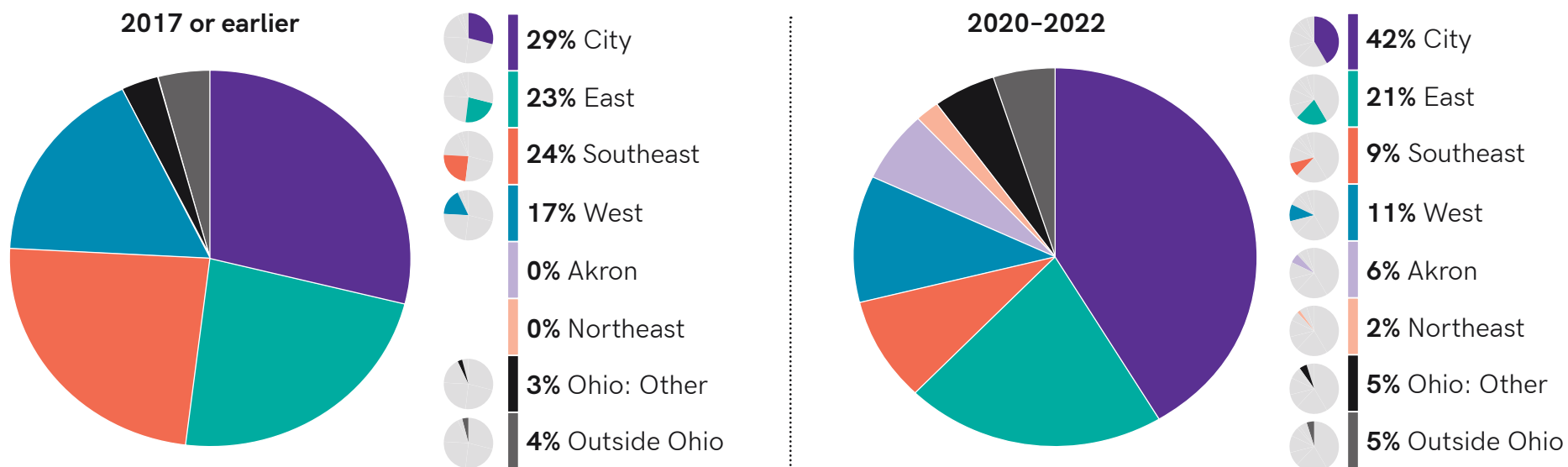


Figure 2: Recent jHUB Users More Likely to Reside in the City of Cleveland





jHUB CONNECTS ITS USERS TO JEWISH LIFE AND COMMUNITY

Participation in jHUB activities and programs has considerable impact on participants' connection to Jewish life and Jewish community. To better understand this impact, the evaluators looked side by side at two kinds of jHUB users. One kind are sporadic or "light" users who have participated in jHUB events only once or who have benefited from jHUB's online resources but did not participate in jHUB's more intensive programming.

Another kind are jHUB's more "heavy" users, defined as those who have attended at least two or more events and who participate in jHUB programming.² While even jHUB's "light" users benefit from the experience, it seems to take the more extensive engagement of the "heavy" users to generate substantial impact. We turn now to review the various ways in which jHUB impacts its users.

NOTES

²Among respondents to the 2022 survey, one-third (34%) are "light" users, whereas two-thirds are "heavy" users. It is likely that the survey sample undercounts light users, who, understandably, are less likely to respond to a survey about their engagement with jHUB.

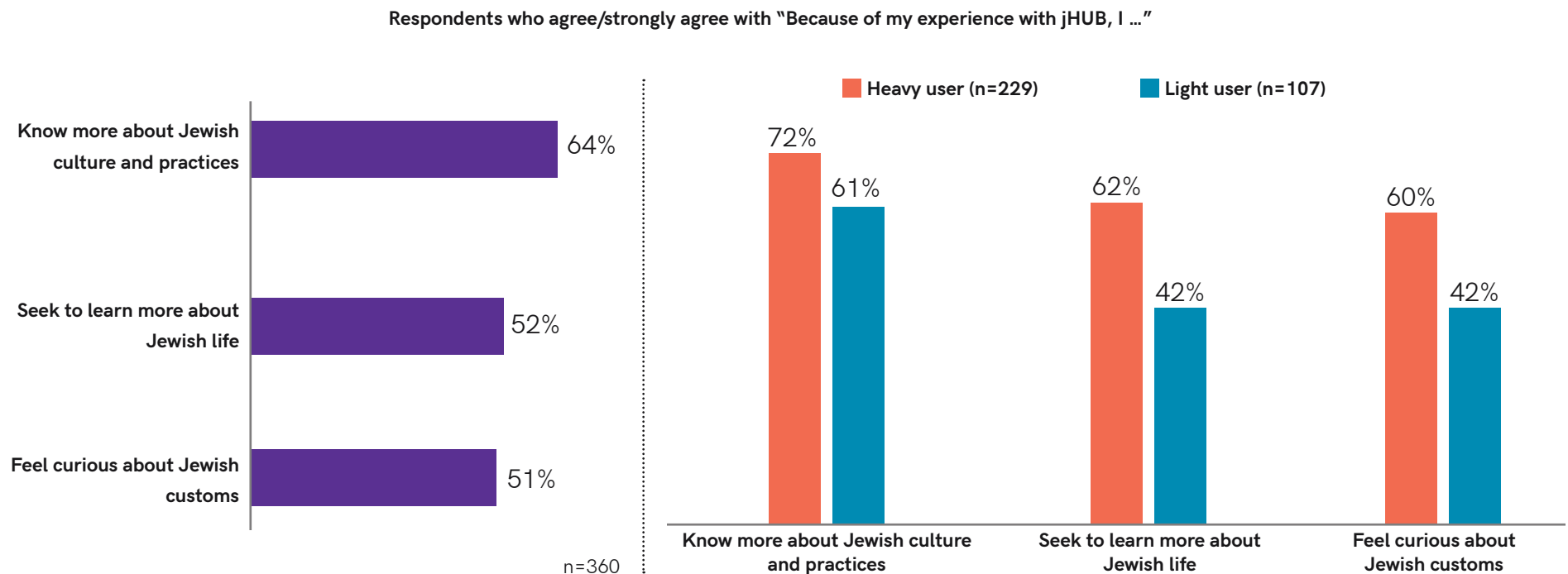
Gaining Knowledge and Curiosity about Jewish Life

