Overnight camp, day school, Jewish supplementary school, synagogue; PJ Library hopes that subscribers will grow up wanting to be a part of these unique Jewish experiences.

In an effort to provide even more support to PJ Library families, PJ Library formed a partnership with One Happy Camper, called PJ Goes to Camp (PJGTC). The program awards grants of up to $1,000 to past and current PJ Library subscribers to attend Jewish overnight camp for the first time. Since 2010, PJGTC helped send 2,685 children to camp. This summer, 473 campers will be attending 95 different camps across the United States.

There is still so much more we can do. In each of the last three years, as PJ Library recipients come of camp age, the demand for first-time camperships has continued to grow. This year, there are more children on the PJGTC waiting list than there are grantees attending camp. That means 544 children may miss out on the significant role that Jewish camp plays in their connection to Jewish life. We are actively seeking funding partners to meet this demand.

The 2014 One Happy Camper evaluation made it clear that the camp experience is more than fun summer memories. The evaluation found that 83 percent of campers in North America left camp with an increased awareness of their Jewish identity and were more likely to participate in their local Jewish community—including attending synagogue.

With more than 80 percent of PJGTC grant recipients returning to camp for a 2nd year (and 90 percent of those for a 3rd year), the program has demonstrated the effectiveness of Jewish summer camp in providing PJ Library graduates with continued exposure to Jewish values. As writer Jordana Horn says, “I want to give this to my kids: the idea that camp is not only a place to sail and swim, but also a place to find out more about who they are and who they want to become as Jews.”

43% of the recipients of PJGTC grants may not otherwise have attended Jewish overnight camp.

NEARLY one-third are from an interfaith family.

45% of all PJGTC recipients were considering only secular, non-Jewish activities or programs, including 28% who would have stayed home.

MORE THAN 50% of PJGTC families have annual incomes below $100,000.

One of the ways we measure the success of PJ Library is in its ability to drive PJ Library families to their next Jewish experience.