

THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE  
OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM



# *In Pursuit of Excellence*

*featuring program descriptions  
of the recipients of*

# *Solomon Schechter Awards for Synagogue Excellence*

2007 BIENNIAL CONVENTION  
December 2, 2007 23 Kislev 5768  
Orlando, Florida



# THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

Dr. Raymond Goldstein  
*International President*

Rabbi Jerome M. Epstein  
*Executive Vice President*

Carole Korowitz  
*Biennial Convention Chair*  
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*Biennial Convention Co-Chair*

Harry Silverman, Barry Mael,  
Rabbi Paul Drazen  
*Biennial Convention Lead Staff*

## *Solomon Schechter Awards for Synagogue Excellence*

### SOLOMON SCHECHTER AWARDS COMMITTEE

Bruce M. Creditor                  Jerry Klibanoff  
*Co-Chairs*

### **THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM**

Founded in 1913 by Dr. Solomon Schechter as the association of Conservative synagogues in North America, the USCJ, through its numerous programs and publications, serves as a resource to its member congregations and works to formulate a Conservative Jewish response to pressing social and religious issues. The United Synagogue, which works actively in the areas of educational programming and youth activities, also maintains an active presence in the State of Israel.

Among other activities, the USCJ offers:

- USY and Kadima for teens and pre-teens, KOACH on campus for college age members, HAZAK for seniors
- Curricula development, administrative assistance, and teacher training for congregational school and Solomon Schechter Day Schools
- Programming and guidance on public policy issues, including child welfare and the environment
- Synagogue-based training of congregation leaders; Imun and Sulam leadership programs
- Listservs for congregational officers, committee chairs and individuals providing program information, networking and study opportunities

Rapaport House    155 Fifth Avenue    New York, New York

# THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

## FOREWORD

The Solomon Schechter Awards Program is one of the longest continuous programs of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and is a fitting tribute to the memory of Solomon Schechter who, when he founded the United Synagogue in 1913, envisioned and voiced the hope that the standards of our congregations would continuously rise. Since 1949, several hundred congregations have been recognized for excellence in various aspects of synagogue life. Dr. Schechter's stress on synagogue activity of a meaningful nature and his emphasis on the synagogue as a core institution of Judaism are still reflected in general in our mission as a Movement and, in particular, in the selection and presentation of these awards.

The Solomon Schechter Award rewards extraordinary characteristics and certain unusual and outstanding aspects or achievements that go beyond the expected norms. The Awards winners deserve recognition for the originality and quality of their programs, their presentations, and achievements. We congratulate them, as well as the many other synagogues that continuously strive for excellence. The selection process is not an easy one, and we applaud the efforts of all who submitted entries to the program.

This publication, "***In Pursuit of Excellence***," is an excellent and valuable source book of programs that can be replicated in other synagogues. Please be sure to share the contents of this book with the staff and lay leadership of your congregation. The Award-winners will be glad to share information with you during the convention and at their exhibits, as well as by telephone, fax, mail, or e-mail after we leave Orlando.

On behalf of the entire Schechter Awards Committee, we extend a heartfelt *mazel tov* to all. The committee, the judging panels, and the USCJ staff — we are awestruck by your commitment and dedication, and we are eternally grateful for your assistance. An hearty *todah rabah* to Ellen Gordon for her extraordinary efforts in compiling the summaries and preparing this volume for publication.

## ADULT EDUCATION

|                                  |                    |                   |           |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| North Suburban Synagogue Beth El | Highland Park, IL  | Gold              | Over 900  |
| Temple Emunah                    | Lexington, MA      | Gold              | 500-900   |
| Temple Beth Sholom               | Roslyn Heights, NY | Gold              | Over 900  |
| Beth Sholom                      | Teaneck, NJ        | Gold              | 250-500   |
| Beth El Temple                   | West Hartford, CT  | Gold              | Over 900  |
| Temple Reyim                     | Newton, MA         | Silver            | 100-250   |
| Congregation Kol Emeth           | Palo Alto, CA      | Silver            | 500-900   |
| Congregation Har Shalom          | Potomac, MD        | Silver            | Over 900  |
| Congregation Emanu-El            | Victoria, BC       | Silver            | 100-250   |
| Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas          | Dewitt, NY         | Honorable Mention | 250-500   |
| Congregation Sons of Israel      | Leonia, NJ         | Honorable Mention | Under 100 |
| Congregation Beth Shalom         | Northbrook, IL     | Honorable Mention | Over 900  |
| Beth El of South Hills           | Pittsburgh, PA     | Honorable Mention | 250-500   |
| Temple Beth Sholom               | Roslyn Heights, NY | Honorable Mention | Over 900  |
| Temple Beth Sholom               | San Leandro, CA    | Honorable Mention | 100-250   |
| Congregation Beth El             | South Orange, NJ   | Honorable Mention | 500-900   |

