

The Alan B. Slifka Foundation

The Alan B. Slifka Foundation (ABSF) is a private family foundation dedicated to the pursuit of inclusion, diversity, peace and healing. The Foundation's strategies seek to: build a world safe for difference, celebrate the diversity of Jewish experience and expression, and promote human health through research and advocacy. We believe the development of inclusive, shared societies requires people-to-people interactions, creative and effective civil society, courageous and thoughtful political leadership, and meaningful public policies. We encourage American and Israeli Jews to explore their Jewish identity and to embrace and respect the diversity of Jewish expression and the diversity of the societies in which they live. We are committed to eradicating cancer, especially Sarcoma and Melanoma and to find innovative treatments for those with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

ABSF's founder, the late Alan Slifka was a visionary creative philanthropist, committed to advocating for respect for differences. Alan and his widow Ariella, both studied various religions and spent time in India studying Jainism and Buddhism. They love and practice the principles of reverence for life, coming from one's highest self, and appreciating the positive value of opposing forces. Though both from Jewish descent, they always believed that staying open and respecting others' beliefs was essential and aimed to create a respectful universe.

To that end, they were committed to fund and create projects and institutions that incorporated the concepts of shared societies and co-existence, which basically means, living together and respecting differences, not assimilating, but acculturating. Alan co-founded the Abraham Fund Initiatives in Israel, which advocates and sets policies of inclusion and equality for Israel Arab's citizens. These are Arabs who live within the green lines of Israel and are Israeli citizens. Israel as a democracy needs to be inclusive of that 20 percent of its population.

Expanding the concept beyond Israel, The Slifkas founded a Master's program in [Coexistence and Conflict](#) at Brandeis University. Most of the students are from troubled regions in the world, especially Africa. A few are from the Middle East. To give the program increased legitimacy and visibility, the Slifkas founded its move to the Heller School of Public Policy and have made it possible for a dual degree in coexistence and sustainable International development to be received.

Additionally, seven years ago at the Clinton Global Initiative conference, Alan and Ariella met The Club de Madrid delegation. The Club is comprised of ex-Heads of State, Presidents and Prime Ministers. People who were once in position of power and now in a position of influence. Together they launched the Club's [Shared Societies Project](#). This project incorporates language and principles of inclusion and incorporation of all citizens of a society. It is one of ABSF's strongest programs. In its Jewish life portfolios, ABSF applies the same principles of inclusion and diversity and sponsors interfaith programs as well. ABSF does not take political stands, it simply follows a set of humanistic core values based on healing and what Jews call "repairing the world", a principle shared by all major religions. Some call it charity and some call it public service.

In 2004, the foundation began supporting Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) research and novel treatments. This was an area familiar to Ariella who is a clinical Assistant Professor at Yale University School of Medicine with a specialty in ASD. ABSF set an annual prize for best basic research award and clinical research award at the International Society for Autism Research. Additionally, they fund collaborative and individual investigators in that field

In 2007, Max Ritvo, Ariella's son and Alan's beloved stepson was diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma. Alan and Ariella quickly surveyed the field and learned all they could about this rare and aggressive disease. With a limited knowledge base, they wanted to fund translational and basic research, targeted therapies and other novel treatment. Their research led them to the Liddy Shriver Sarcoma Initiative (LSSI) and they began seed funding to this organization, which they found to be the most scientifically sound and committed to sarcoma research. As they gained more knowledge, they began funding investigators directly, while continuing to collaborate with LSSI whenever possible; see, e.g., <http://bit.ly/1mPNnW8>, <http://bit.ly/1tSyoLp>, and <http://bit.ly/14SF654>. Alan succumbed to melanoma in 2011, Max is still with stable sarcoma in a clinical trial and ABSF is committed to continuing funding sarcoma research with the same standard of excellence set forth by LSSI. Alan Slifka's widow, Ariella Ritvo-Slifka is the President and Chairwoman of ABSF.