



Temple Israel of  
New Rochelle



# 112TH ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2020

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## 112th Annual Meeting Agenda - July 21, 2020

1. Call 112th Annual Meeting to order
2. Welcome and Invocation
3. Roll Call
4. Reading of the Minutes
5. Nominating Committee
6. Rabbi Search Committee
7. Report of the Rabbi
8. Report of the President
9. Report of the Treasurer
10. Adjournment
11. Benediction

### “Transitions”

**New Births:** Avital Cohen, Ada Falberg, Eli Gilman, Wyatt Murray (this is a non-member Kehillah family)

**New Members:** John & Noa Arias, Gene & Jennifer Bederak, Avishai & Shanee Cohen, Brandon & Alana Davis, Brian & Marisa Edwards, Kenneth Handelman, Jason & Lisa Harris, Harry Isacoff & Amy Moskowitz, Nancy & Jackie Kaplan, David & Sara Kaye, Ms. Rhonda Leonard, Steven & Rebecca Lippel, Gary & Rachel Morse, Jeffrey Moskowitz, George & Kimberly Nguyen, Dr. Eric & Sarah Prager, Dr. Robert Rifkin & Dr. Mariya Rozenblit, Mark Rosen & Dolores Malaspina, Michael Rosen & Jillian Goorevitch, Mr. Craig & Mrs. Miho Rosenberg, Jared Ross & Jessica Edelman, Richard Krupa & Stephanie Ross, Jead Rutcowitz & Racheli Bensky, Jeremy & Rebecca Sigel, Adam Slansky & Jessica Ottinger, Jill Sorota, Michael Stier & Petra Antonini, Dr. Eugene & Susan Weiss, Elizabeth (Ty) Wilde

**Departed:** Barbara Kantor, Sydelle Ornstein, Arthur Barr, Ruth Lasser, Herman Slotoff, Wendy Bill, Marilyn Levine, Louise Stern, Arthur Samuels, Wilma Roberts, Lauren Jordano, Ruth Marks, Bernice Herman, William (Bill) Handelman, Robin Manganeli, Charlene Newburg, David Reps, Deborah Davidson

**On the Cover:** In response to the national pandemic, Temple Israel pivoted to virtual / digital communications and out-reach to connect with Congregants, Kehillah Families, Chavaya Participants, and the Community at large.

*Photo Credit: Rebecca Halperin*

## From the President: Rich Alter

Together we've faced challenges this year. The way in which the Temple Israel community has come together to face those challenges is the reason this is our 112th annual meeting and why I know Temple Israel will be here for our children and grandchildren.

The pandemic and lock-down took us all by surprise. Here at Temple Israel that surprise was short-lived.

**The Temple's finance committee responded,** reallocating the Temple's investment portfolio so as to avoid the staggering market losses of the subsequent weeks and months.

**Our staff responded.** Our Principal, Rebecca Elkus-Ferst, took us virtual in a matter of days. Many of you have reached out to tell me that her program was your children's primary connection to their community, especially during the early days of the lock-down.

We made the decision to re-open camp and within weeks our Camp Director, Jesse Gallup, re-imagined the entire program, while navigating the uncertainties and complexities of new, and in many cases constantly evolving, county and state health guidelines. Were you here during the past three weeks (which our safety procedures still don't permit) you'd know that the sound of children's laughter has returned to our campus.

Last week we re-opened the Kehillah School for our youngest community members. I'm very proud of the Board of Trustees' decision to open the school, at a financial loss, in service to our Kehillah families. We owe them this. For many of them we are crucial piece in the puzzle of getting back to work, and to some sense of normalcy. If we want to be able to see our Doctors and Nurses, call on our emergency workers, or shop in our stores, we have to do our part to support them in their return to work. Laurie Thomas and her staff were responsible for the Herculean lift required to get our doors open. We couldn't be any prouder of them.

**Our clergy responded.** B'nei Mitzvah students seemed like they'd be some of the earliest programming casualties. However, the Board has been delighted to hear from so many parents who felt that their child's ceremony was warm and intimate, far exceeding their expectations in the middle of a pandemic. Clergy

delivered our Torah scrolls to congregants' houses, conducted daily video check-ins, held on-line services and remained at the center of all we do.

**Our volunteers responded.** Our Social Action Committee established phone trees, connected with many of our older congregants with regular check-ins, helped others to overcome technical hurdles allowing them to participate in our newly virtual community, and most importantly has been responsible for the delivery of over 100 grocery orders to at risk and immunocompromised congregants. I'd like to take a moment to recognize one member of our community in particular. It was a call I received from a congregant telling me that our long-time community member and staff member, Brian Reiner, had voluntarily done her shopping for her, that led to the shopping program. Together with Brian Gomez and Frank Chavez, Brian Reiner went on to do all the volunteer shopping and deliveries to our congregants. While some of you may already know this, what you probably don't know is that they did most of this while on furlough, on a volunteer basis. I'm very pleased that as activity on our campus has picked up, congregants have stepped in to do the important work that Brian, Brian, and Frank were doing.

**Finally, you responded.** The cancellation of our Annual June gala was an enormous setback. Setting aside that it's our single largest fundraiser and the obvious effect it had on our budget, we believed we had lost the chance to bring our community together in celebration of this year's honorees. Margie Ostrove disagreed. She thought that in the middle of this pandemic, with the country on lock-down, and while our congregants were facing job insecurity and unprecedented financial challenges, it made some sort of sense to push forward with an on-line fundraising gala. More surprisingly, she managed to convince 10 other volunteers of the same, and somehow together with members of our staff, this committee pulled it off. And you responded. I'm very pleased to report that with your help, last week's gala in honor of Len & Berdie Stein and Laurie Thomas raised over \$90,000. Congratulations to the entire gala committee, to this year's honorees, and to all of you who came together to support us.

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On behalf of the Board of Trustees I want to thank the staff, clergy, lay leaders, volunteers, and congregants who have seen us through what has been an unprecedented year in our long history.

Moving forward we will continue to be as proactive as needed to ensure that whatever the challenges are to our community, we're here to face them together.

Temple Israel is fortunate to have an endowment, established with forethought by our members decades ago, in 1983. Under the strictures of that endowment we are permitted to use the fund's income for operating expenses. The principal is not to be touched. Any use of endowment funds beyond income requires the approval of the entire congregation.

During last year's annual meeting we were forced to ask you to approve the drawdown of \$319,000 from the Temple's endowment to cover our actual and anticipated operating deficits. This represented 18% of the fund's principal. It pained us to have to ask, and at the time we told you we would act decisively to try and avoid accessing the approved drawdown. I'm very pleased to say, we were able to make good on that promise. With your support, and through the incredible hard work of our staff to rein in costs, we closed out the year without the need to access ANY of the endowment funds in excess of income.

Had the gala taken place in June of the just completed fiscal year, rather than July, we actually would have closed out the year in the black, for the first year in over 20 years, without the help of any endowment funds. While I'm very proud of this result, I hope the takeaway is to provide you with a level of comfort as you approach today's budget vote that we remain committed to the long-term fiscal viability of our Temple.

We are again forced to ask you to approve a possible drawdown from the endowment. Once again please let me assure you that approved does not mean spent. I hope to come to you at this time next year to tell you that the money we are about to ask you to approve remains in our endowment, there to provide for our children and theirs.

*Submitted by,*

Rich Alter, Temple President

# 111th Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes: Wednesday, June 12, 2019

Liz Weingast, President, called the meeting to order at 7:52 pm and welcomed the congregation to the 111th annual meeting.

Rabbi Nichols gave the invocation.