Users of jHUB resources and participants in jHUB programs describe gaining both knowledge of Judaism and Jewish life and a curiosity and desire to learn more. They share that jHUB presents Jewish customs in ways that are profoundly accessible to them:

"jHUB, through education events or just informal discussions, allowed me to form an authentic connection to our family's Jewish identity and to feel the [Jewish] traditions we have are mine as well. I have yet to come across a new learning about Judaism or the reason for a holiday or the meaning behind a symbol that has not resonated with me."

Almost two-thirds (64%) of the survey respondents report that because of their involvement with jHUB they know more about Judaism and Jewish customs, and half say that they now actively seek more knowledge about Jewish life (52%), and that they are curious to learn even more (51%). While this gain in knowledge is more pronounced for "heavy" users, jHUB's "light" users report some gains as well (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Users Gain Knowledge and Seek More Knowledge of Judaism and Jewish Life



Feeling Welcomed and Connected

As a result of their engagement with jHUB, users, and especially heavy users, feel a greater sense of connection to the Jewish community of Cleveland.³

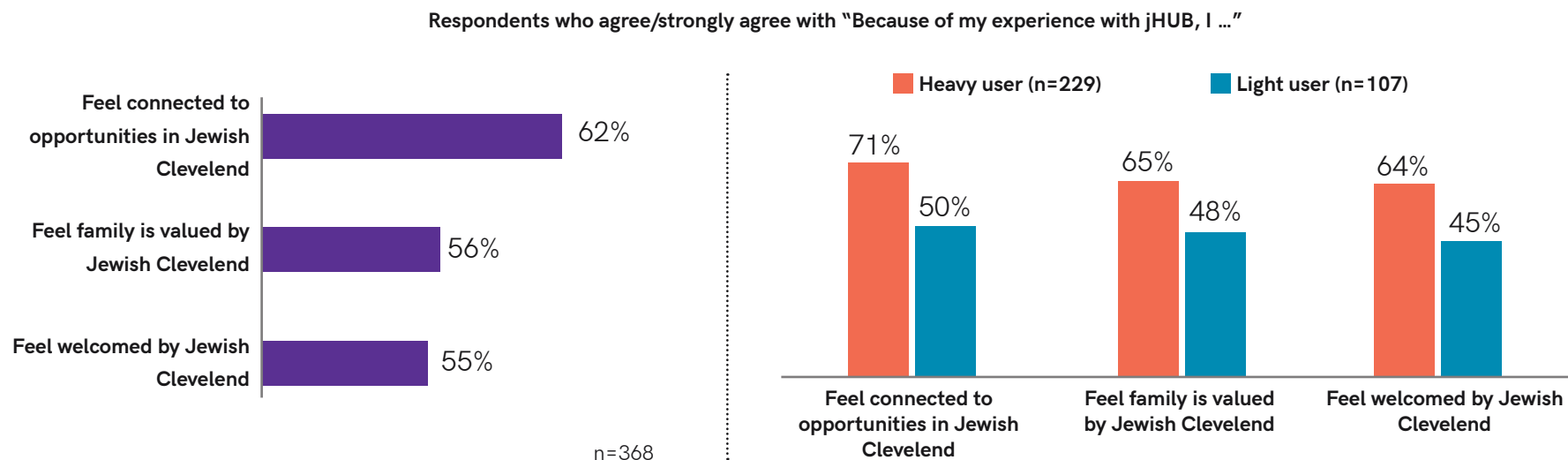
"jHUB is a great resource for my wife who is a newer Jew ... jHUB helped her feel welcomed in our community."

"Being Christian and married to a Jewish woman, I have felt welcomed because of the packages I received from jHUB."

"jHUB helped me feel more connected to the Jewish community while also allowing my kids to have fun and be kids."

As can be seen from Figure 4, most heavy users say that jHUB made them feel connected to opportunities in Jewish Cleveland (71%) and made them feel valued (65%) and welcomed (64%) by Jewish Cleveland. At the same time, about half of jHUB's one-time, or "light" users share the same sense of feeling welcomed by the Cleveland Jewish community.