## BULLETINS

|                                   |                         |                              |           |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| Beth El Congregation Of Baltimore | Baltimore, MD           | Gold                         | Over 900  |
| Congregation Brith Shalom         | Bellaire, TX            | Gold                         | 250-500   |
| Congregation Shaarey Tefilla      | Indianapolis, IN        | Gold                         | 100-250   |
| Beth El Synagogue Center          | New Rochelle, NY        | Gold                         | 500-900   |
| Agudath Israel                    | Ottawa, ON              | Gold                         | 500-900   |
| B'nai Shalom                      | West Orange, NJ         | Gold                         | 250-500   |
| Beth Shalom Congregation          | Westminster, MD         | Gold                         | Under 100 |
| Beth El of Montgomery County      | Bethesda, MD            | Gold <i>with Distinction</i> | Over 900  |
| Congregation Brith Shalom         | Erie, PA                | Silver                       | Under 100 |
| Temple Israel of Great Neck       | Great Neck, NY          | Silver                       | Over 900  |
| Beth El Temple                    | Harrisburg, PA          | Silver                       | 250-500   |
| Temple Beth Shalom                | Mahopac, NY             | Silver                       | 100-250   |
| Beth Jacob Congregation           | Mendota Heights, MN     | Silver                       | 250-500   |
| B'nai Israel Congregation         | Rockville, MD           | Silver                       | Over 900  |
| Temple Beth Sholom                | Roslyn Heights, NY      | Silver                       | Over 900  |
| Tifereth Israel Congregation      | San Diego, CA           | Silver                       | 250-500   |
| Congregation B'nai Amoona         | St. Louis, MO           | Silver                       | 500-900   |
| Beit Rayim Synagogue              | Thornhill, ON           | Silver                       | 100-250   |
| Beth Israel of Northern Valley    | Bergenfield, NJ         | Honorable Mention            | 100-250   |
| Commack Jewish Center             | Commack, NY             | Honorable Mention            | 250-500   |
| Congregation Ahavas Israel        | Grand Rapids, MI        | Honorable Mention            | 100-250   |
| Congregation Or Shalom            | Orange, CT              | Honorable Mention            | 250-500   |
| Temple Israel of Palm Beach       | Palm Beach, FL          | Honorable Mention            | 250-500   |
| Jewish Community Center           | Paramus, NJ             | Honorable Mention            | 250-500   |
| Temple Sholom                     | Pompano Beach, FL       | Honorable Mention            | 100-250   |
| North Shore Jewish Center         | Port Jefferson Sta., NY | Honorable Mention            | 250-500   |
| Congregation Har Shalom           | Potomac, MD             | Honorable Mention            | Over 900  |
| Congregation Beth David           | Saratoga, CA            | Honorable Mention            | 500-900   |
| Agudas Israel                     | Saskatoon, SASK         | Honorable Mention            | 100-250   |
| Congregation B'nai Israel         | St. Petersburg, FL      | Honorable Mention            | 250-500   |
| Adas Israel Congregation          | Washington, DC          | Honorable Mention            | Over 900  |

## CELEBRATIONS AND DEDICATIONS

|                                       |                    |                   |          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Temple Beth El                        | Allentown, PA      | Gold              | 250-500  |
| Beth Shalom Edmonton                  | Edmonton, AB       | Gold              | 250-500  |
| Beth Shalom                           | Jacksonville, FL   | Gold              | 100-250  |
| Congregation of Moses                 | Kalamazoo, MI      | Gold              | 100-250  |
| Beth El Synagogue                     | Omaha, NE          | Gold              | 500-900  |
| Beth Israel Congregation              | Owings Mills, MD   | Gold              | 500-900  |
| The Jewish Center                     | Princeton, NJ      | Gold              | 500-900  |
| B'nai Israel Congregation             | Rockville, MD      | Gold              | Over 900 |
| Temple Beth Shalom                    | Roslyn Heights, NY | Gold              | Over 900 |
| Temple of Aaron                       | St. Paul, MN       | Gold              | Over 900 |
| The Forest Hills Jewish Center        | Forest Hills, NY   | Silver            | 500-900  |
| Huntington Jewish Center              | Huntington, NY     | Silver            | 250-500  |
| Congregation B'nai Shalom             | Newington, CT      | Silver            | 100-250  |
| Beth El Synagogue                     | Omaha, NE          | Silver            | 500-900  |
| Beth El Temple                        | Harrisburg, PA     | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |
| Congregation Etz Chaim                | Marietta, GA       | Honorable Mention | 500-900  |
| Morristown Jewish Center Beit Yisrael | Morristown, NJ     | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |
| Congregation Or Shalom                | Orange, CT         | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

|                             |                    |                   |          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------|
| B'nai Torah Congregation    | Boca Raton, FL     | Gold              | Over 900 |
| Beth Ahm Israel             | Cooper City, FL    | Gold              | 250-500  |
| Forest Hills Jewish Center  | Forest Hills, NY   | Gold              | 500-900  |
| Congregation Beth Shalom    | Pittsburgh, PA     | Gold              | Over 900 |
| Temple Israel of Great Neck | Great Neck, NY     | Silver            | Over 900 |
| Temple Beth Shalom          | Roslyn Heights, NY | Silver            | Over 900 |
| Congregation Har Shalom     | Potomac, MD        | Silver            | Over 900 |
| Kehilat Shalom              | Gaithersburg, MD   | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |
| Temple Beth Am              | Margate, FL        | Honorable Mention | 500-900  |
| Beth El Synagogue           | New Rochelle, NY   | Honorable Mention | 500-900  |
| Har Tzeon-Agudath Achim     | Silver Spring, MD  | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |

### ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

|   |                    |        |          |
|---|--------------------|--------|----------|
| B'nai Israel                            | Millburn, NJ       | Gold   | 500-900  |
| Temple Beth Shalom                      | Roslyn Heights, NJ | Gold   | Over 900 |
| Temple Beth Torah/Tamarac Jewish Center | Tamarac, FL        | Gold   | 250-500  |
| Temple Beth Am                          | Margate, FL        | Silver | 500-900  |

### FAMILY EDUCATION

|                                      |                    |                   |          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Beth El Synagogue                    | Bloomfield, CT     | Gold              | 100-250  |
| Ohavi Zedek Synagogue                | Burlington, VT     | Gold              | 250-500  |
| Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am      | Toronto, ON        | Gold              | Over 900 |
| Temple Emanuel of the Pascack Valley | Woodcliff Lake, NJ | Gold              | 500-900  |
| Congregation Beth Shalom             | Atlanta, GA        | Silver            | 250-500  |
| Plainview Jewish Center              | Plainview, NY      | Silver            | 500-900  |
| Temple Beth Ahm                      | Aberdeen, TX       | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |
| Congregation Etz Hayim               | Arlington, VA      | Honorable Mention | 100-250  |
| Congregation Etz Chaim               | Marietta, GA       | Honorable Mention | 500-900  |

### FUNDRAISING

|                                    |                 |                   |          |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------|
| Temple Beth El                     | Allentown, PA   | Gold              | 250-500  |
| Temple Beth Emet                   | Anaheim, CA     | Gold              | 250-500  |
| Temple Beth Am                     | Margate, FL     | Gold              | 500-900  |
| Har Zion Temple                    | Penn Valley, PA | Gold              | Over 900 |
| Congregation Agudat Achim          | Schenectady, NY | Gold              | 250-500  |
| Commack Jewish Center              | Commack, NY     | Silver            | 250-500  |
| Jewish Community Center of Paramus | Paramus, NJ     | Silver            | 250-500  |
| Congregation Agudas Achim          | Austin, TX      | Honorable Mention | 500-900  |

### **HAZAK**

|                                |                    |                   |          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Valley Beth Shalom             | Encino, CA         | Gold              | Over 900 |
| Kol Shalom                     | North Bethesda, MD | Gold              | 100-250  |
| Congregation Beth David        | Saratoga, CA       | Gold              | 500-900  |
| Temple Israel of Sharon        | Sharon, MA         | Gold              | 500-900  |
| Summit Jewish Community Center | Summit, NJ         | Gold              | 250-500  |
| B'nai Torah Congregation       | Boca Raton, FL     | Silver            | Over 900 |
| Tikvat Israel                  | Rockville, MD      | Silver            | 250-500  |
| Temple Beth Am                 | Margate, FL        | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |
| B'nai Shalom                   | West Orange, NJ    | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |

### **HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION**

|                    |                    |      |          |
|--------------------|--------------------|------|----------|
| Temple Sholom      | Bridgewater, NJ    | Gold | 250-500  |
| Temple Beth Sholom | Roslyn Heights, NY | Gold | Over 900 |

### **HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE**

|                         |                      |                   |          |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Temple Beth-El          | Poughkeepsie, NY     | Gold              | 500-900  |
| Yorktown Jewish Center  | Yorktown Heights, NY | Gold              | 100-250  |
| Temple Beth-El          | Poughkeepsie, NY     | Silver            | 500-900  |
| Temple Israel of Albany | Albany, NY           | Honorable Mention | 500-900  |
| Temple Beth Sholom      | Roslyn Heights, NY   | Honorable Mention | Over 900 |

### **INCLUSION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

|                                     |                     |        |          |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|----------|
| Congregation B'nai Israel           | Millburn, NJ        | Gold   | 500-900  |
| The Jewish Center of Princeton      | Princeton, NJ       | Gold   | 500-900  |
| B'nai Israel Congregation           | Rockville, MD       | Gold   | Over 900 |
| Congregation Beth David             | Saratoga, CA        | Gold   | 500-900  |
| Congregation Beth El                | Voorhees, NJ        | Gold   | Over 900 |
| Congregation Tifereth Israel        | Columbus, OH        | Silver | Over 900 |
| Congregation Kneses Tifereth Israel | Port Chester, NY    | Silver | 250-500  |
| Summit Jewish Community Center      | Summit, NJ          | Silver | 250-500  |
| Shaare Zedek Synagogue              | University City, MO | Silver | 250-500  |
| B'nai Shalom                        | West Orange, NJ     | Silver | 250-500  |

### **ISRAEL MASORTI AFFAIRS**

|                                  |                  |        |         |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--------|---------|
| Northern Hills Synagogue Beth El | Cincinnati, OH   | Gold   | 100-250 |
| Beth El Synagogue                | East Windsor, NJ | Silver | 250-500 |

### **JUDAICA AND FINE ARTS**

|                          |                    |        |          |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------|----------|
| Temple Emanuel           | Newton, MA         | Gold   | Over 900 |
| Temple Beth Sholom       | Roslyn Heights, NY | Gold   | Over 900 |
| Beth Shalom Congregation | Jacksonville, FL   | Silver | 100-250  |