Liz Weingast acknowledged the transitions in the community this year including births, new members, and deaths and she stated that these are all listed in tonight's printed annual report. She asked the congregation to join in a moment of silent remembrance for those who have departed

A motion was made by Mia Egelberg that in order to proceed with the meeting under the Religious Corporation Law of New York State, Liz Weingast be empowered to conduct and preside at this annual meeting and that Sally Meisner act as secretary of the meeting. The motion was seconded and it carried.

A motion was made by Toni Hoffman to dispense with the calling of the roll. The motion was seconded and it carried.

A motion was made by Alan Hoffman to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the annual meeting of June 6th, 2018 and to approve them as previously distributed. The motion was seconded and it carried.

## **President's Report**

Liz Weingast reflected on the significant events and changes in the congregation during the 2018-2019 year. Highlights included the opening of Camp Pinebrook last summer. Laurie Thomas became the director of Kehillah. Youth education committees were reconfigured to more strategically reach target age groups. Security procedures and coverage has been upgraded and staff has received specialized training. Police presence has increased. Unexpected costs have impacted our budget for the coming year. The BOT is recommending taking from the endowment to cover these unanticipated costs.

Liz thanked the outgoing BOT member: David Zensky, who contributed significantly to TINR during his tenure.

Liz also thanked the entire staff of TINR for their outstanding work during the year.

## **Report of the Treasurer**

Adam Egelberg reported on the finances of TINR.

*Hello everyone, thank you for coming. Before I get started I want to give a nod to Anita Aronoff. Anita does all the work and then I get to stand up here and get all the attention. She wears too many hats to mention and this place would not function without her. So would everyone please give her a round of applause.*

*Tonight I'm first going to do a quick review of the 2019 fiscal year which ends this month, and then a short discussion about the year ahead.*

*Through the end of May we had 460 families who made voluntary supporting pledges to Temple Israel. That was an increase of 30 families from two years ago. Our membership had declined every year since 2004 until we switched over to voluntary dues in 2017. I'm pleased to see our congregation growing again. Note this figure of "supporting members" is different from the membership figures you will see in the annual report. My figure excludes Kehillah families and staff members.*

*Looking at the major items in the budget, membership support will come in under budget by roughly \$10,000. So far, the rebound seen in the number of members has not yet resulted in a subsequent rebound in supporting funds. At the time that we transitioned to voluntary dues, we did expect a lag between membership and contributions. We will be directing more attention to rebuilding our contribution base going forward.*

*The Kehillah School was better than budget by more than \$100,000 due to lower costs than expected. In particular we did not fill the Assistant Director position until late in the fiscal year. Also we had produced an overly-conservative budget for this year.*

*Our Chavaya program will come in roughly \$22,000 better than budget. Chavaya had budgeted for a full-time staff position that was never filled. Instead they worked through the year with the help of a part-time assistant.*

*Camp Pinebrook was significantly behind budget this year. These results reflect the summer of 2018 when we had 40 campers. Permitting and construction delays left our camp director, Jesse Gallup, trying to market*

*a camp that did not physically exist until June. Still, it was a successful summer given that the campers had a great time as evidenced by a 95% retention rate when it came time for re-enrollment. I'm pleased to report that the upcoming summer will have more than twice that enrollment with 90 campers expected. Jesse has done an incredible job building our brand and creating a phenomenal Jewish camp experience. All metrics are going in the right direction here.*

*Summed up, the current year came in better than projected by about \$11,000, but that still left us with a deficit of \$23,000.*

*Looking ahead to 2020, we are facing a number of challenges. Westchester Torah Academy is building their own school and will be leaving us. The hit to our budget from losing them is \$130,000. In addition, our contract with Bright Horizons is being renewed at significantly higher costs to us. We have therefore budgeted for a \$90,000 decline in the contribution from the Kehillah school. Finally, although Camp Pinebrook is moving in the right direction, it will continue to be a drain on our resources by an estimated \$18,000.*

*The resulting expected deficit for 2020, plus the incurred deficit for 2019, will require us to make a withdrawal from the endowment of as much as \$319,000. Income from the endowment does support our operations every year, so for 2020 this request reflects a \$216,000 increase over what might have been a more normal withdrawal in line with prior years.*

*As of the end of April, the core endowment had \$2 million of investment assets.*

*I should point out that this is a "worst case" scenario. Although we are asking for approval for a \$319,000 withdrawal, we do believe our actual withdrawal will be less than this in 2020. Westchester Torah Academy may continue to rent from us for part of the year and we are in negotiations with them about that. In addition, we have not yet finalized our contract with Bright Horizons and the end result may be better than what is reflected in our 2020 budget.*

*Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions or defer the difficult ones to Anita.*

A motion was made to approve the budget for 2019-2020 as presented to the membership. That motion was seconded, and after discussion and questions, the motion carried.

A motion was made to use up \$319,000 from our endowment fund to cover operating losses from the fiscal year 2019-2020. That motion was seconded. And after discussion that motion was carried.

### **Committee Reports**

Written reports from all Committees were published in the annual report and were distributed to all those in attendance. Liz asked that they be read carefully.

*(Copies of these reports were placed on file)*

### **Unfinished Business**

There was no unfinished business.

### **Election of Trustees**

Michelle Klein, as acting Chairperson, noted that the Nominating Committee consists of Katherine Dennin, Charlie Reitman, Eve Fish, Larry Goldman, and fellow board members Richard Stoerger, and Toni Hoffman.

Michelle read the list of nominees and placed into nomination the following TINR member to serve on the Board of Trustees for his first term: Derek Davis

*- Derek Davis*

*Derek Davis joined Temple Israel with his family in September 2006. He, his wife Rachel and their twin daughters Abby and Grace, who are in the 11th grade at Schechter Westchester, are all active in Temple life. Rachel is currently the Chair of the Music Committee and has produced the past two Music Benefits. Abby and Grace have attended Chavaya since kindergarten and have served on the TIFTY Board this year. Both girls also grew up attending URJ Summer Camps - Grace at Crane Lake and Abby at Eisner, where she will be Machon this summer.*

*Derek graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with a Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering and a Master's in Business Administration. He worked in the Finance Office at New York City Opera for 17 years, arranging tours to Saratoga Performing Arts Center and Wolf Trap for five years, negotiating union*

*contracts and was involved in all budget, planning and governance aspects at one of New York City's major arts organizations. Derek is currently employed as the Executive Director of the AGMA Health and Retirement Funds, providing benefits to over 7,000 artists nationally.*

*Derek currently serves on the Investment Committee, has been on the Nominating Committee and was involved with the communications during the transition to the volunteer dues system. Derek is energized by annual TINR activities such as the 2nd Day Rosh Hashanah Hike and cooking latkes with the Brotherhood for the Temple's Chanukah party. In 2015, the Davis family was fortunate to embark on the TINR journey to Israel, led by Rabbi Weiner, which created inspirational memories.*

*Derek is honored to be nominated to the Board of Trustees and looks forward to contributing more to the TINR community.*

*We are extremely pleased to nominate Derek to the Board of Trustees.*

David Itzkowitz moved to close nominations and elect the aforementioned nominees for the term ending June 30, 2022. The motion was seconded and carried.

Michelle then nominated Richard Alter, Todd Brecher, Carolyn Dudek, Marjorie Ostrove, Todd Pekats, Berdie Stein, and Mitchell Tarnopol for re-election to the Board of Trustees.

Jen Goldman moved to re-elect the aforementioned Trustees for the term ending June 30, 2022. The motion was seconded and carried.

Michelle stated that the Nominating Committee wishes to thank Larry Goldman for his two years of service on the nominating committee. Michelle then placed into nomination to the nominating committee the following non-Trustee member: Dan Weiser.

David Itzkowitz moved to elect the aforementioned non-Trustees to the Nomination Committee. The motion was seconded and carried.

Michelle stated that the Temple wishes to extend its gratitude to Dave Zensky for his service to the Board.