Figure 4: Feeling Welcomed by and Connected to the Jewish Community of Cleveland



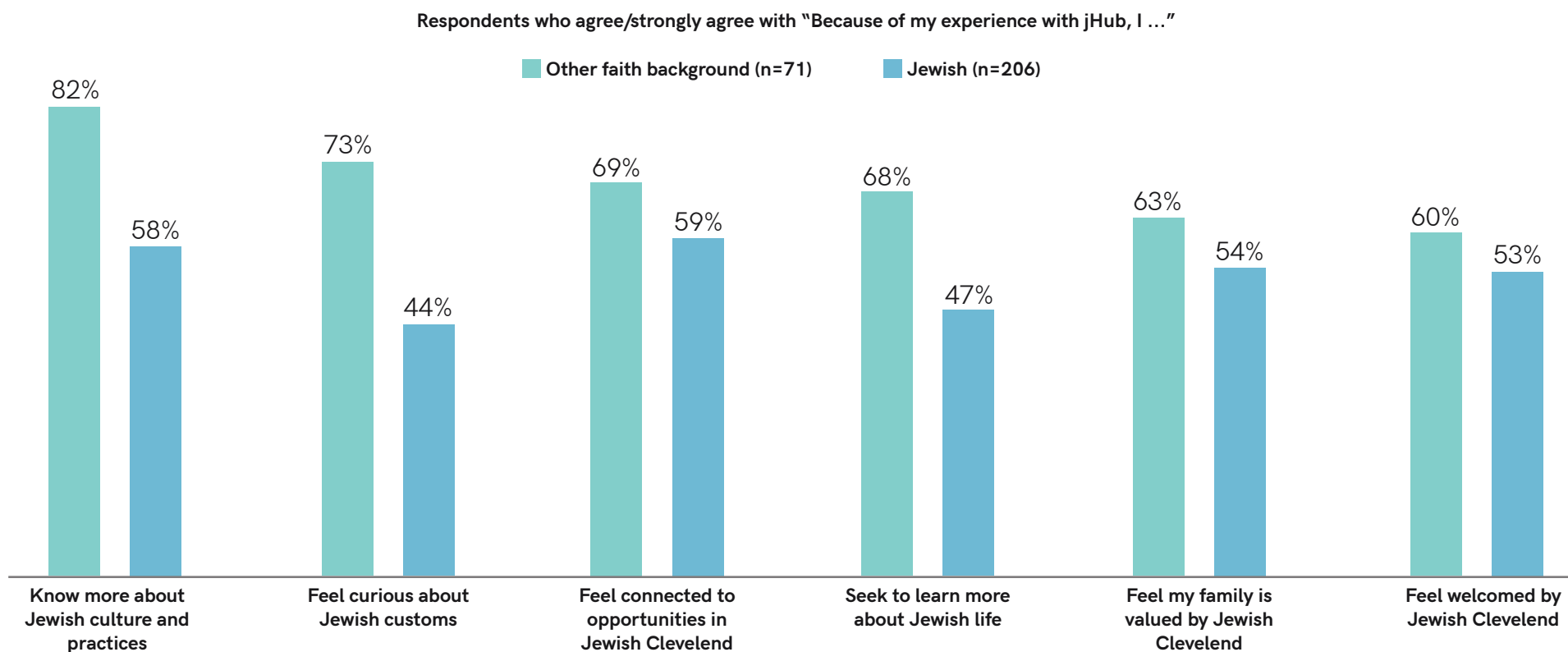
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³As we will see below, while many users "feel connected" to Jewish Cleveland, this does not always translate to specific behavioral steps, such as attending communal events, joining Jewish organizations, or enrolling in Jewish education.

Moreover, both forms of impact—gains in knowledge and curiosity about Jewish life and feeling valued and welcomed by Jewish Cleveland—are especially pronounced for respondents of other faith or cultural backgrounds (see Figure 5).⁴ Creating an environment that welcomes spouses of other backgrounds into the folds of the Cleveland Jewish community is one of jHUB’s greatest accomplishments.

"[jHUB is] the first organization that has allowed me, as the non-Jewish parent, to feel comfortable attending Jewish-centered activities with my interfaith family. My spouse and I both had negative experiences with organized religion and finally feel like we have a 'faith' home with jHUB!"

