Tel Aviv is the center of the Jewish world. Certainly Jerusalem is our eternal capital both spiritually and politically, but one quarter of global Jewry lives in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area making it the most Jewish place on Earth. For the past 100 years, the “White City” has been home to the most significant vibrant innovative centers of Israeli culture, business, fashion, art, finance, high-tech, film, television, and the army. Tel Aviv is currently is one of the youngest cities in the world per-capita with over 40% of the populace being between 20-40 years old. Today the majority of new immigrants to Israel choose Tel Aviv as their home. A city full of bustling boulevards, cafes, startups, baby strollers, construction cranes, venture capital, art galleries, and over 500 synagogues; has surpassed even the dreams of Theodor Herzl, approaching the visions of our ancient prophets.

“For all of Israel’s triumphs over the past 70 years, we are still in the pioneering phase of the country. What an honor it is to be a young Jew here now, being able to invest creativity, imagination, and energy towards building the next 1000 years of the Jewish People. Nowhere else on the planet can a young Jew be as relevant and central to our nation’s collective destiny than Tel Aviv,” says President of the Am Yisrael Foundation, Jay Shultz. Jay moved from New York to Tel Aviv in 2006 and has been championing the banner of the city ever since, with Israeli media understandably dubbing him “Tel Aviv’s Other Mayor”. Recognizing the potential to use Tel Aviv as a positive fundamental force for the benefit of young Jews worldwide, Jay founded the Am Yisrael Foundation a decade ago, building the nonprofit into what is now the largest young adult Jewish community organization in the world with a following of over 60,000. The Am Yisrael Foundation (AmYisrael.com) is a giant umbrella for tens of innovative initiatives that empower young Jews to pioneer Israeli society.

“We cannot take for granted that the future of our People will have strong Jewish or Zionist identities. The main goal of our work in Tel Aviv is to inspire every young Jew on the planet to connect to a shared vision of Jewish destiny, giving them the tools to continue building our Home in the Land of Israel.”

The Am Yisrael Foundation is about redefining our time in history, giving young Jews the opportunity to be uniquely relevant. Jay focuses his foundation’s work on building what he believes are the next steps in
Zionist pioneering - developing the
vacuums left in Israeli civil society;
community, volunteerism, tzedakah,
civic engagement, grassroots leader-
ships, and Jewish identity.

To this end, the Am Yisrael Foun-
dation has created something unique
for Israel, what many see as a mini
Jewish Federation, founding and
managing a multitude of organi-
zations, with a special focus on Tel
Aviv. Many of these organizations
have become pillars of community
life for so many of the city’s young
adults. There is the Tel Aviv Interna-
tional Salon (TLVSalon.com), Israel’s
largest speakers forum that works to
engage young adults in the critical
issues of the day, the Tel Aviv Arts
Council (TelAvivArts.com) which
works to create young patrons of
the Israeli arts and finally, the fan-
tastic program called; Adopt-A-Safta
(AdoptASafta.com). “Safta” being
Hebrew for “Grandma”, pairs young
volunteers with lonely Israeli Holo-
cast Survivors on the Big Brother/
Big Sister model.

Even though Tel Aviv has its
legendary Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir
Lau (another strong supporter of
Jay’s work), and is home to more
synagogues and kosher restaurants
than New York, the city still has a
stronger reputation for its beaches
and parties. Jay laments over Isra-
el’s complacency when it comes to
Jewish education. A major focus on
the Am Yisrael Foundation’s efforts
is not taking for granted the Jewish
character and Jewish identity of the
nation. “It is a great investment for the
future of our people in giving Tel Aviv’s
young professionals positive Jewish life
experiences and transformative Jewish
educational opportunities. Most of Is-
raeli future leaders in politics, business,
and culture are young Jews living in Tel
Aviv today. If we care about our Home-
land having a rich Jewish character in
more than name alone, investing in Tel
Aviv should be our main collective
focus.” The Am Yisrael Foundation
has developed groundbreaking ini-
tiatives with its Jewish outreach
efforts. White City Shabbat is the
main portal for community Shab-
bat life in Tel Aviv, hosting tens of
thousands of young Jews for Shabbat
and holiday meals each year. It is so
important to Jay to reveal the deep
spiritual potential of what he calls
“Tel Aviv Ir HaKodesh”, that in 2014
he set the Guinness Record for the
World’s Largest Shabbat Dinner.

Working as Educational Director of
the Am Yisrael Foundation, Rabbi
Shlomo Chayen is Tel Aviv’s popular
young Jewish community leader,
running a center for beginners Jew-
ish education and the city’s most
active synagogue, 86 Ben Yehuda,
home to hundreds of young Olim
& Sabras from all backgrounds,
religiosities, and nationalities.

A key to the Jay’s strategy is to
create partnerships between young
Olim that come to Israel with a
dedicated passion for Zionism, with
native-born young Sabras. Together,
these two populations complement
each other in ways that have the
ability to truly “move needles” for
the positive vibrant future of
Israel. Jay’s TLV Internationals
(LoveTelAviv.com) is clearly Israel’s
largest Olim/Aliyah community or-

organization and is the main “welcome
home” portal for young immigrants.

When asked to sum up his phi-
losophy, Jay coined the term “Ob-
servant Zionism”.

“Observant Zionism holds that every
Jew must take upon himself the mantle
of mutual responsibility for our home and
our people. Observant Zionism is the pi-
oneering spirit, vision, and pro-activity
of reinvigorating our national renais-
sance in Eretz Yisrael. There is no one
way to observe Zionism, the key is ded-
icated and elevated action. Just like all
aspects of Jewish life, Observant Zionism
should take on wonderfully varied forms
of expression that reflects the individual
and their unique ability to contribute to
Am Yisrael. Observant Zionism cannot
be limited to religious or secular spheres,
it is part of our romantic, mystical and
revolutionary national DNA. There has
never been an easier time in history for
a Jew to live in the Land of Israel. This
is your Home, come build it. We have
spent millenia wanting to build this
country, now that we are here we must
get our hands dirty and build a Nation.
Am Yisrael Chai!”

World’s Largest Shabbat Dinner by White City Shabbat in Tel Aviv