

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OLAM ADAPTIVE STRATEGY 2025-2027



OLAM
Improving the world. Together.



OUR STORY

Since our launch in 2015, OLAM has emerged as a powerful field-builder, bringing together Jewish and Israeli individuals and organizations committed to serving the world's most vulnerable people, as an expression of our deepest Jewish values.

Through convenings, trainings, networking events, Jewish learning opportunities, and microgrants, we have built a robust network of practitioners in the fields of international development, humanitarian aid, and global service.¹

Simultaneously, we have amplified their work by running study trips for Jewish leaders to developing countries, commissioning field-wide research, advancing thought leadership, creating educational materials and workshops grounded in Jewish wisdom, and organizing awareness-raising campaigns.

1. International development refers to efforts to address the long-term socioeconomic challenges confronting vulnerable communities, whereas humanitarian aid addresses urgent needs of populations facing natural and human-made crises. For OLAM's purposes, global service connotes volunteer programs in developing countries, for skilled professionals and young adults alike.





THE NEED

Our world is facing unprecedented challenges. Vulnerable populations in developing countries are grappling with compounding crises: extreme poverty, climate change, conflict, and more.

Many Jews are working to address these issues. Yet, they often work in isolation, are under-resourced, and lack opportunities to exchange knowledge and share best practices. This leads to duplication of efforts, and thus, reduced impact. Meanwhile, many young Jews looking to volunteer globally or get into this work do not know that there are Jewish frameworks to do so.

The rise of antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment after October 7th has left many Jews in the international development and humanitarian sectors feeling increasingly isolated; they are thirsty for Jewish connection and seek opportunities to be in community with Jewish colleagues.

While the Jewish values of chesed (loving kindness), tzedakah (charitable giving), and kavod habriyot (human dignity) serve as a foundation for supporting the world's most vulnerable, the broader Jewish community does not, as a whole, sufficiently prioritize, fund or engage with global responsibility. This lack of engagement further contributes to the sense of isolation felt by those Jews dedicated to this work.



OUR VISION

A global Jewish people that supports and partners with vulnerable communities in developing countries to foster a more just and compassionate world for all.

OUR MISSION

Inspired by Jewish values and committed to high ethical standards, OLAM convenes and mobilizes Jewish organizations, leaders, practitioners, and others to take meaningful action in support of the world's most vulnerable people.



OUR VALUES

○ The whole is greater than the sum of its parts

Only by combining resources, wisdom, and expertise can we make a real difference.

○ A big tent

OLAM is a diverse and inclusive network, united around a commitment to improve the quality of our work. Though we do not vet our partners, we strive to be a space for continuous learning, particularly around ethical standards.

○ Deep and authentic Jewish conversation

Jewish tradition, values, history, and culture have much to contribute to contemporary thinking about global issues.

○ Humility and respect

We feel a deep sense of humility towards the wisdom of local communities in developing countries as well as towards the volunteers, professionals, and organizations working with them.

○ Multiple circles of Jewish responsibility

As Jews, we have a responsibility to serve vulnerable communities at home, in Israel, and around the world, whether Jewish or not. OLAM is one piece of this puzzle.

○ Israel as a resource

Israel's own relatively recent experience as a developing country can provide important insight to developing countries. We see value in having Israel and Israelis, with their knowledge and resources, play an integral role in global Jewish efforts to improve the world.



OUR AUDIENCE

PRACTITIONERS:

Staff of OLAM's **partner organizations**² as well as **individual members** — Jews who work in international development, humanitarian aid, and global service outside of a Jewish context, i.e., in UN agencies, non-sectarian nonprofits, etc.

Our individual members are based in more than 20 countries, with the largest concentrations from the USA, Israel, and the UK, respectively.

JEWISH LEADERS:

Individuals with influence in the Jewish community, who can advocate for and support OLAM's vision and mission. This includes Jewish communal professionals, funders, lay leaders, educators, rabbis, and young adult leaders.

2. OLAM partners are organizations that self-identify as Jewish and/or Israeli and work with vulnerable communities in and from developing countries. Not all of OLAM's Israeli partners identify as Jewish organizations. Nor are all the staff of our partners Jewish. OLAM welcomes the participation of all partner staff, regardless of religious background.