Michelle stated that the Temple wishes to extend its gratitude to Liz Weingast for all of her service as she transitions to Honorary Board Member status.

Michelle noted that the Nominating Committee could not have successfully completed this process without the help of Anita, Ellen, Orietta, and Rosa and thanked them for their assistance.

### **New Business**

Liz Weingast reported on proposed changes to the Bylaws of TINR which had been approved by the Board of Trustees and recommended for approval by the members of the congregation. Liz discussed the process by which the proposed changes had been arrived at and reviewed slides highlighting the key changes to the Bylaws. She referred to a summary of the changes and a full copy of the revised Bylaws which had been made available for viewing by members of the congregation on the Temple website (copies of which were also available at the meeting). [A copy of the summary and the revised Bylaws were placed on file.]

Liz asked for a motion to approve the revised Bylaws. A motion was made, seconded and carried.

### **Report of the Senior Rabbi**

*With last Shabbat, we began the fourth book of the Torah, the Book of Numbers. As Rabbi Nichols mentioned in her opening reflection, a central aspect of the Book of Numbers is a census that Moses and Aaron were commanded to take of the Israelites. The process involved Moses, his brother, Aaron, the High Priest, and a member of the leadership of each tribe. The men to be counted for military service, aged 20-60, who were capable of bearing arms, were then counted, tribe by tribe. In total, it was more than 600,000 men. During the process, the Torah relays to us one beautiful detail in an otherwise mundane process, one counting thousands of men. It tells us that Moses lifted the head of each man so that he could look each and every individual in the eye.*

*According to tradition, there are two main reasons that Moses did this simple, yet remarkable, act. First, Moses understood why he was counting them – in order to send them to war to recapture the Holy Land. By looking them in the eye, Moses was reminding himself of the severity of such an awesome task – to ask others to give their lives. That glance in the eyes was to reassure the*

men then he would not take his role, their lives, lightly. Second, Moses looked in each man's eyes to form a bond between Commander-in-Chief and footsoldier. Once battle began, they were unlikely to see each other again, but by looking each man in the eye, they knew exactly who was leading them.

I would like to add my own, third, interpretation to this gesture from Moses. In looking each man in the eye, Moses was trying to actually convey his authority to each man, lest they think that once they take the field of battle, they have to wait for orders from him to act. Since freedom from slavery, every act commanded by God was transmitted through Moses to the people. In the midst of war, with 600,000 men at his command, individual communication would be impossible. With a glance, then, Moses, empowered each man to act and not wait on orders. Further, this look conveyed not just military responsibility, but a dual responsibility that Moses held and divested it to them – to be responsible for one's own moral conduct as an individual as well as the Jewish people as a whole. Each man, deputized by Moses, was like him: leader, shepherd, ritual practitioner, communicator with God, and more. Why did Moses do this? Because, the Book of Numbers, on the whole, represents an important transition for the Jewish people, with Moses at the top and everyone else at the bottom. From this point forward, each Israelite would share the load – they were all now both leader and member of the Jewish People.

That is why I am sharing this with you tonight. Like every generation stretching back to Moses, the Jewish people has faced its challenges. In every generation they seem to be a little different. In our own, we are facing both internal and external threats. Internal from apathy and assimilation and externally from those who we once thought vanished who have returned – people who loathe and threaten our very existence. The solution for Moses is the same for us – each of us must be both participant and leader of the Jewish people. The clergy, staff and Board members cannot do all of this alone – we need the entire community to take ownership of this people and its problems in order to solve them. In all honesty, we need more of you. Yes, we need more of your time and your resources to meet Temple Israel's challenges. I know every person here tonight. You are not the type of people who show up every now and then. I know you because you are here, often. What I

am asking in the year ahead is that you do what Moses asked of his people, to lift your heads. To walk taller as a member of this community. To hold your head high to lead the next generation by example. Lift your heads so that others can see you and hear you. So that they too will love this congregation as you do and will be inspired, as you have been, to be an integral part.

Tonight, I deputize you as Moses did his men – you are to be both Israelite and Moses. Help us lead this people this year!

### **Good and Welfare**

Members of the congregation shared good and welfare.

### **Adjournment**

Lloyd Robinson made a motion that, in accordance with the Not for Profit Membership Corporation Act and the Religious Corporation Laws of the State of New York, the acts of the officers and Trustees for the preceding year be ratified and approved. The motion was seconded and carried.

Lloyd Robinson moved to adjourn the 111th annual meeting of Temple Israel of New Rochelle. The motion was seconded and carried.

### **Benediction**

Cantor Schloss delivered the closing benediction.

*Submitted by,*  
Sally Meisner  
Recording Secretary

# Committee Reports July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

## Brotherhood

Before we had to social distance Brotherhood was able to have a number of successful and enthusiastic events such as building the Sukkah, informative breakfasts, Latkes & Vodkas, and Bourbon & Bible. Brotherhood looks forward to hosting these events in the upcoming year like Bourbon & Bible, Vodka & Latkes, Purim Carnival and much more, but for now we encourage all to ensure that you are taking steps to keep you and your family healthy. As always, if Brotherhood can be of any assistance please contact us any time. Please consider joining Brotherhood - It is your donations and involvement that make Brotherhood what it is.

Have a great rest of the summer and a Happy, Healthy New Year!

*Submitted by,*

Todd Pekats, Mitchell Tarnopal,  
Co-Brotherhood Presidents

## Camp Pinebrook

Camp Pinebrook had a wonderful second summer! We grew over 2 times larger than our first summer, and had 95 campers. As we are growing, we are able to have specialty staff that led programs including art, drama, martial arts, yoga, cooking, nature, sports, and science. Camp Pinebrook is gaining a reputation as a warm and caring community. In addition, we have an incredibly strong "learn to swim" program.

In 2020, Camp Pinebrook opened on June 29th. We are one of the only full-day programs running for 8-weeks in Westchester County. We have incorporated safety protocols as we are dealing with Covid-19. Parents are truly grateful for Camp Pinebrook, and they share how much joy and emotional support camp has given to their children. It is amazing seeing campers smiling, laughing, and being happy kids. This summer we have 11 teens and young adults on staff who are members of the congregation. Camp is continuing to build a strong reputation in the community as a welcoming, warm, organized, and wonderful place for our children and their families.

*Submitted by,* Jesse Gallop, Camp Director

## Cantor's Report

This 2019-2020 year was hard for our entire community. In addition to the coronavirus pandemic, we have been managing a difficult transition of Rabbinic leadership. In light of these significant challenges, I have tried to stay focused on how best to serve and support our community. This has been especially hard as the needs of our community have also been changing during this time. I am proud of how the entire team of professional and lay leaders have adapted and accommodated to the changing situation in order to continue to serve the needs of the community. I have been privileged to collaborate over the past year with so many of our own talented members, leadership, staff, and our dedicated Rabbis Weiner and Nichols.

As I look to the year ahead, I look forward to continuing to shape the musical and spiritual life of TINR and to support and serve the community through music and so much more. While our environment has created additional challenges, it has also created opportunities, including, I believe, an even greater need for those elements that are my professional focus: music, prayer and community. I look forward to working with so many of you and beginning a productive and sacred partnership with Rabbi Hirsch as we continue to serve this special community.

Following are some of the highlights of the past year at TINR:

### Music and Worship:

*Your Song/Our Song: Music of Family, Community, Home and Harmony*, the Third Annual Benefit for Music at Temple Israel, was an unqualified success! First, it was a beautiful and powerful community event, particularly so this year as the theme itself demonstrated how music builds and binds community. Musically, the event was also exciting in many ways: how fulfilling to make music for, about and with members of the Temple Israel family, both professionals and volunteer musicians. I was thrilled to join my wife, Leah Schloss, singers from our professional choir, Lydia Brown and Cesar Rospigliosi, instrumentalists Miho Sasaki, Jim Weingast and Jeremy Klein, featured performers David Zensky and Elliot Kassoff, and *Kol Simcha*, our youth choir.

