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FEDERATIONS CEO JERRY SILVERMAN PROFILED ON SHALOM TV

Says Federations mission includes protecting Israel

October 7, 2010 (Fort Lee, NJ) -- In an unusually touching and candid conversation, one of world Jewry's foremost leaders, Jerry Silverman, president & CEO of The Jewish Federations of North America, describes his own Jewish background and shares his vision of the critical responsibilities and opportunities facing federations today.



Speaking with Shalom TV President Mark S. Golub at The Jewish Federations Manhattan office, the man who now leads the largest secular Jewish organization in North America tells how he grew up in a home where Jewishness was celebrated.

"It was one of those enormous, high energy, spirited households filled with a tremendous love of Judaism and a love of laughter--a love of the joy of Judaism and pride in Judaism. I was blessed. It was always family."

Silverman credits his mother, Florence, and his father, Rabbi David Silverman, for creating marvelous models of Jewish life and of *tzedakah*.

Recalling how his father always taught him "there are jewels and diamonds in every person," Silverman recounts how twice a week as a teenager, he would drive with his father to a cattle farm 45 miles from their home so his father could teach Hebrew to two sons. One son is now the executive vice president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations--Rabbi Steven Weil.

Silverman also describes how world Jewry is confronting some of the biggest challenges it has ever faced, beginning with the demonization and deligitimization of Israel.

"We've been really slow to combat the messaging," explains Silverman. "We haven't done good messaging; the State of Israel has not done great messaging."

For Silverman, advocacy for Israel, and getting the facts out regarding Israel, is a crucial responsibility of the federation movement.

"Our mission is about our commitment to Israel, our protection of Israel, creating Israel as a core, having a Jewish State. It's part of who we are."

When asked by Golub about fund-raising problems during the current world economic crisis, Silverman responds optimistically about opportunities for innovative ways to involve new "investors" in the Jewish future.

"I truly believe there are more dollars available for the concept of Jewish renaissance and Jewish life and the Jewish future than all of the organizations worldwide could possibly spend."

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