**KADIMA USY**

|                                  |                        |                   |          |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|----------|
| North Suburban Synagogue Beth El | Highland Park, IL      | Gold              | Over 900 |
| Temple Reyim                     | Newton, MA             | Gold              | 100-250  |
| Congregation Har Shalom          | Potomac, MD            | Gold              | Over 900 |
| Temple Emanuel                   | Newton, MA             | Silver            | Over 900 |
| Shaare Zedek Synagogue           | St. Louis, MO          | Silver            | 250-500  |
| Adath Jeshurun Synagogue         | Elkins Park, PA        | Honorable Mention | 500-900  |
| Bet Torah                        | Mt. Kisco, NY          | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |
| Temple Beth David                | Palm Beach Gardens, FL | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |

**KERUV-EDUD**

|   |                 |                   |          |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|----------|
| Northern Hills Synagogue-B'nai Avraham  | Cincinnati, OH  | Silver            | 100-250  |
| Beth Sholom Congregation                | Elkins Park, PA | Silver            | 500-900  |
| Summit Jewish Community Center          | Summit, NJ      | Silver            | 250-500  |
| Temple Israel & Jewish Community Center | Ridgewood, NJ   | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |
| Temple Beth Sholom                      | San Leandro, CA | Honorable Mention | 100-250  |
| Beth Tikvah Synagogue                   | Willowdale, ON  | Honorable Mention | Over 900 |

**KOACH**

|                           |                |                   |          |
|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------|
| B'nai Israel Congregation | Rockville, MD  | Gold              | Over 900 |
| B'nai Torah Congregation  | Boca Raton, FL | Silver            | Over 900 |
| Temple Beth Am            | Margate, FL    | Honorable Mention | 500-900  |
| Congregation Beth Shalom  | Wilmington, DE | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

|                                     |                |      |         |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|------|---------|
| Beth El Congregation of South Hills | Pittsburgh, PA | Gold | 250-500 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|------|---------|

**LIBRARIES**

|                          |                   |      |          |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------|----------|
| Temple Emunah            | Lexington, MA     | Gold | 500-900  |
| Temple Emanuel of Newton | Newton Centre, MA | Gold | Over 900 |

**MEMBERSHIP**

|  |                 |                   |          |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|----------|
| Northern Hills Synagogue-B'nai Abraham | Cincinnati, OH  | Gold              | 100-250  |
| Temple Emanuel                         | Newton, MA      | Gold              | Over 900 |
| The Jewish Center                      | Princeton, NJ   | Silver            | 500-900  |
| Temple Beth Am                         | Margate, FL     | Silver            | 500-900  |
| Jewish Community Center of Paramus     | Paramus, NJ     | Silver            | 250-500  |
| Har Zion Temple                        | Penn Valley, PA | Silver            | Over 900 |
| Temple Beth Am                         | Margate, FL     | Honorable Mention | 500-900  |
| B'nai Israel Congregation              | Rockville, MD   | Honorable Mention | Over 900 |

**OUTREACH TO YOUNG ADULTS**

|                                   |                |                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------|
| Ahavath Achim Synagogue           | Atlanta, GA    | Gold              | Over 900 |
| Congregation B'nai Torah          | Atlanta, GA    | Gold              | 250-500  |
| Beth El Congregation of Baltimore | Baltimore, MD  | Gold              | Over 900 |
| Beth El Synagogue                 | Omaha, NE      | Silver            | 500-900  |
| Adas Israel Congregation          | Washington, DC | Silver            | Over 900 |
| Neve Shalom                       | Portland, OR   | Honorable Mention | Over 900 |
| Congregation Beth Shalom          | Wilmington, DE | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |

## PERFORMING ARTS

|                          |                   |                   |           |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| B'nai Torah Congregation | Boca Raton, FL    | Gold              | Over 900  |
| Temple Beth Shalom       | Stratford, CT     | Gold              | Under 100 |
| Beth El Temple           | West Hartford, CT | Gold              | Over 900  |
| Beth Shalom Congregation | Elkins Park, PA   | Honorable Mention | 500-900   |
| .Shaare Zedek Synagogue  | University, MO    | Honorable Mention | 250-500   |

## PUBLICATIONS

|  |                     |                       |          |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Congregation Neveh Shalom              | Portland, OR        | Gold                  | Over 900 |
| Shelter Rock Jewish Center             | Roslyn, NY          | Gold                  | 250-500  |
| Congregation B'nai Jacob               | Woodbridge, Ct      | Gold                  | 500-900  |
| Congregation Beth El of Montgomery Cty | Bethesda, MD        | Gold with Distinction | Over 900 |
| Summit Jewish Community Center         | Summit, NJ          | Gold with Distinction | 250-500  |
| Ahavath Achim Synagogue                | Atlanta, GA         | Silver                | Over 900 |
| Morristown Jewish Center Beit Yisrael  | Morristown, NJ      | Silver                | 250-500  |
| Oceanside Jewish Center                | Oceanside, NY       | Silver                | 500-900  |
| Congregation Or Shalom                 | Orange, CT          | Silver                | 250-500  |
| Congregation Ohev Shalom               | Orlando, FL         | Silver                | 500-900  |
| Congregation Neveh Shalom              | Portland, OR        | Silver                | Over 900 |
| B'nai Israel Congregation              | Rockville, MD       | Silver                | Over 900 |
| Tifereth Israel Synagogue              | San Diego, CA       | Silver                | 250-500  |
| Shaare Zedek Synagogue                 | University City, MO | Silver                | 250-500  |
| Nanuet Hebrew Center                   | New City, NY        | Honorable Mention     | 250-500  |
| Congregation Har Shalom                | Potomac, MD         | Honorable Mention     | Over 900 |
| Shaare Zedek Synagogue                 | University City, MO | Honorable Mention     | 250-500  |