No less important, the evening generated significant funding for our ongoing music programs. The growth of the music fund, largely due to the success of the Annual Music Benefit, has enabled the expansion of our music programs, especially with the addition of guest musicians who increase the versatility and expressive range of our musical worship. In the coming fiscal year, due to significant budget cuts, it is solely due to the success of the Music Benefit and our Music Fund that we will be able to engage a piano/keyboard accompanist and additional professional musicians for Shabbat, Festival and High Holiday services at all. Chris Creaghan will continue to share his talents with us for the High Holidays and select services. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, Miho Sasaki has returned home to Japan and will not be with us this year. As online services and programming continue, I hope to include her in selected programs.

I hope many of you have appreciated that our worship services at Temple Israel continue to blur the lines between “professional” music and “congregational” music. Certain musical prayer moments require professional musicians to bring them to life and inspire the congregation. At other times, those professionals serve to engage and support participation by the entire congregation. I truly love to make music for and with all of you. During the past few months, our worship has largely moved online. I know we would all rather join together in person, but I have been proud of the flexibility and general high quality of our Zoom and live-streamed services. As we continue to master the technologies, we will continue to enhance our online worship as much as possible. Stay tuned!

Following are additional ways that the community of Temple Israel has joined in musically throughout the past year:

This year has been a strong year for volunteer singing. *Kol Simcha* had a terrific year, having sung at our High Holiday Family Services, Community Shabbat Services, and the Third Annual Music Benefit. Unfortunately, like so many aspects of our community, active participation was cut short due to the pandemic. But we did continue to make music, even creating a “virtual choir” video of *Oseh Shalom* for the Rabbis’ farewell service. In the coming year, I look forward to continuing our tradition of strong youth singing at TINR, whether online or in person.

In addition to *Kol Simcha*, *Kol Sasson*, our adult volunteer, gained some steam and sang beautifully at *Shabbat Shirah*. They were also joined by singers from other New Rochelle faith communities as part of the ongoing Coalition Choir. For our annual *Dr. Martin Luther King Commemoration Shabbat*, this fabulous interfaith chorus continued its tradition of exciting community singing, moving both the choir members and the congregation. Due to the pandemic, they were unable to finish the year and participate in *Shabbat HaKavod*, nor the Interfaith Passover Seder.

Many of our services and programs featured individual congregant musicians as well. Sam Minnitti, Elliot Kassoff, Leah Schloss, Maya Schloss, Mark Kleinman, Sydney Relkin, Abby Rittenberg, Stephen Tahbaz, and Sam Meisner have all joined in Shabbat, High Holidays or Festival services. The High Holidays in particular featured many more of our congregants singing, blowing shofar and chanting Torah. If you sing or play an instrument, please let me know and join us! Finally, many talented congregants and I had prepared a terrific Purim Spiel, “Esther Saved Our Lives Tonight: An Elton John Purim.” Unfortunately, the Purim festivities were some of the first events to be cancelled back in March. As soon as we have the green-light to gather in person, I know this fabulous troupe will be ready to go!

At Kehillah, the kids and I sing together regularly: every Thursday for our weekly Shirah, and festive, musical Shabbat celebrations every Friday. These events moved online in the past few months, but the kids remain engaged and I am excited to see them singing along and dancing, even if I can’t be with them in person. Preparing for the Annual Kehillah *Seeyoom* to end this year was a new experience since it was also online, but the kids participated fully. It remained a fun and moving event for all.

Finally, the Music Committee, led by Rachel Davis, continues to support not only the Music Benefit, but music programming throughout the year. This year, in collaboration with the Music and Worship committees, we will work diligently and creatively to ensure that music continues its vital function in our community. I look forward to working with so many that are invested in the musical life of TINR in the year to come.

## Learning:

I am sure that you all know by now that I enjoy participating in every aspect of the diverse job of a cantor. In addition to the job of “musician,” I embrace my role as an educator. I often use music as my means, but learning and Jewish engagement are the ends. Some of the ways that I am involved in teaching (and learning) are:

I love participating in the Kehillah school classrooms. In addition to our singing, I have the opportunity to read, do puzzles and play with the children from two classrooms. It’s a wonderful way for me to get to know more of our children individually.

At Chavaya, the sixth grade had a great time learning to chant Torah during our Trope Class. This year’s *Trope Cup* was particularly competitive and fun. Although the class was cut short, they did a great job and should be well prepared to move into Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparations.

This year’s *b’nei mitzvah* class has been fully engaged and prepared; they have done a wonderful job across the board. The move to online *b’nei mitzvah* celebrations was a challenge for our students and their families, as well as for the clergy, but all adapted well. I am so proud of all of the students. Along with their families and our entire community, we were able to create services that allowed all to appreciate the powerful achievement and depth of meaning associated with Bar/Bat Mitzvah, even during Zoom services. We will be working together with our families in the coming year to ensure that these important milestone moments will continue to be as fulfilling as possible. Mazel tov to all of our fabulous *b’nei mitzvah*!

In our High School program I participate in 8th and 9th grade core Torah learning, 11th and 12 grade dinners with the clergy, and I was particularly excited and proud to share the Zoom bimah with our confirmands at *Shavuot*. Each year that I am here I get to know the kids that much better. I look forward to a few years down the road when I can tell our confirmands, “I’ve known you since you were in 2nd grade!”

Lifelong learning, of course, continues as well. This year I have had the chance to share Torah learning through Saturday morning Torah Study, several Shabbat *divrei*

Torah (sermons), and through *Kol Sasson* (Adult choir). While the choir focuses on musical presentations, I always incorporate text learning into our rehearsals. Finally, as we navigate our largely online world right now, daily video check-ins and other Zoom and Facebook sessions have enabled us all to continue to connect and learn together.

## Finally:

Thank you all for helping to create a fulfilling Jewish year for the whole community through learning, music, prayer and action. We all know the challenges that make this a particularly difficult time. It is during this time that our community becomes even more necessary. Through partnership and participation, I believe the rewards can be even greater than the challenges. I look forward to the year to come.

*B’shir uv’racha* (in song and blessing)

*Submitted by,*

Cantor Randall Schloss

## Cemetery Committee

During the last fiscal year there were no grave sales or returns. There are currently 257 graves remaining at Sharon Gardens and 571 at Mt. Pleasant, the two cemeteries where the Temple holds sites.

Purchasing a grave is rarely on anyone’s “to do list,” but it is a task that should be completed now to save loved ones from stress at a difficult time later. Anita Aaronoff and I can assist in the purchase and it can be done rather simply and easily.

*Submitted by,*

Herb Smith

Cemetery Committee Chair

## Chavaya Committee

This year was the first year that Chavaya operated with its two subgroup committees, Kindergarten-Seventh grade and Teen Engagement. This year’s K-7 Committee was led by Jennifer Goldman and Julie Rosenbluth with the Teen Engagement Committee led by Mara Roberge and Diana Nero. Additional

members of the Kindergarten-Seventh Grade included: Sarah Prager, Beth Sadicario, Sara Deutsch, Jennifer Soberman, Anna Weiser, Rachel Hirschl, Leslie Kowalski, Robin Hershkowitz, Laura Feinblum, Sarah Versacci, Bettina Blum, and Stacey Rittenberg.

The 2019-2020 year was unusual but our strong parent reps, alongside Rebecca Elkus-Ferst and the clergy, were committed to the Chavaya mission and went above and beyond to provide consistency for students and families. Unfortunately, no one could have foreseen Covid-19 and Rebecca, the clergy, and educators quickly switched gears turning the entire program into a virtual classroom. Each group continued to meet regularly on Zoom. The overall sentiment from parents and students was one of appreciation that we could still be engaged in Jewish learning and connection with peers during such a challenging time.