Figure 5: Greater Impact on Users of Other Background



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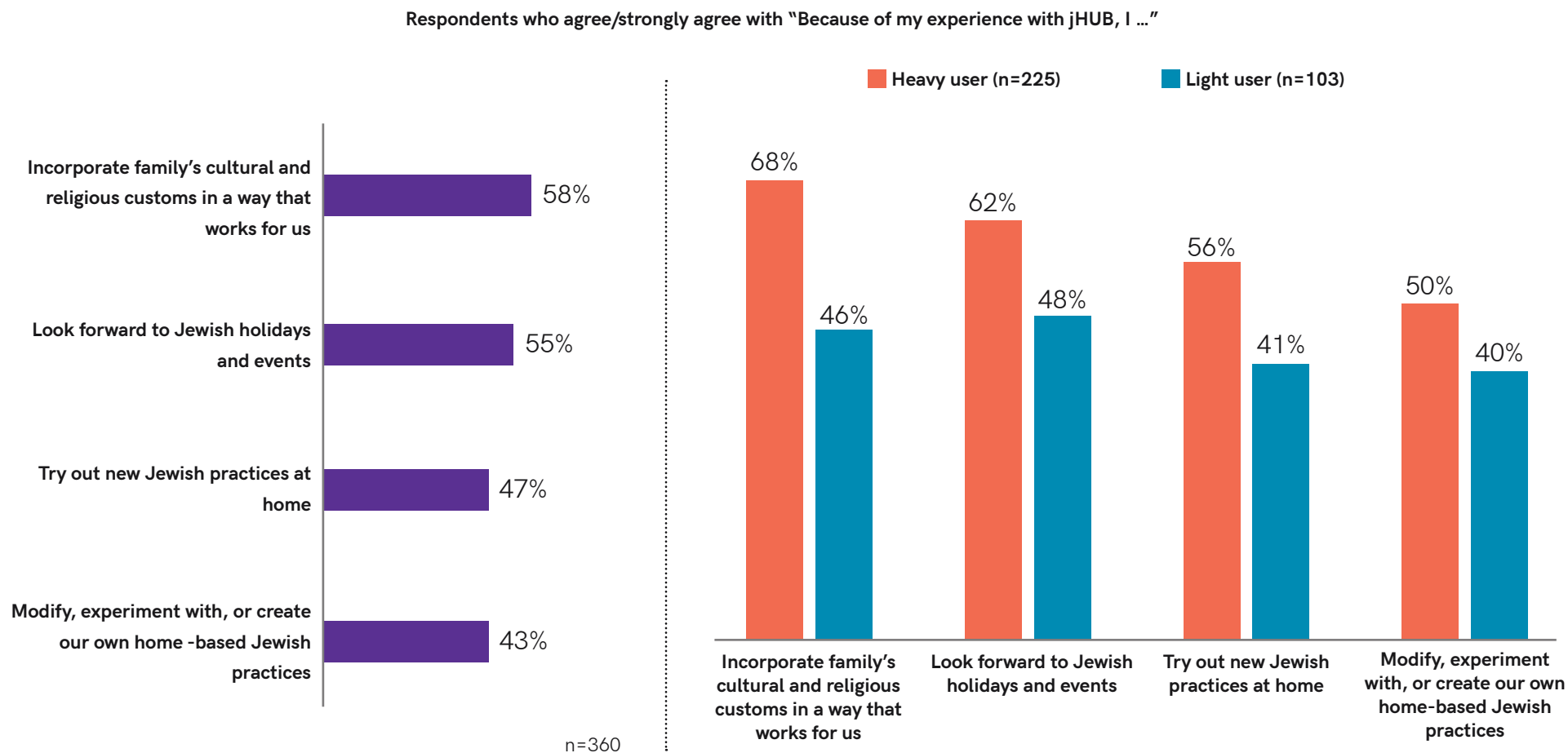
⁴Almost one in five respondents to the 2022 User Survey (18%) identify with another faith or cultural background (or with no faith or cultural background). Three-quarters (76%) of the respondents identify as Jewish and the remainder identify both with Judaism and with another faith background. This analysis compares those who identify as exclusively Jewish with those who identify exclusively with another faith background or with no faith at all.

Building Jewish Homes

About two-thirds of the heavy users and four in 10 light users share that their jHUB experiences led them to experiment, modify, and “make their own,” various Jewish traditions and customs. As one user shared:

"I think that what jHUB offered was a very inclusive and welcoming space, as you are and where you are in your journey. That helped me learn where I'd like to be in my own practice."

Figure 6: Users Creatively Weave Jewish Practices into Their Homes



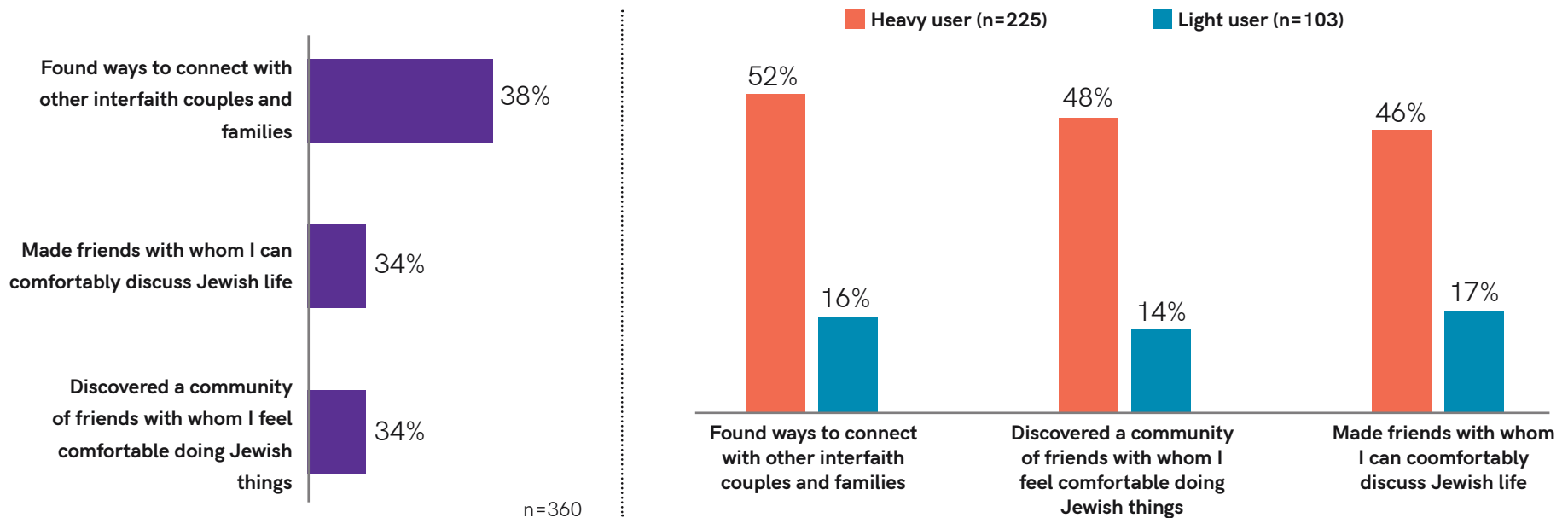
Finding Community in Other Interfaith Families

No less importantly, through their involvement with jHUB, users find a community of families with whom they share the experience of building Jewish homes (and, for many, raising Jewish children) where one parent comes from a cultural or religious background other than Jewish.⁵

"We received an invitation to a Hanukkah event in 2018 and decided to attend with another interfaith couple that we knew. The welcoming and inclusive nature of jHUB was immediately appealing and we love the community that we have met through it in the years that have followed. I believe strongly that jHUB has helped me better understand my own beliefs and the way that they fit into my life and my relationship with my partner."