## SMALL CONGREGATIONS

|                           |             |        |           |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------|-----------|
| Congregation B'nai Israel | Danbury, CT | Silver | Under 100 |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------|-----------|

## SOCIAL ACTION AND PUBLIC POLICY

|                                    |                     |                   |          |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Congregation Etz Chaim             | Marietta, GA        | Gold              | 500-900  |
| Adash Israel Synagogue             | Merion, PA          | Gold              | 250-500  |
| Congregatioin Beth Shalom          | Pompton Lakes, NJ   | Gold              | 100-250  |
| Beth Jacob Congregation            | Mendota Heights, MN | Silver            | 250-500  |
| Congregation B'nai Israel          | Millburn, NJ        | Silver            | 500-900  |
| Temple Beth Ahm                    | Aberdeen, NJ        | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |
| Beth El Synagogue                  | East Windsor, NJ    | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |
| Temple Emanuel                     | Newton, MA          | Honorable Mention | Over 900 |
| Jewish Community Center of Paramus | Paramus, NJ         | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |
| Congregation Beth Israel           | Scotch Plainis, NJ  | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |
| Adas Israel Congregation           | Washington, DC      | Honorable Mention | Over 900 |
| The Conservative Synagogue         | Westport, CT        | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

|                |               |      |         |
|----------------|---------------|------|---------|
| Temple Beth El | Allentown, PA | Gold | 250-500 |
|----------------|---------------|------|---------|

## WEBSITE ON-LINE

|                         |             |      |          |
|-------------------------|-------------|------|----------|
| Congregation Har Shalom | Potomac, MD | Gold | Over 900 |
| Congregation Or Shalom  | Orange, CT  | Gold | 250-500  |
| Congregation Har Shalom | Potomac, MD | Gold | Over 900 |

|                                   |                    |                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------|
| The Emanuel Synagogue             | West Hartford, CT  | Gold              | 500-900  |
| Congregation Beth Emeth           | Herndon, VA        | Silver            | 250-500  |
| Beth El Synagogue                 | New Rochelle, NY   | Silver            | 500-900  |
| Temple Reyim                      | Newton, MA         | Silver            | 100-250  |
| Adas Israel Congregation          | Washington, DC     | Silver            | Over 900 |
| Congregation Ohav Shalom          | Albany, NY         | Honorable Mention | 500-900  |
| Beth Hillel Synagogue             | Bloomfield, CT     | Honorable Mention | 100-250  |
| Temple Beth-El of Bellmore        | North Bellmore, NY | Honorable Mention | 100-250  |
| Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center | Pasadena, CA       | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |

### **WORSHIP AND RITUAL**

|  |                    |                   |          |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Jacksonville Jewish Center             | Jacksonville, FL   | Gold              | 500-900  |
| Congregation Har Shalom                | Potomac, MD        | Gold              | Over 900 |
| North Suburban Synagogue Beth El       | Highland Park, IL  | Silver            | Over 900 |
| Temple Emunah                          | Lexington, MA      | Silver            | 500-900  |
| Temple Beth Abraham                    | Oakland, CA        | Silver            | 250-500  |
| Har Zion Temple                        | Penn Valley, PA    | Silver            | Over 900 |
| Temple Beth Torah                      | Tamarac, FL        | Silver            | 250-500  |
| Temple Beth Sholom                     | Roslyn Heights, NY | Honorable Mention | Over 900 |
| Northern Hills Synagogue B'nai Avraham | Cincinnati, OH     | Honorable Mention | 100-250  |
| Congregation Beth Emeth                | Herndon, VA        | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |
| Temple Beth Am                         | Margate, FL        | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |
| Kol Shalom                             | North Bethesda, MD | Honorable Mention | 100-250  |
| Congregation Beth El                   | Norwalk, CT        | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |
| Jewish Community Center of Paramus     | Paramus, NJ        | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |
| B'nai Shalom                           | West Orange, NJ    | Honorable Mention | 250-500  |

## ADULT EDUCATION

### **GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Sandy Starkman

### **NORTH SUBURBAN SYNAGOGUE BETH EL**

Highland Park, IL

847-432-8900

North Suburban Synagogue Beth El (NSSBE) in Highland Park, Illinois, is one of the largest and most prominent Conservative Synagogues in both the Chicago area and North America, serving about 1,100 member families. NSSBE offers a great variety of services and activities to meet the diverse needs of its multigenerational congregation. It provides for the education of all its members, from pre-school toddlers to adults. Adult education is known as Continuing Education (*CE*) at NSSBE and is an important priority at the synagogue.

The Continuing Education Committee (*CEC*), chaired by Sandy Starkman, comprises one of the NSSBE Vice Presidents for Education, Elise Frost, Associate Rabbi Michael Schwab, other congregants, and a part-time professional Continuing Education Director, Merle Tovian, all under the supervision of the head Rabbi, Vernon Kurtz. The *CE* department strives to provide programming with the broadest appeal to its constituents. *CE* has met with great success by providing ongoing classes, seminars, scholars-in-residence, and numerous other programs, formal and informal, that educate, elevate and entertain NSSBE members and participants from the larger Jewish community. *CE*'s diversity of educational offerings can provide something for everyone.