3. The data is updated as of January 1, 2025.

OLAM'S GROWING NETWORK³



PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS
80+



Up from 52 in 2021 at the start of our previous strategy



TOTAL PARTNER STAFF
4,000+



Up from 2,174 in 2021



INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS
120+



Up from 24 in 2021



JEWISH LEADERS ENGAGED
SINCE OLAM'S INCEPTION
9,300+



Including 1,281 in 2024

THE IMPACT OF OCTOBER 7TH

When Hamas attacked Israel in October 2023, 50 of OLAM's partner organizations were based in Israel. Many had staff called up to reserve duty and/or evacuated from their homes. A founder of one OLAM partner was taken hostage, another was killed.

Seventeen of our partners have applied their global expertise to aid Israelis most impacted by the Hamas attack – Nova survivors, evacuees, Bedouins, etc. Some have also worked with Israeli authorities to facilitate aid to Gazan civilians.

Nevertheless, many OLAM partners have seen funding for their work in developing countries dramatically reduced, as Jewish donors have pivoted to address urgent needs in Israel and as non-Jewish donors have distanced themselves from Jewish organizations. Some have reported budgetary losses as high as 40-75%. Our global service partners have been hit particularly hard, as many had to recall volunteers or temporarily cease programs.

OLAM individual members have confronted challenges of their own. Working in non-sectarian humanitarian settings, many have experienced loneliness, strained relations with colleagues, and anti-Israel or antisemitic sentiment at their workplaces.

STEPPING UP

Since October 7th, OLAM has stepped up to support our network in numerous ways:

Sustaining the Field and its Staff – Together with SID-Israel, we [distributed microgrants](#) to 29 of our Israeli partners, helping them safeguard their teams' wellbeing, and offered trainings on running a nonprofit during wartime.

Unlocking Critical Funding – We embarked on a partnership with The Livelihood Impact Fund, resulting in [\\$1 million in emergency grants](#) for 23 OLAM partners that lost funding due to shifting philanthropic priorities.

Providing a Space for Jewish Aid Workers – We have enabled Jews in the broader sector to connect, reflect on their unique experiences, attend trainings on navigating difficult conversations in the workplace, and be in Jewish community.

Amplifying Our Network – We have worked tirelessly to advocate for continued support of our partners' work via briefings, presentations, podcasts, and op-eds aimed at Jewish leaders and funders.



NOW MORE THAN EVER

OLAM's partners and members embody the positive face of the Jewish people in the world. Their work not only transforms lives, but also builds bridges and fosters understanding. They are among the Jewish community's strongest assets in the fight against antisemitism.

Never has OLAM's role as a field-builder and convener been more important. In today's complex global landscape – marked by the war in Israel and the region, ongoing conflict in Ukraine, and other global crises and political upheavals, OLAM is uniquely positioned to identify field-wide needs and help our network navigate an ever-changing reality.

In an increasingly polarized world and Jewish community, OLAM stands out as a shining example where Jews, Israelis, and others – from diverse political, religious, and geographical backgrounds – come together to learn, develop deep relationships, and have nuanced conversations about our role, as Jews and human beings, in the world.

As we continue to build bridges, we are also focused on the next generation: OLAM is uniquely suited to inspire young Jews with our vision of a Jewish identity that is proud, outward-facing, and grounded in deep engagement with Jewish learning, community, and values.



STRATEGIC REFRESH

In April 2024, OLAM embarked on a strategic refresh process to refine our [Theory of Change](#), hone our priorities, and develop new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This process, led by OLAM's CEO, involved OLAM's board and staff, with research and evaluation firm Rosov Consulting supporting the Theory of Change and KPI components of the process.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

OLAM's previous strategy identified four priorities to accelerate our mission. We will continue to focus on these priorities over the next three years, while refining specific areas of emphasis within each one. As these strategies are mutually reinforcing, we aim to create programs that fulfill multiple strategies at once.

Given the unpredictability inherent in our fast-changing reality, we see this plan as "adaptive," characterized by a rapid and flexible response to change.

1

Empower Jewish leaders to become champions for global service, international development, and humanitarian aid.

2

Bring together Jewish and Israeli global service, international development, and humanitarian aid practitioners to network, learn, and pursue ethical best practices and excellence.

3

Increase the visibility of OLAM and our practitioner network in the global Jewish community.

4

Build a more sustainable organization in service of our mission and the field.



STRATEGY 1: Empower **Jewish leaders** to become champions for global service, international development, and humanitarian aid

SUB-STRATEGIES:

1 Training global service practitioners

Approximately 25% of our partner organizations run global service programs. We'll expand and enhance trainings for educators and staff of these programs and others in order to equip them with the skills to deliver ethical, high-quality Jewish service experiences.

2 Unlocking additional funding for partners

We aim to catalyze \$2 million in new funding for our partners by identifying Jewish funders with an interest in our field, exposing them to our partners' work, and devising models to direct funding to the field.