Before March when Covid-19 impacted our community, Chavaya held several successful events. We kicked off the year with welcoming 20 new Chavaya students at Simchat Torah. We held our Boker B'yachad (morning together) programs for each unit, which focused on a piece of the curriculum. Chavaya families enjoyed holiday programming together, and parents had the opportunity to participate in a Parent Education program about technology and its benefits and challenges with their children. Purim brought our annual Mishloach Manot fundraiser which raised \$3,132.76. The Mitzvah of giving baskets took on a whole new meaning this year because the timing occurred as the community was forced to self-isolate. We knew that we wouldn't be able to be together in person and a gift of sweets would be a token of connection.

Additionally, nine Chavaya students became B'nei Mitzvah during the time of the pandemic. The services took place on Zoom and were live streamed to the congregation. It is Chavaya's tradition to give each B'nei Mitzvah child a cake at the Tuesday session following their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Cakes for these children were delivered to homes so the kids could experience the love from their community.

By mid-May the formal programming came to an end. However, many parents wanted to keep their children engaged. Rebecca Elkus-Ferst offered electives including cooking, science, and art that many families

chose to participate in led by some of our teens. As we move into July we recognize that the structure of Chavaya will continue to shift as our community, and the world, manages the effects of Covid-19. Prior to the end of the year, we sent a survey to our families requesting feedback on our online learning sessions, as well as families' plans to re-enroll for the fall. Overall, we received very positive responses about online learning, and the feedback shared will help inform our structure for the fall. While we are unable to make full predictions, we do expect enrollment to decline due to loss of income for some of our families. Rebecca Elkus-Ferst is working on the structure for the fall, as well as participating in seminars and trainings, so that we are ready to meet the health, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of our children.

*Submitted by,*

Rebecca Elkus-Ferst, Chavaya Director  
Jennifer Goldman, Julie Rosenbluth,  
Chavaya K7 Co-chairs

## **Israel Action Committee**

The Israel Action Committee (IAC) sponsors speakers, films, and cultural events related to the State of Israel, and provides a forum for the exchange of ideas on a wide range of topics including the Arab Israeli conflict and the treatment and status of Israeli Arabs and Palestinians residing in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza.

Last June, IAC member Howard Horowitz facilitated an appearance by Jafar Farah of the Massawa Center, an advocacy group dedicated to equal treatment of Arab citizens of Israel. Mr. Farah shared his views on recent political developments as seen through the eyes of members of the Arabic community.

In July, IAC hosted a return appearance by the organization Givat Haviva, which sponsors an Israeli youth group comprised of both Jewish and Palestinian high school students. Each year, they send a contingent of teens to the United States to attend summer camp and tour a photography exhibit chronicling their efforts to promote greater understanding of their respective cultures.

In October, IAC partnered with Brotherhood to host a

breakfast discussion led by TINR member and past president Paul Warhit. Paul and Howard Horowitz shared perspectives on their summer visit to Palestinian communities and Jewish settlements on the West Bank.

In November, IAC hosted a panel discussion titled “The Lived Reality in Israel and the Palestinian Territories: Current Political Developments and the Prospects for a Peaceful Solution.” Panelists included Jewish, Palestinian, and Bedouin women representing various political, academic, and media institutions in Israel.

In December, Meri Hilton sponsored a visit by Israeli film producer Harvey Stein, a former resident of New Rochelle and TINR member. Harvey showed his film “A Third Way: A Documentary Film About Peaceful Relations Between Israeli Settlers And Their Palestinian Neighbors,” followed by a Q & A session.

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 Pandemic resulted in cancellation of a number of spring events, including a Golda Meir documentary, participation in an Israeli Independence Day celebration organized by UJA and the Westchester Jewish Council, and participation in the Israel Day Parade. Activities in the coming year will be planned in accordance with local and state guidelines, as well as policies determined by TINR clergy and the Board of Trustees.

*Submitted by,*

Mitchell Benson  
Israel Action Committee Chair

## **Kehillah School for Early Learning**

The 2019-2020 year at Kehillah, like all schools, turned out to not actually be a year at all!

This year we said good bye to our Assistant Director, Melissa DePaz, and welcomed our new AD, Temple Community member, Danielle Cohen. Danielle comes to us from The Carmel Academy and brings a skill set that is so complimentary to our Director Laurie Thomas' that we truly have a dream team in place running our school. Danielle also has a daughter, Elle, who attends Kehillah.

As in past years the children of Kehillah held their annual Bake Sale in October benefitting Breast Cancer Research and raised over \$1600! This introduction to

*mitzvot* and charity is not lost on the children as they not only bake the goods and wrap them and sell them but they are taught what it means to do something for the benefit of others.

There was also educational programming offered to the parents. Naomi Schaefer Riley, author of [Be The Parent Please - Stop Banning Seesaws, Start Banning Snapchat](#), came to talk with us about her book. It is an issue many of our young parents are trying to navigate and the evening was on point, educational, and appreciated.

In December, the Early Childhood Committee, co-chaired by Rebecca Lippel, planned the first Annual Teacher Appreciation event. Kehillah parents threw the entire Kehillah staff a night to remember! It was a fancy night of fun, games, gifts, and gratitude. The staff got dressed in their finest and a great time was had by all. This type of “giving back” to those teachers who love and care for our children every day is a true example of the unique community that exists at Kehillah. We are truly family.

Sadly in February, our dear Office Manager, Wendy Bill, passed away suddenly. Kehillah, as well as the Temple Offices, closed for the day to enable the staff to attend her funeral. Red Oak Transportation showed their support of our community and provided us a bus to transport our entire community - Staff and some Kehillah Parents - to the funeral. It was an amazing display of our community coming together and showing Wendy's family how loved she was by her Kehillah family.

Before Covid-19 struck New Rochelle, we had 112 students attending Kehillah. We kept Kehillah open as long as we could to support essential workers who needed childcare. Unfortunately, we were forced to close our doors on March 28th at 3:00 pm. Initially we had hoped to reopen on April 27th. Little did we know how this global pandemic was going to effect every aspect of our lives and for how long.

The exciting news is that on July 13th, 2020 we re-opened our school to 27 students. Each week we anticipate that additional students will rejoin their classmates. We surveyed the parent community and are prepared to have robust enrollment once again by September.

As the country began making cutbacks to withstand the pandemic, TINR created a Benevolence Fund, intended to help those in need during these days of employment insecurity.

The Kehillah families rose to the occasion to ensure that our teachers, and any other temple member, would be able to survive financial hardships brought upon them by Covid-19. For the past three months, the Fund has helped 20 people in total. We are so proud of this effort and this community.

Lastly, our Virtual Gala took place on July 16th. One of the honorees this year was our Director Laurie Thomas. We were so happy to show how much Laurie means to our entire community, as she has been a part of TINR for over 20 years. The evening enabled us to show her our love and appreciation and engage the Kehillah families in a Temple Israel event. And participate they did, as was evidenced by the wonderful journal ads submitted and Kehillah parents who joined in and watched the Gala.

Kehillah will probably never resemble the Kehillah of the past, but with the new protocols in place, and the love and support of TINR, the teachers, and parents, Kehillah will be reborn and once again take its place as the premier school for Early Childhood Education in our area.

*Submitted by,*

Marjorie Ostrove  
Kehillah Executive Board Chair

## **Library Committee**

The books are calling but we can't come in! The Edith H. Handelman Library is temporarily closed due to the corona virus. Book reviews and recommendations are still available weekly in the virtual library section of the Temple Israel website. We are continuing to keep up with all the best fiction and non-fiction books of Jewish interest so that these books will be available as soon as it is safe to reopen our library for circulation. For those of you who still have our library books in your home, they may be returned to the Temple front desk and will remain in quarantine until it is safe to reopen the library. Access to our entire library collection can be found online at: <https://www.librarycat.org/lib/HandelmanLibraryTINR>.