This deeper sense of a community of friends seems to require more intensive involvement to materialize. Just about half of jHUB's "heavy" users agree or strongly agree that they connected with other interfaith families (52%) and that they have made friends with whom they feel comfortable discussing Jewish life (46%). However relatively few "light" users share a similar experience. While not surprising—it takes more than a one-off experience to make good friends—this finding does highlight jHUB's value for those who engage more deeply.

Figure 7: Users Find Community in Other Families Like Them



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⁵Among all survey respondents who have children under 18, 71% raise their children exclusively Jewish, 21% raise their children Jewish and "something else," and 11% raise their children "not Jewish" (meaning, in another religion or culture, or in no particular religion or culture).

Connecting Further with Jewish Cleveland

For most jHUB users (70%), jHUB is all the community they are currently seeking. jHUB teaches them about Jewish life, makes them feel welcomed and valued, empowers them to experiment with Jewish rituals and customs, and connects them to other interfaith families.

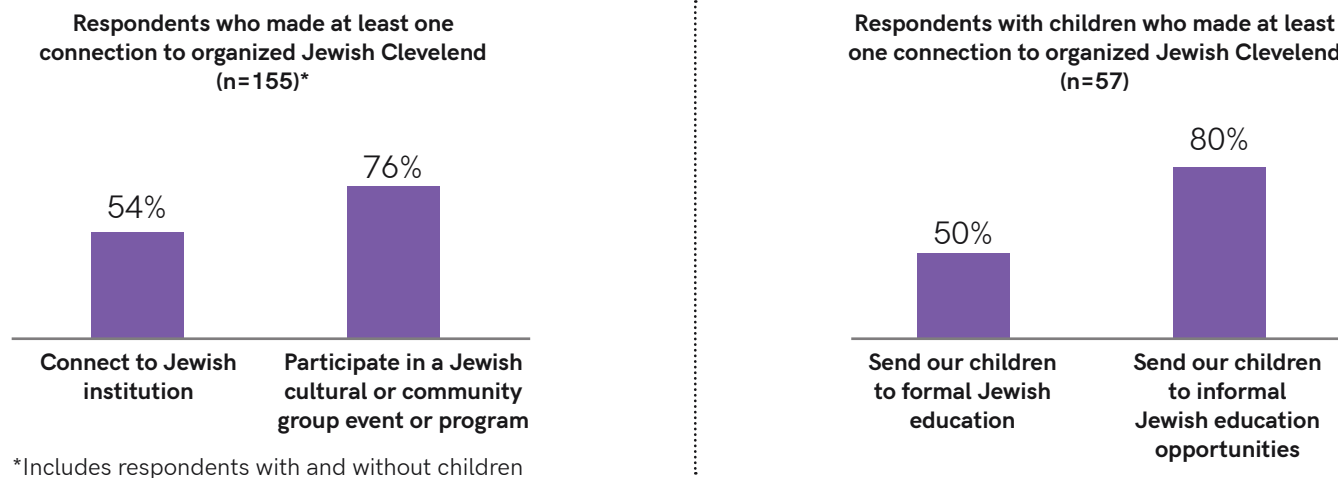
For about three in 10 users, jHUB has also been a bridge to further participation in Jewish Cleveland. For these users, connection with Jewish Cleveland could mean participating in programs and events offered in the wider Jewish community, outside of jHUB (which 76% of these users did). It could mean making connections with local synagogues or the JCC (54%). It could also mean (for those with children) enrolling their children in informal (80%) or formal Jewish educational frameworks (50%).

"jHUB was my first exposure to Jewish Cleveland and they helped me be less intimidated to go to other events, get more engaged with Federation, join the temple. It was a great welcoming first resource to break down barriers and intimidation to join the community."

"[jHUB] really helped us decide on how we would raise our kids before the added challenge of them already existing. We were new to the area, so it also exposed us to the Cleveland Jewish community. It was an incredibly valuable experience we feel so fortunate to have had."

Figure 8: Users Connect with Jewish Cleveland Organizations

Respondents who report that the programs, services, and information provided by jHUB supported them to make the following choices.





jHUB USERS GROW OVER TIME

The fact that this is the second time in four years that a jHUB user survey has been conducted offered the research team a rare opportunity. A subset of 74 survey respondents completed the survey twice—in 2018 and again in 2022. Comparing the responses of these individuals across these two points in time opens a window into ways in which they and their families have grown and changed over the intervening years.

The overall emerging picture is one of greater comfort in their “skins” as an interfaith family (Figure 9), expanded and enhanced

experimentation with incorporating Jewish practices into their homes (Figure 10), and a greater likelihood to participate in Jewish Cleveland programs and organizations (Figure 11). The data show an especially pronounced increase in the number of these 74 families who send their children to Jewish education. This can likely be attributed (in addition to their greater comfort as participants in Cleveland Jewish life) to the maturation of their children (some of whom were too young to participate in Jewish education framework in 2018).