3 Infusing OLAM programs with Jewish learning

We'll elevate meaningful Jewish learning across our programs, for leaders and practitioners alike.

4 Deepening partnerships with Jewish young adult engagement organizations

We'll cultivate relationships with key organizations whose participants and alumni include young Jews interested in pursuing global service opportunities, graduate degrees, and/or careers in international development. This will result in increased awareness about opportunities to pursue global responsibility within a Jewish framework.



STRATEGY 2: Bring together Jewish and Israeli global service, international development, and humanitarian aid **practitioners** to network, learn, and pursue ethical best practices and excellence

SUB-STRATEGIES:

1 Expanding individual membership & partner staff engagement

We'll leverage the 85% growth in individual membership post-October 7th to further expand our membership and create a unique space where members can explore Jewish values related to their work, navigate their roles as Jews in non-Jewish humanitarian settings, and build meaningful Jewish community. We will also increase annual engagement of partner staff, and foster greater collaboration across our network.

2 Prioritizing OLAM's role as a Jewish network

We'll focus our programmatic content on the unique challenges faced by Jewish and Israeli international development and aid practitioners since October 7th, and lean into their potential role as bridge builders to the international community.

3 Developing tailored programming for practitioner subgroups

As our network expands, we'll create special programs for senior-level professionals, program and

communications staff, newcomers to the field, and those in areas with a high concentration of practitioners (e.g., Washington, DC).

4 Promoting ethical best practice resources

We'll expand opportunities for partners and members to utilize resources from our Aspire program, enabling them to learn more about and better implement ethical best practices - an increasingly critical need in the post-October 7th landscape in which our partners are subject to stricter scrutiny.

STRATEGY 3: Increase the **visibility** of OLAM and our practitioner network in the global Jewish community

SUB-STRATEGIES:

1 Advocating for OLAM and our partners in a post-October 7th world

We'll highlight stories from our network that align with OLAM's mission and resonate with Jewish funders and leaders.

2 Doubling down on thought leadership and field-wide research

We'll write op-eds and blogs, and publish field-wide data, that anchor global responsibility in Jewish values.

3 Refining marketing aimed at network growth and increased engagement

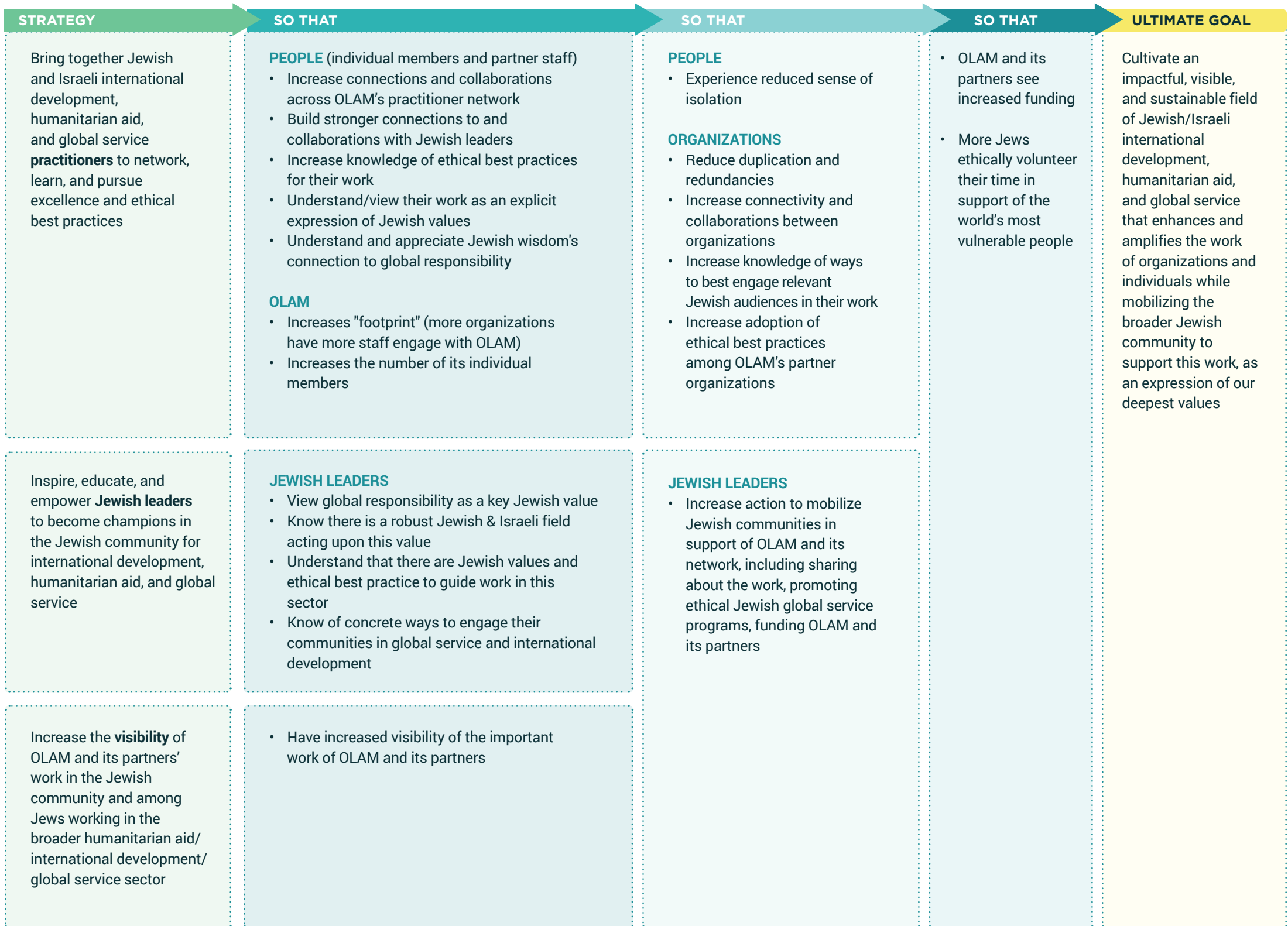
To meet our ambitious growth targets, we'll tailor communications to engage and expand various subgroups within our network.