The site includes information about the titles and reviews from other readers. Members can access this site and reserve books they are interested in reading. We will notify you as soon as circulation resumes. Many wonderful websites are offering free zoom meetings and interviews with popular Jewish authors. Some of these sites can be reached by searching Google for Moment Magazine, Yivo, Jewish Book Council, Temple Emanu-El Streicker Center, and the Jewish Women's Archive (JWA) book club – Quarantine Book Talks.

Our Temple Wide Read event, in partnership with Sisterhood, has been postponed. We hope to reschedule this event with Talia Carner and her National Book Award winner: [The Third Daughter](#). This novel, based on actual events, is about a young woman who was lured from Russia in the late 19th century only to become a victim of sex traffickers in Buenos Aires. Books are available on Amazon and some copies will be available as soon as the library reopens. We will notify everyone as soon as this event can be rescheduled. Stephanie Krasner, the Temple's volunteer librarian, will be in the library most Friday mornings once the library reopens. At all other times she is available to answer questions or to take requests or suggestions at: [stephkras11@gmail.com](mailto:stephkras11@gmail.com).

The library is seeking volunteers to help out in the library on Friday mornings between 10 am and noon. Volunteers are needed to help prepare the new books for circulation and to help set up displays. Perks include being the first to read and recommend new purchases. B'nei Mitzvah projects can include library story time readings to Kehillah and Chavaya children. Please contact Stephanie if you are interested.

*Submitted by,*

Stephanie Krasner, Edith H. Handelman Library – Librarian  
Russel Handelman – Library Committee Chair

## **Membership Committee**

Temple Israel of New Rochelle welcomed 27 new member families.

The Membership Committee focused its efforts this year on welcoming new members by delivering to them welcome baskets and invitations to attend the

Community Shabbat Dinners as our guests as well as to other Temple Israel events. The next phase of the committee's work will include efforts toward retention and re-engagement of current members.

*Submitted by,*

Kirk & Sari Bedevian,  
Membership Chairs

## **Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee has nominated the following individual for election to the Board of Trustees commencing July 1, 2020:

### **To serve for a 3-year term ending June 30, 2023:**

Beth Kane Feldman

The Nominating Committee has nominated the following individuals for re-election to the Board of Trustees commencing July 1, 2020:

### **To serve for a 3-year term ending June 30, 2023:**

Jamie Deutsch, Adam Egelberg, Jennifer Goldman, Sally Meisner, Ilissa Warhit

The Nominating Committee has nominated the following individuals **to serve as non-Trustee members**

**of the Nominating Committee for a 2-year term ending June 30, 2022:** Lee Jagoda, Marilyn Morris, Barbara Rosenthal

*Respectfully Submitted by,*

### **The Nominating Committee**

Katherine Dennin, Eve Fish, Toni Hoffman, Sally Meisner, Charlie Reitman, and Richard Stoerger

## **Prime Time 4 Adults**

Prime Time 4 Adults is Temple Israel's ongoing program to engage middle-aged adults and "empty nesters", the latter very loosely defined these days! In past years, Prime Time sessions included pot-luck dinners, lectures, social action, films, crafts programs, and even the occasional field trip. By popular demand 2019-20 saw the group morph into a movie night series unfortunately cut short by the pandemic. In September we showed the film Extra Innings, a powerful film based on the writer/director's true story of a young man torn between pursuing his dream of playing baseball while staying devoted to his Syrian Jewish family that is afflicted

with mental illness. Interesting and heartfelt discussion followed the screening.

Striking a different tone in November we showed Keeping the Faith, a light comedy starring Ben Stiller and Ed Norton as a rabbi and a priest, friends who reunite with their best friend from childhood, played by Jenna Elfman. In January Prime Time partnered with the temple's new Advocacy Committee to show Care, an important film about home health care. A coalition of Jewish groups formed the NY Caring Majority and a member of that group, Zahara Zahav, led a discussion of the film and their work to improve the conditions for both recipients and paid providers of home care services. Shelter-in-place orders preempted March's plan to show the award-winning British drama about the holocaust, The Boy in the Striped Pajamas. We will show the film whenever the building safely opens for activities.

As always, Prime Time 4 Adults activities are open to Temple members and non-members alike. No long-term commitment is required and participants enjoy refreshments and conversation and the opportunity to gather with old friends and new. All are welcome to offer ideas and take part.

*Submitted by,*

Debby Rubin-Marx  
Adult Programming Chair

## **Sisterhood**

The coronavirus in 2020 has been a year unprecedented in our lifetimes. Life "shut down" in many different ways. Of course, Sisterhood was impacted by this. We had several exciting programs planned that we had to cancel. The Sisterhood Board hopes to bring you this programming once we can gather and life is normal again. We look forward to seeing each other in person at our meetings and events. When the pandemic has ended, it will be wonderful to catch up and continue to support the Temple and each other.

Before the pandemic hit, we did manage to have several great events. Despina Kartson spoke to us about her church's work feeding the homeless in New York City. This was very inspiring to us and many of us wanted to get involved. Hopefully, we can assist with this work in the future. In addition, Sisterhood made a contribution to

Despina's organization.

Another fun event was a visit from Claire Stevens from the Z100 Zoo Crew. Claire entertained us with stories about her fascinating radio career. It was a fun event that everyone who was present really enjoyed!

Sisterhood used funds that we have raised to support the youth of Temple Israel. We supplied Chanukah gelt to candles to all Chavaya and Kehillah students and purchasing *Mishloach Manot* for new temple members. In addition, Sisterhood presents a Kiddush cup to each *B'nei Mitzvah* student and also donated to charities in Israel. (Yes, *B'nei Mitzvahs* still were celebrated in quarantine.) Sisterhood will continue to participate in other projects throughout Temple Israel.

Throughout this difficult year, there was much support from Executive Board members: Greta Berenbaum, Liz Hartzman, Lauren Pekats, Jackie Saril, Berdie Stein and Robin Werner. We could not have gotten through this year without the hard work, support and friendship of this group of talented women.

Sisterhood is looking forward to 2021 where we can resume our programming and support of Temple Israel!

*Submitted by,*

Janet Dubiel-Frey, Jennifer Herbst  
Co-Sisterhood Presidents

## **Social Action Committee**

The Social Action Committee (SAC) is grateful for the generosity and the support of our temple community. From last summer until March 2019, committee members actively met, cooked, ran drives and Mitzvah Day. Being put on PAUSE in March did not slow down our volunteers! Since the middle of March, over 30 volunteers have reached out to congregants to check in to see how they are faring during this time. Many volunteers have stayed in touch and some have made new friends within the temple!

While we are all eager to get back to life as we knew it pre Covid-19, the SAC will continue to try and find ways to give back to our community, locally and within the temple. Through Temple Israel Shops and SAC donations, over \$500 has been donated to HOPE

Community Services since March and leftover Camp Pinebrook food is being delivered daily by volunteers. Marilyn Morris is also leading an effort to have members cook or purchase fresh fruit and vegetables that she will deliver to HOPE.

## **Temple Israel SHOPS**

Temple Israel Shops was established in April 2020 to provide congregants with an additional way to access groceries during the COVID-19 pandemic. The service continues to be offered to congregants who are 65 and older, immunocompromised, home-bound or self-quarantined. TI Shops started on April 7, 2020 and has made over 100 deliveries to date. Our incredible shopping team consisted of Frank Chavez, Brian Gomez and Brian Reiner who shopped at DeCicco's in Pelham weekly on Tuesdays and Fridays. Frank, Brian and Brian went above and beyond in their efforts to support our community.