Figure 9: Increased Comfort as an Interfaith Family

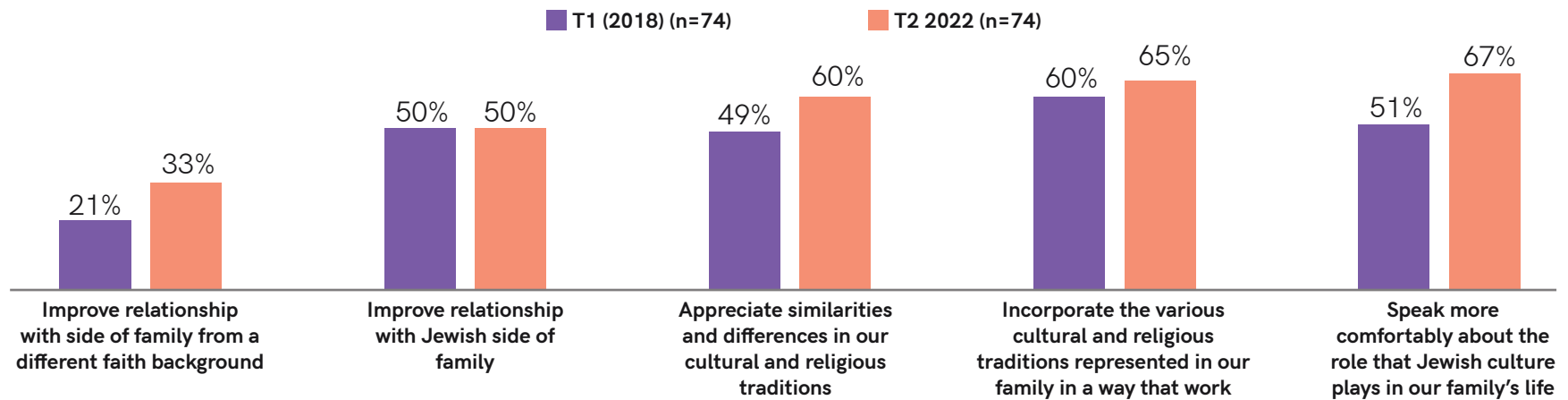


Figure 10: Expanded Experimentation with Jewish Practices at Home

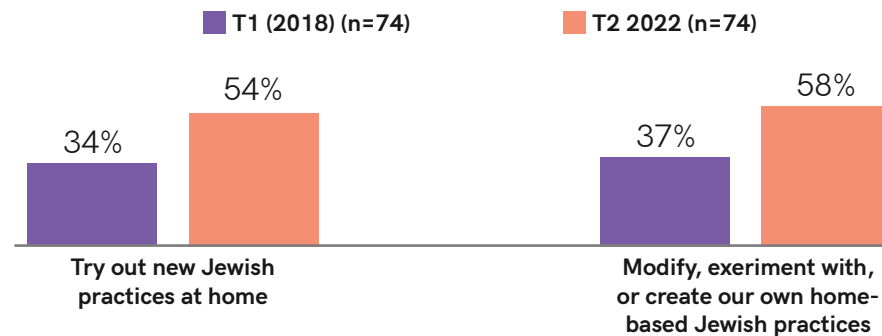
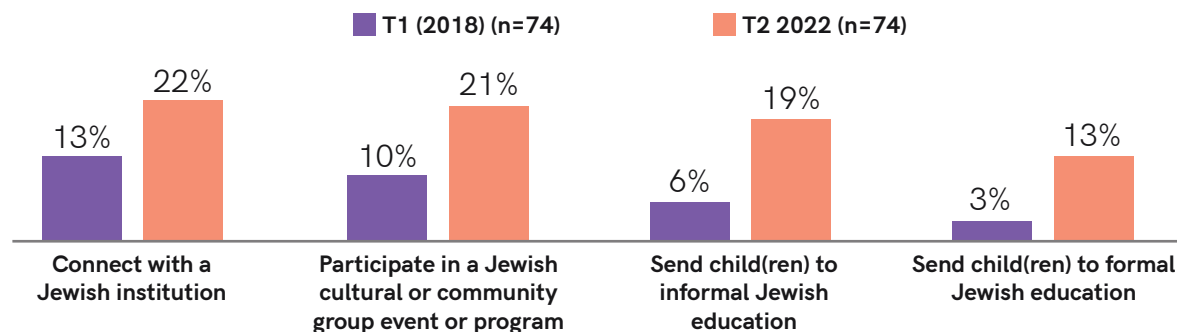


Figure 11: Greater Connection to Jewish Cleveland Organizations and Programs





WHERE NEXT? INTEREST IN POPULATION-SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING

Over the coming years, jHUB will explore expanding its programmatic offering for specific subgroups of its audience, such as parents of preteens. It will work with others in the field, as opportunities emerge, to support programming for other audiences, such as families where one or more members identify as LGBTQ+ or as a Jew of Color.

Families with Preteen Children

jHUB emerged as an organization that primarily serves couples and families in the early stages of their familial Jewish journeys. In 2018, most couples either had no children (but were planning or expecting children) or had very young children. As jHUB's users and their families mature, their needs and interests change. Among all respondents with children under 18, 44% indicated interest in joining programming for families with preteens, and 31% were also interested in programming for preteen children.

"The programming for young families is something we've engaged with. I'm excited to see how they develop the teen program moving forward."