The members of the *CE* committee and the professional staff involved in adult education are devoted to providing high quality Jewish education to the adult NSSBE congregants and to improving our programming and responsiveness each year. This is accomplished through ongoing class and program evaluations. In the longer term, we hope to expand and improve the breadth of our offerings to reach a greater number of our adult congregants within the budget allotted by the synagogue. The *CEC* is interested in and works often with the other departments at NSSBE, as well as outside organizations, to provide optimal learning experiences for our congregants first and foremost, as well as the local community. *CE* is always "a work in progress." Learning opportunities at NSSBE, whether a lecture, a *Tanach* study group, a modern Hebrew class, or a social/educational event, are always at the forefront of adult Jewish education.

Israel, the state, its people and its language, is a high priority for *CE*, and our programming reflects this emphasis.

### **GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by Richard S. Wissoker

### **TEMPLE EMUNAH**

Lexington, MA

781-861-0300

Over the last two years, Temple Emunah has engaged in an extensive evaluative process to determine the needs within our community for educational, spiritual and pastoral services. Clear congregational priorities were:

- Desire to expand family programming for Shabbat and holidays
- Create an integrated educational framework that builds community by bringing together our various constituencies
- Make religious life more accessible and meaningful to more congregants.
- Overwhelming support for elevating the role of Family Educator to the clergy level by hiring a second rabbi for this position.

These results encouraged us to expand our efforts to increase and intensify family engagement on Shabbat and holidays.

During 2005-6 (5767) we began to test our ideas of Shabbat programming styled after Synaplex™ - an initiative created by the Minneapolis-based STAR Foundation (Synagogues: Transformation and Renewal) - a philanthropic partnership of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, Jewish Life

Network/Steinhardt Foundation and the Samuel Bronfman Foundation. Synaplex is about finding new ways to connect and come together to celebrate Shabbat in the Synagogue!

In 2006, a cross-section of traditional *daveners*, educationally oriented, and spiritually minded persons plus chairs or representatives of key committees (Sisterhood, Brotherhood, Preschool, Adult Education, Family Education, Religious School, Youth) were invited to join the Steering Committee to initiate a Synaplex style Shabbat at Temple Emunah. The charge to this committee was to come up with ideas for topics, sessions, leaders, and projects that various parts of the congregation would find engaging. The goal was to promote a more vibrant Shabbat community and bring people in the door. Two Shabbat events took place that received rave reviews and evaluations. Where a normal Shabbat morning attendance would be 100-150, these events opened the doors for 425-450 people. Through Synaplex we have begun to extend the types of offerings that appeal to those who are interested not only in *tefilah*, but are looking for alternative ways to connect with the greater community within the context of Shabbat.

**GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Joel Seltzer

And Gila Hadani Ward

**TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM**

Roslyn Heights, NY

516-621-2288

Temple Beth Sholom's, *High Holy Day Ohel* is an innovative program offering an alternative synagogue experience for the congregant during the High Holy Days. The *Ohel* is a *Beit Midrash*, a house of study where the rabbis and teachers of the community can come from the *bima* and engage the congregants in study. In addition to offering up to four classes per holiday, we also encourage our participants to explore our reading section for a chance to connect with the deep meaning of the High Holy Day experience.

**GOLD**

250-500

Submitted by Arlene Solokow

**BETH SHOLOM**

Teaneck, NJ

210-833-2620

Our Artists' *Beit Midrash* Program is a series of classes, encompassing text study with exciting and renowned scholars and co-taught with artists. The classes are geared to Visual Artists working in any Visual Media. We attracted artists both in our synagogue, as well as within the broader Jewish Community. The program, which was sponsored and supported by our Adult Education Committee, brings high visibility to our shul. It also places our shul in the forefront of teaching Torah and our ancient text in an innovated and unique way. It has created a community of artists who both study text together and respond visually to the text!

The class format was interactive text study with our Scholar/Teacher together with critique of artwork, by our Artist/Teacher. All artwork was done by participants outside of class. Teachers, as well as students, participated in the class critiques. The class was also exposed to artwork of contemporary artists' current exhibitions in museums and galleries, art history as well as discussion of different techniques used by artists.

The culmination of each year's course was a Lunch and Learn Program and Art Show, on the Second day of Shavuot. The luncheons and art shows were open to all members of the shul, as well as to the Community. A brochure was produced for each art show, which illustrated some of the works produced by the artists. During the formal part of the Luncheon program the artists talked about their works, what motivated them to produce the kind of work they did, their thought processes and their reactions to the text. In other words, the artists themselves became the teachers, by using their art work to interpret and reinterpret the text.

During the six semesters of our program, we had 10-12 participants each semester and currently maintain a waiting list. Our first Shavuot Lunch and Learn was attended by 80 people. There were 120 attendees at our second Lunch and Learn Program. We are currently in the planning stages for our third Shavuot Lunch and Learn program. All who participated in the classes and the Shavuot Lunch and Learn programs literally had their eyes opened to a new and expansive way of viewing both text and art.

**GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Rabbi Ilana Garber

**BETH EL TEMPLE**

West Hartford, CT

860-233-9696

The women of Beth El Temple had been coming to Women's Rosh Chodesh events and other learning programs with greater frequency. It was clear that they were interested in Jewish learning, in Jewish spirituality, in getting to know each other better, and in being able to spend time with their new female rabbi. After one Rosh Chodesh event, some women suggested that we spend a Shabbat weekend together, as they expressed a need to further their learning and spirituality in a safe, comfortable, and concentrated environment, free of distractions and other stress. And so we created the first ever: *Refresh, ReJEWvenate, Renew: A Spiritual Retreat for the Women of Beth El*.

A committee of two dedicated volunteers along with the Rabbi and Executive Director crafted a weekend full of sharing, singing, and learning, including goals of physical, spiritual, and intellectual growth and renewal. As you will see from our schedule, Shabbat was festive and creative, everyone had a role (many roles, in fact, from working in the kitchen to delivering a d'var Torah or teaching a song), and there were several opportunities for tears, laughter, spontaneity, and Jewish enrichment. The Shabbat we chose was the weekend right before Rosh Hashanah, which afforded us the chance to hold a creative Selichot service by a bonfire (followed by s'mores and bonfire songs) and to prepare for the High Holidays in a way that most women are not usually able to do. Evaluations from the weekend expressed overall gratitude for the program and deep appreciation for the opportunity to experience Judaism in such a rich and safe environment.

Highlights of the weekend included an autobiographical story told in third person by a child survivor of the Holocaust, a yoga/stretching activity each morning, and a theme song (*Shiru Lo* by Soulfarm) that we sang many times and even taught to the congregation upon our return. The learning component focused on the upcoming High Holidays. We studied: the themes of *Unetaneh Tokef* the meaning of God remembering Sarah (and therefore God remembering us and how we must remember ourselves and our needs) via the text *Adonai pakad et Sarah*, and the implications of *teshuva*, *tefilah*, and *tzedakah* in our lives past, present, and future. We spent time in small groups and *hevruta*, asking each other the important questions that led to great discussions of spiritual journeys and writing personal letters to ourselves (after Shabbat) that were mailed after Simchat Torah.

We experienced the weekend through the four elements — fire, water, earth, and air. These elements helped break the women into groups for logistical purposes and study sessions, but also gave us a context within which to explore our feelings. We hired a movement specialist who got us dancing, moving, feeling, and reacting, exploring our inner fire, water, earth, and air and expressing ourselves freely. Saturday night before our Selichot service and bonfire (which included an activity about sins in which we threw our secret sins into the fire), we painted and decorated mirrors to reflect our High Holiday aspirations.

We are a congregation of 980 families and every woman was invited to this program via a personal mailing. We also announced the retreat in our weekly Shabbat brochure. The venue for this retreat was a small retreat center in Plainfield, MA, so we limited the number of participants to 20. The cost of the program was \$175 per person — that paid for food, transportation (we insisted that the relaxation began at the Beth El Temple parking lot — everyone parked there and the journey to the retreat began with ice breakers and fun on the bus), instructional materials, and the retreat center. This program was subsidized by the Rabbi Jennifer Tobenstein fund — money donated in honor of Beth El's first female rabbi upon her departure in an effort to continue programming that was important to her.

Long before our closing ritual (which included writing one word on a stone that is kept in a dish in the rabbi's office as a testament to our bonding program), we knew this would become a close-knit group of women at Beth El. At many points in the weekend, tears were shared as someone was touched significantly by a story or an experience or a personal revelation. We were there for each other, supporting, comforting, holding, and learning how to be fully present. It was a safe space — even *tefilot* could be interrupted if someone had a question, and many did! We promised to schedule a reunion to answer some of the questions and so in January we held an evening in which we sang our theme song, caught up on each other's lives, and studied angels in Jewish history and belief, something that had perplexed many.

Since the retreat, the women have been more involved in Beth El. They reported having a deeper appreciation for the High Holidays and more of a sense of family when coming to the synagogue. They are begging for the next retreat, and since so many women have heard that they missed such a great time, we are planning a larger women's

retreat in the spring of 2008. This new initiative has brought life to Beth El Temple and has brought Beth El Temple to many of its women.

**SILVER**

100-250

Submitted by Carol Stollar

**TEMPLE REYIM**

Newton, MA

617-527-2410

Temple Reyim's *Limud* program has formal and informal classes and courses in seven different areas of study. They are presented at varied times to make them convenient for learners. These areas include Jewish languages, text study, the Arts, *Shabbat* and Holiday observances, Living a Jewish Life, Issues of our Times and the *Kallah Shabbat*.

Study (*limud*) at Temple Reyim is recognized as a form of spiritual fulfillment and as a path towards greater observance. Rabbi Rosenberg and the *Limud* Committee plan and implement a wide variety of classes and programs that recognize the diverse learning needs of Temple Reyim congregants and those in the greater Jewish community. People are met wherever they are in their personal learning journey and offered many interesting opportunities to study, to learn new Judaic skills or encouraged to teach. Thus *Limud* strives to enrich Jewish souls on many levels.

**SILVER**

500-900

Submitted by Eileen Soffer

**CONGREGATION KOL EMETH**

Palo Alto, CA

650-948-7498

Based on the popular *One City One Book* program, Congregation Kol Emeth's Adult Education inaugurated *One Shul One Book* in 5767 with the selection of *A Tale of Love and Darkness* by Amos Oz. We encouraged as many people as possible to read the book during a several month period, creating a "shul-wide" book club. The program was designed to inspire lively and stimulating conversation around a single piece of literature with Jewish themes of interest to our community and, in the process, to renew and strengthen a sense of community among congregants.