Beginning on Tuesday, June 30th, we transitioned to congregant volunteer shoppers. These volunteers include Jamie Deutsch, Beth Feldman, Jill Frey, Marilyn Morris and Elijah Pomerantz

## **CO-SPONSORED SPEAKER EVENT WITH SISTERHOOD**

On Tuesday, December 3, 2019, the SAC and Sisterhood held a joint author event. Author, Despina Kartson visited the temple to discuss her book, [Last Night's Soup Run](#). The Chavaya teens attended along with 10-15 adult members. The teens were engaged and asked thoughtful questions. Following the speaker there was a sandwich brigade led by TIFTY. Hope Community Services received the sandwiches.

## **MITZVAH DAY 2019**

On December 8, 2019 over 250 volunteers came to give back during our 5th Annual Congregational Mitzvah Day!

The time, effort, donations, and care from our congregants allowed us to give back to multiple organizations that target hunger, poverty, domestic violence, shelter pets, worldwide medical supply shortages, teen social services and children in need.

We also had the opportunity to thank our local New Rochelle Police Department heroes in person, meet the K9 unit, an adorable German Shepherd puppy named

Ace, as well as four several police vehicles. In addition, some of our congregants traveled to Yonkers to sort unused medical supplies at AFYA. The supplies are donated from hospitals around the area and once sorted they can be sent anywhere in the world. Some are shipped to Africa in cargo containers, while others can be sent to disaster areas closer to home.

The giving continued Tuesday night, December 10, 2019, when several families visited Community Service Associates to serve the dinner that was cooked on Sunday. The families were also able to hand out the holiday meals in a bag directly to the CSA guests!

All in all, together as a community, we made...

**61** Meals-in-a-Bag for Community Service Associates

**58** Bracelets for My Sisters' Place

**100+** Hot Cocoa Snow People and Superhero Bars for New Rochelle Police Officers

**184** Winter decorations for Bronx Jewish Community Council and HOPE Community Services

**90** Brown Bag Lunches for Trinity St. Paul Church's Lunch Program

**60** Hot meals for the clients at Community Service Associates

**100+** Toiletry To Go Bags for the Jewish Board's Mann Center

**135** Pet toys for the Humane Society of Westchester

**100** Bedtime Care Packages for the Tarrytown HeadStart, WIC of New Rochelle and My Sisters' Place

**46** Gorgeous Inspirational Decoupage Canvases for the teens at The Jewish Board's Mann Center!

Our community helped feed, clothe, and inspire one another and others through our efforts.

A successful Mitzvah Day is a community effort of both time and money. It takes a generous congregation like ours to make it happen. The Social Action Committee is appreciative of all the time and donations that contribute to Mitzvah Day annually.

If you are interested in leading a project or being more involved next year, let us know. We start planning over the summer. Mitzvah Day 2020 may look different depending on Covid-19 and we welcome all creative ideas and organizations that may need support. SAC will continue to plan a variety of options that include on-site, off-site and virtual projects. Depending on

circumstances, Mitzvah Day could be pushed out until Spring 2021.

## **QUOTES FROM SOME OF OUR PROJECT**

### **CAPTAINS:**

*A merry band of "collage" artists enthusiastically assembled almost 50 inspirational creations for the teenagers at The Jewish Board's residential facility. Our mission to bring beauty and joy to the children also brought great satisfaction to the participants. I can't wait to do it again next year!*

**-Toni Brackis-Hoffman**

*20 Adults and children worked together in the kitchen to prepare three giant trays of chicken and rice, four trays of glazed carrots, and 120 chocolate chip cookies. The meal serves 60-70 people at Community Services Associates, in Mount Vernon.*

**-Marilyn Morris**

*Our morning at the AFYA Foundation went very well. We were warmly greeted by the AFYA Volunteer Manager, Mary Grace Pagaduan, and her crew. We worked alongside other volunteers there to sort unused medical supplies into bundles that could be sent to places where they were needed. The supplies come from many hospitals around the area and once they are sorted they can be sent anywhere in the world. Some are shipped to Africa in cargo containers, while others can be sent to disaster areas closer to home. Our crew (Jackie Bitterman, Deborah Rubin-Marx, Richard Marx, Herb Smith, Deborah Maher, Damon Maher, Herb Smith, and Dan Pomerantz) worked steadily until it was time for us to go, so that the next group could take over and begin sorting.*

**-Dan Pomerantz**

### *A Special Thank You to the 2019 Mitzvah Day Captains!*

*Marilyn Morris, Lisa Eichler, Ilissa Warhit, Jen Soberman, Jessica Scheer, Heather Langer, Judith Redlener, Jill Reiger, Nancy Chez, Lauren Mandelbaum, Jill, Eva, & Marni Winston, Jamie Deutsch, Jill Frey, Berdie Stein, Toni Hoffman, Dan Pomerantz, Yonat, Lou, Mikey & Layla Arbetter, Peter Topol, Len Stein, and Liz Manasse.*

*And thank you to the staff, clergy, and Frank's team, without whom none of this could happen!*

## **THE GIVING TREE 2019**

In addition to all our community accomplished on

Mitzvah Day, thank you to all who donated to this year's holiday drive via The Giving Tree. Our community filled over 300 wishes going to nine organizations:

Children's Center for Learning HeadStart (WESTCOP)  
Community Service Associates (CSA)  
Hearts and Homes for Refugees/HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society)  
HOPE Community Services  
P.S. 41  
The Jewish Board's Sally & Anthony Mann Center  
The Sharing Shelf  
The Tarrytown HeadStart (WESTCOP)  
Westchester Cares Action Program (WCAP)  
HOPE Community Services Donation \$700

Our community's generosity brought smiles to so many local children. Each organization is grateful for Temple Israel of New Rochelle's continued support during the holidays and throughout the year.

### **COOK FOR A CAUSE 2019**

Marilyn Morris has continued the Cook for a Cause program and coordinates with volunteers to cook meals monthly for Community Service Associates (CSA). Volunteers cook a course in their own homes and bring to Marilyn for delivery.

\* Marilyn is currently coordinating meals for HOPE Community Services during the COVID-19 pandemic. HOPE has seen a 600% increase in demand and welcomes prepared meals, non-perishables as well as financial donations.

### **INTERFAITH COUNCIL FOR NEW AMERICANS WESTCHESTER (ICNAW)**

Temple Israel continues to support ICNAW as an organization member. A new family arrived on Sunday, February 2, 2020, after a long journey from Kabul. The reunion of families (new family is Fardin's brother and his wife is Mahnaz's niece) was quite emotional. After four years of waiting for final approval of their SIV, Special Immigration Visa, the family of five arrived safely in the US.

The family was a bit overwhelmed when they were taken to a beautifully furnished two-bedroom apartment. Volunteers had spent several days furnishing and decorating. People contributed from near and far to help get the apartment settled. After a hot meal the family got

a needed good night's sleep.

### **DRIVE UPDATES**

#### SEPTEMBER

Winter Drive - Coats, boots, new socks for Hearts & Homes for Refugees and The Sharing Shelf

#### OCTOBER

Feminine Hygiene Products and Beauty Supplies for The Jewish Board and The Sharing Shelf's Teen Boutique. Local salon, The Beauty Room of Larchmont ran a drive jointly and donated amazing products to our collection. Hayden Roberge, Jill, Eva & Marni Winston ran a successful drive.

#### NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

Mitzvah Day collections along with Giving Tree. It was the largest Giving Tree to date, and we fulfilled all "wishes".

#### JANUARY

Sports Drive Equipment was delivered to The Jewish Board. The administrators and children were incredibly grateful.

#### FEBRUARY

Another successful Pet Supply Drive for the New Rochelle Humane Society in conjunction with Kehillah and organized by Rebecca Halperin and Margie Ostrove.