LGBTQ+ Families

Among all respondents to the 2022 survey, 14% indicated that at least one member of their household identifies as an LGBTQ+ person. Of those, most (61%) said they would be interested in programming that is targeted specifically at the LGBTQ+ community (as one user expressed it: *"Involve more LGBTQ events outside of a June pride month Shabbat"*) In all, LGBTQ+ users expressed a desire for inclusive programming that reached a wide range of audiences, such as:

- Mixers, connecting with other Jewish/interfaith queer families
- Social mixers for college grads and up
- Programming for middle school children of queer parents with Jewish values
- Safe social events
- Social events surrounding LGBTQ+ couples and families
- [LGBTQ+-specific] learning programs (perhaps virtually)

Jews of Color

Twenty survey respondents (5%) indicated that at least one member of their household identifies as a Jew of Color. Of those 20, most (12; 60%) were already aware of the Jews of Color: Cleveland initiative, and seven users had participated in Jews of Color: Cleveland programs. Fourteen users (70%) expressed interest in programs that specifically target them and their families as Jews of Color. One respondent said they wanted to learn more "about the history of Jews of Color and current customs that incorporate Judaism along with other heritages." Another respondent shared that they would like to see "something for young kids so they can meet other young kids that are Jews of Color." An interviewee who identifies as a Jew of Color shared that:

"The community I discovered was a Jews of Color group ... [jHUB] connected me with an organization of Jews of Color very recently that I was not a part of. It is a phenomenal group of people, really cool conversations."

These data suggest a need and a desire for JOC programming. While jHUB will not pursue offering this programming on its own, it will continue to support and partner with JOC Cleveland in ways that are beneficial to JOC Cleveland and support Jews of Color in Cleveland.



CONCLUSION

Over the last four years (since the last jHUB User Survey was conducted), jHUB has grown and changed in many ways. The organization now reaches more than 4,000 individuals, many more of whom are young adults and people residing in the city of Cleveland. What has not changed, however, is jHUB's ability to generate a truly open and welcoming environment that helps interfaith couples and families feel welcomed and valued by the Jewish community. As they learn more about Jewish life, jHUB users benefit from a community of other interfaith families and they find ways to incorporate Jewish customs into their home lives. For many (about 70%) users, jHUB is all the Jewish community they need at the current time; for others (about 30%) jHUB is a bridge and a doorway to greater engagement with other organizations in the Cleveland Jewish community.

"I am so grateful for your existence. I grew up in an interfaith family and dearly wish an organization like jHUB had been around to provide my mom with support. The jHUB team has always made my family feel welcome and that our connection to Judaism mattered. Without your encouragement that I would be welcomed, I would not have had the courage to join a temple. For years, I let the stigma of being half-Jewish and not 'looking the part' hold me back from pursuing a connection with a Jewish community. Now I am taking steps to become more educated and connected to my heritage and have enrolled my children in religious school so that they can grow up with the knowledge and spiritual practice I wish I had had."

As it continues to grow, jHUB will explore expanding its programmatic offering for specific subgroups of its audience, such as parents of preteens, and families where one or more members identify as LGBTQ+.

APPENDIX





Methods

The jHUB user survey was fielded in May 2022 over a period of four weeks to the entire jHUB user list (N=3,055). A \$200 gift card was offered as incentive for participation; 459 responses were collected (15% response rate).

In June and July 2022, after they completed the survey, 14 in-depth interviews were conducted with a purposeful sample of survey respondents who indicated they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. The interview asked participants to reflect on their responses from the survey and to offer additional insight into their experiences with jHUB and the opportunities or changes it had enabled for their Jewish life.

The sample was purposively drawn to include participants from two categories: User type ("heavy" vs. "light"), and families with and without children. The final composition of interview participants is shown in the below table.

Figure A1: Religious/Cultural Identity (n=420)

	Couples with Children	Couples with No Children
Heavy Users		
Light Users		

Composition of Survey Respondents

Here, we provide a snapshot of the demographic and religious profile of survey respondents.

Figure A2: Religious/Cultural Identity (n=420)

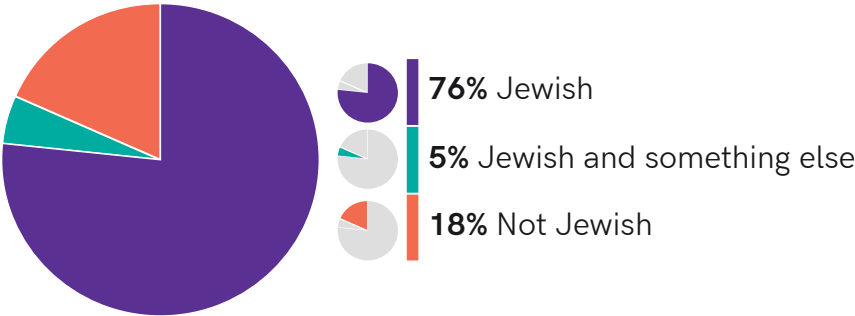


Figure A3: Age (n=344)