4 Supporting partners' communications efforts

We'll offer trainings, one-on-one guidance, and microgrants to help partners reach Jewish audiences effectively.



KEY OUTCOMES OF STRATEGIES 1-3



STRATEGY 4: Build a more **sustainable organization** in service of our mission and the field

We will **grow OLAM's budget by 55%** over the next three years in order to meet rising demands for our work. This will ensure we can deepen our impact in a rapidly evolving and increasingly uncertain landscape for our partners and members, the global Jewish community, Israel, and vulnerable populations across the globe.

Increasing our budget will enable us to:

- **Engage 3,000 Jewish leaders** over three years through workshops, trainings, and study trips infused with Jewish wisdom.
- **Triple the number of individual members** by the end of 2027.
- **Amplify inspiring stories** of Jews and Israelis doing good work around the world.
- Continue to **innovate solutions** to address the ever-changing needs of our network in an uncertain time.
- **Hire 2-3 staff** to ensure we have the necessary capacity to meet our goals and engage our growing network.
- Cultivate an **impactful, visible, and sustainable field** of Jews and Israelis improving the world together.

To meet this goal, we seek to raise \$4.7 million over three years from both existing and new funders.

BUDGET PROJECTIONS:

FY24 Actuals: \$1.1 million

FY25 Projected: \$1.4 million

FY26 Projected: \$1.5 million

FY27 Projected: \$1.8 million

APPENDIX: SAMPLE MENU OF STRATEGIC GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Ideas to accelerate growth if project-specific funding is secured:⁴

Strategy 1: Empowering Jewish Leaders

- Launch multi-day immersive trainings for global Jewish service staff and educators from around the world
- Run bespoke study trips with strategic Jewish leadership groups
- Scale Jewish learning opportunities for OLAM's practitioner network (e.g., Jewish learning retreats on mission-aligned topics)

Strategy 2: Strengthening our Practitioner Network

- Scale participation at our annual Focal Point conference (500+ people) to create a sense of “movement-building” via increased subsidies for strategic populations, such as individual members
- Launch ongoing, in-person programs for practitioners in geographic hubs, such as Washington, D.C. and NYC
- Increase microgrant pools to promote collaboration across OLAM's network
- Run mini-convenings for different subgroups in our network (individual members, senior-level professionals, etc.)

Strategy 3: Increasing Visibility

- Create a fellowship and accompanying microgrant pools for communications staff at OLAM partners
- Run a large-scale digital campaign to increase visibility for OLAM and our practitioner network

4. This list is not exhaustive, nor is there a guarantee that OLAM will pursue all items on the list.



OUR PARTNERS

This list of partners is accurate as of January 1, 2025.

OUR PARTNERS



OLAM

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OLAM is generously supported by Adnim Foundation, Anne Heyman and Seth Merrin Family Fund, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, Laurie and Jeff Franz Fund, Pears Foundation and Toleo Foundation.

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