#### MARCH

Baby Supply Drive: Although March was interrupted, donations poured in prior to shutting down. Clothing and diapers will be distributed to The Sharing Shelf and the Diaper Bank of Westchester.

### **ONGOING DRIVES**

Pencil Drive – Members and non-members donated several hundred pencils for member Erika Tobia's District 6 in the Bronx. Her overall drive collected over 1,000,000 pencils.

The pencil, toiletry and eyeglass drives will remain ongoing once the building reopens.

CANCELLED: National Refugee Shabbat, Friday, 3/20.

Leah Rozenfeld-Sills was going to be our guest speaker and share her family's history with our community

CANCELLED Purim Collection and Activity with Chavaya – Rebecca Elkus-Ferst initiated a Chavaya/SAC joint project with Community Service Associates. One of the four Purim *Mitzvot* commanded during the holiday is giving *Matanot L'evyonim* (gifts of food to those who are food insecure) The plan was to collect and pack groceries together after the Purim Spiel.

We welcome new volunteers, new ideas, feedback and anyone interested in learning more about a leadership role in the SAC. Thank you for all that you have helped accomplish during this past year. We hope you are all well and healthy.

*Submitted by,*

Amy Ecker: amybrose@gmail.com or 917-348-2301 or  
Mia Egelberg: miaegelberg@gmail.com or 914-629-2794  
or SocialActionTINR@gmail.com

## Teen Engagement Committee

This was the first official year of the Teen Engagement Committee after being created in late winter 2019. Teen engagement has been declining in recent years, at Temple Israel and nationally, due to the increased demands on our teens' time and focus. Changes to our teen offerings need to be ongoing in order to continue to meet their needs now and in the future. Led by Rabbi Nichols and committee co-chairs Diana Nero & Mara Roberge, the new committee included parents of engaged and un-engaged teens to represent multiple viewpoints in new proposed teen programming.

The committee actively worked to re-frame how teen engagement is measured at TINR. Traditionally, we only counted teens that were registered in Chavaya. Our congregation and lay leaders now recognize that TINR teens are involved in Jewish life in various ways: Chavaya, TIFTY, the Jewish basketball league, volunteering in Chavaya or Kehillah, teen travel, URJ Israel programs and overnight camps, working at Camp Pinebrook, involvement in other Temple Israel programs such as social action and music, ongoing relationships with the clergy and membership in other New York area Jewish teen programs. Offerings for our teens this year provided two new

options or paths in youth engagement. These included a new community service program called Tikkun Teens and an alternative Confirmation program with a social action track that includes limited Tuesday evening attendance, participation in Tikkun Teens and the Confirmation trip to the Religious Action Center. While neither program was an overwhelming participation success, it did bring increased participation from teens who otherwise were not engaged in other aspects of TINR. Due to the virus outbreak, the programming along with everything, was halted in early March. The Confirmation trip was in January while the Confirmation service during Shavuot was exclusively virtual as the pandemic progressed into the summer.

TIFTY had some modifications this year and included the inclusion of 8th graders beginning in January and more digital and social media promotion was done to encourage participation at events and meetings. TIFTY fundraising was not included in annual member support packets and board dues were instituted this year. TIFTY held monthly meetings, led the High Holiday food drive and held many social programs prior to the virus outbreak. All programs easily transferred virtually in March but overall did continue to see decreased teen participation as in recent years. Virtual programs seemed to attract the same participation as in-person events thereby requiring the committee to further evaluate the TIFTY model. The committee will meet over the summer to analyze whether we would like to try to or add another model of youth group engagement for the 2020-2021 programming year. Rabbi Nichols has also provided additional background information on funding changes and decreased participation across the region (NFTY). The final TIFTY program (in-person, social distanced of course!), an annual tradition of "tie dye and goodbye," was especially hard for our teens as they said goodbye to Rabbi Nichols after so many years of spiritual and personal guidance. TINR teens are grateful for the cherished years with her and they wish her all the best.

Even as we look to strengthen teen engagement during a dynamic upcoming year for TINR, we are proud of the strong participation in our programs this year. 14 teens graduated from the Chavaya High School Program and 8 students were confirmed on Shavuot. Over 30 teens volunteered or worked at Chavaya (or Chavaya on Zoom) on Sunday mornings as *madrichim*

and *manheegeem*. 11 teens worked at Camp Pinebrook and 10 volunteered at Kehillah. With the virus outbreak and New Rochelle as the country's first "containment zone," our teens and youth programming worked hard to seamlessly translate programs virtually while maintaining engagement. Our teens experienced challenges no other generation of teenagers in modern history have had to endure. The teen engagement committee commends our TINR teens for yet again rising to the occasion and maintaining engagement, while juggling home-schooling, social isolation and the loss of traditions or typical rites of passage.

The Teen Engagement Committee only met once in person this year. The committee will be meeting via Zoom over the summer to identify how we can support all teen and youth programming for the dynamic, uncertain TINR year ahead. Quarterly meetings will be scheduled for next year as we hope to welcome our teens back on campus and encourage more parents to join the committee. The Teen Engagement Committee will continue to work to help our teens find social and personally gratifying ways to be engaged in Judaism and TINR!

*Prepared by,* Mara Roberge

*Submitted by,* Diana Nero, Mara Roberge

## **Temple Israel Cares Committee**

Chaired by Sari Bedevian the committee is made up of Helen Miller sending condolence cards and donation thank you notes, Dina Bino delivering baby blankets, Toni Hoffman & Marjorie Mangot shopping for and delivering Shiva Bags, and Susan Tarnopal keeping our records.

In 2017 we made 46 deliveries and in 2018 we made 56.

In 2019 we delivered 14 Shiva Bags, 5 baby blankets and sent 22 notes of condolence. Due to Covid-19 we were unable to make deliveries to those in mourning. Because of generous donations we are able to continue the mitzvah of being Temple Israel's Angels.

*Submitted,*

Sari Bedevian, Karen Balik, Dina Bino, Toni Hoffman, Marjorie Mangot, Helen Miller, Susan Tarnopal

## **Worship Committee**

The Worship Committee collaborates with the clergy to ensure that worship at Temple Israel is meaningful and welcoming to our members and our community, and consistent with Reform Jewish practice.

The Worship Committee met for its annual review of the High Holiday services in the Fall of 2019. All of our discussions for changes to the timing and order of services have been rendered moot by the Coronavirus pandemic. Our worship experiences have changed dramatically over the past few months, as we have dealt with the health and safety issues caused by Covid-19. We wish to acknowledge the efforts of Cantor Schloss and Rabbis Weiner and Nichols to create services that allowed us to worship communally without physically gathering. Our virtual services have been well "attended" and well received. While we look forward to returning to worship in the sanctuary when we can do so safely, we hope that those who are not able to come to services in person will continue to find meaning in joining our online services.

We have begun working with Rabbi Hirsch and Cantor Schloss to develop a full program of virtual services for this year's High Holidays. We are looking for ways to incorporate some additional communal experiences to the celebration of the holidays. We are considering many possibilities—including smaller virtual gatherings to allow congregants to interact, and possibly small group meetings (in real life) for certain services to allow for safe distancing of family groups. We are looking forward to a novel but meaningful celebration of the holidays.

We continue to explore new approaches to worship which can help us to inspire spiritual growth, encourage new learning and build a stronger sense of community. We look forward to continuing our work to build our community through worship and encourage any interested members of the congregation to join our committee.

*Submitted by,*

Dan Pomerantz, Brian Heaps  
Worship Committee Co-chairs



We are a community that adds meaning and purpose to modern lives through an inclusive approach to Judaism.

We live our Jewish values in our worship, celebration, lifelong learning and *Tikkun Olam*—the repair of the world.

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