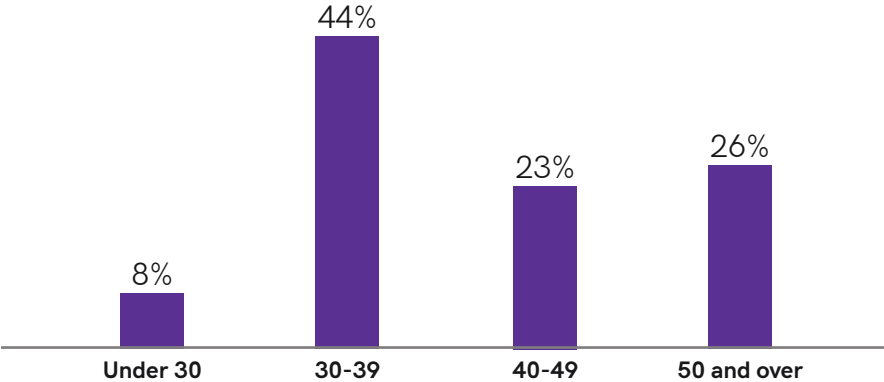


Figure A4: Importance of Jewish Life at Home (asked only of unmarried users; n=53)

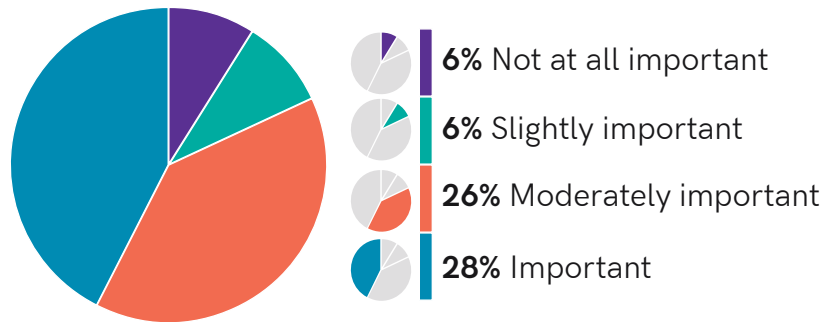


Figure A5: Customs Practiced at Home (asked only of married users)

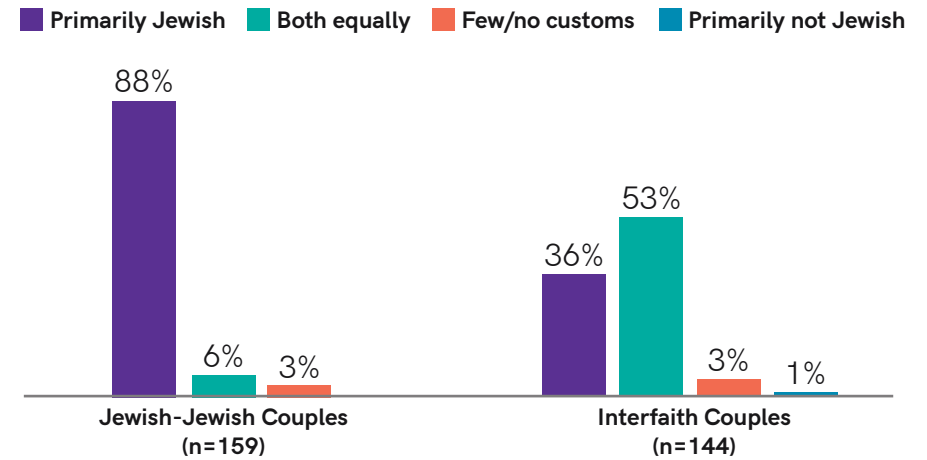
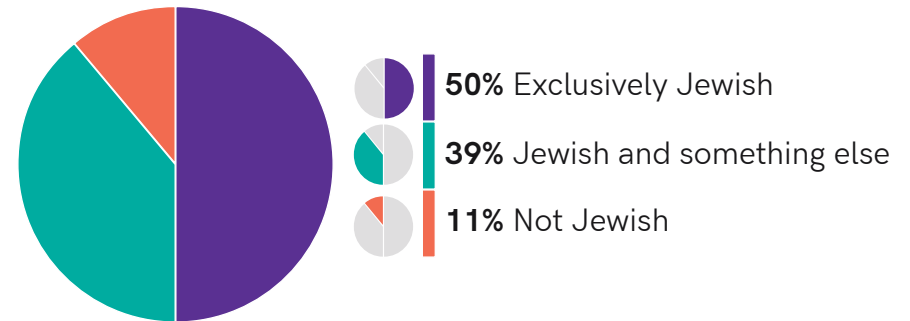
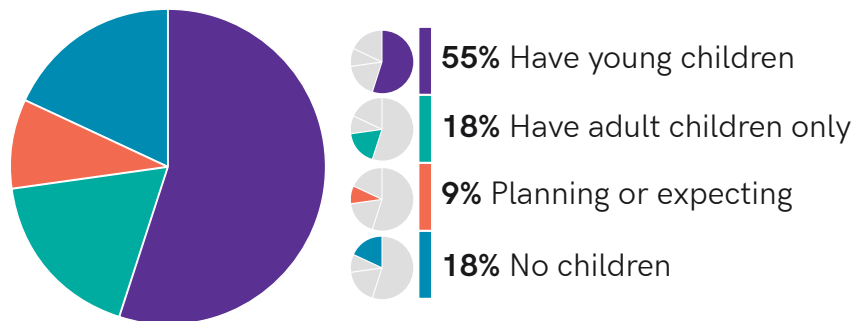
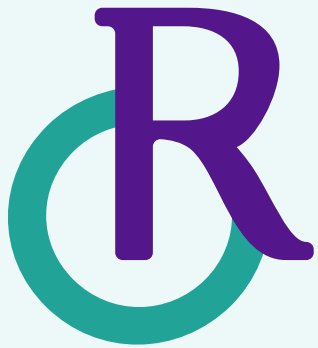


Figure A6 : Children (n=420)





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