We held a kick-off event with a presentation ("Politics and Poetics in the Works of Amos Oz" introducing the author and his work) followed by a light brunch; held several facilitated book group discussions; publicized the already scheduled lecture by Amos Oz as our author event (Oz was speaking at Stanford in a free lecture open to the public); and offered a four session class entitled "Israel Today," building on topics in the memoir.

We found that the *One Shul One Book* program successfully created a thriving sense of community by, literally, getting us all on the "same page." The shared learning experiences and discussions added a richness and depth to our communal life.

**SILVER**

Over 900

Submitted by Michael L. Simmons

**CONGREGATION HAR SHALOM**

Potomac, MD

301-299-7087

Congregation Har Shalom takes pride in offering its congregants and the Jewish Community at large many formal and informal adult Jewish education learning opportunities. The diversity of opportunities can be seen in such programs as breakfast Torah study with Rabbi Fisher, morning or lunch text study with Rabbi Rose, courses on the Jewish perspective on contemporary societal issues, to courses on Jewish Diaspora communities and Jewish cooking. Learning opportunities were provided to study Talmud and Torah, lead High Holy Day services, and observe Passover

Congregation Har Shalom's 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 Adult Education programs were the culmination of years of successful adult education programs at the congregation. The informal course offerings expanded tremendously to provide learning opportunities outside Congregation Har Shalom. Additionally the course offering included a new initiative based upon offering one, two and three-week courses as well as a well-attended Diaspora Culture learning opportunity.

The two lessons that Congregation Har Shalom learned were: One, Congregations need to think 'outside the box' and offer informal Torah-based discussions at local coffee houses (i.e. Starbucks or Panera), and; two, that one,

two, and three-week mini-courses addressing specific topics would attract participants who are not the traditional adult learners.

**SILVER**

100-250

Submitted by Barbara Faye Pelman

**CONGREGATION EMANU-EL :**

Victoria, BC

250-382-0614

In the beginning.... Rabbi Harry Brechner had a desire to bring artists and sacred texts together in some kind of communal project. In November 2004, he and the Adult Education Committee invited artists to join together to study a many-layered and mystical text. He foresaw a community of artists working together to bring new meaning and richness to a "*darsheni*", a text that calls out to make meaning. Victoria is blessed with artists; visual and literary and musical, and many of whom are members of the synagogue. Rabbi Harry wanted to look at specific texts with new eyes, the eyes of those who create, who seek to create order and meaning in the universe. His idea was that this process of study and interpretation would expand Mishnah and bring a deeper understanding of mystical texts. The studying was interesting. What happened next in terms of artistic creation was astonishing.

The first year, fifteen artists joined Rabbi Harry to study the story of "the Four Who Enter Pardes." It was called "The Paradise Project," and included poetry, painting, fabric art, collage, computer graphics, music, and photography. The artists, mostly members of the synagogue, studied together, and worked independently for seven months on their creations. In June they presented their work at a gallery opening, along with a chapbook created by one of the artists, which included the poems, photographs of the paintings, and a brief explanation of each artist's creative process. The show took place in the synagogue's "Wings of Peace Gallery" (which also serves as a social hall) and was attended by over a hundred people, from within and outside of the community. The chapbook, along with paintings, fabric art, and poems (mounted on foam board) were sold, a portion of the proceeds going to the synagogue.

The second year, the text was the first chapter of Ezekiel. Again, the format included a number of study sessions with Rabbi Harry, then some months for the artists to produce their work inspired by the text. This project, "The Ezekiel Project," again included a gallery opening and a chapbook which was sold at the opening and which continues to be available in the synagogue gift shop. This year the topic is "Visions, Dreams and Prophecies" with the annual show planned for June, 2007. Although all the art works are created independently, the composite show reveals a surprising unity of colour and image. Many of the artists were amazed by their own innovations, which emerged from this process.

The Calling All Artists project has inspired more than just the artists involved. Each year more artists join the group. The congregation and others who attend the opening, visit the show, buy the chapbooks and art work are also inspired by the creativity expressed through the project. There is now discussion about expanding the project to include interfaith groups who will share different perspectives on a chosen text. There will be further opportunities to cherish the creativity in all of us, and in doing so, increase the presence of the Shekhinah in the world.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Gwen Kay

**BETH SHOLOM-CHEVRA SHAS**

DeWitt, NY

315-446-9570

Congregation Beth Sholom Cheva Shas's annual Chinese Banquet centers on the well-known Jewish enjoyment of Chinese food, but fully within the context of *kashrut* and multi-cultural history. There is no other program of its kind in the country. The Congregation offers this banquet, completely kosher, to the general Jewish community of Syracuse. Classic, fully authentic Chinese dishes are cooked in our commercial kitchen and under the supervision of Dr. Donald Siegel. Siegel authored "From Lokshen to Lo Mein: The Jewish Love Affair with Chinese Food" (Gefen Publishing House, Jerusalem, 2006), which has been nominated as the Best Asian Cookbook of 2006 by the Gourmand Society (known as the "Oscars" of cookbook publishing). Siegel donates most of the royalties from this book to the synagogue, and incorporates many of the book's recipes for the banquet. Siegel was selected by the Jewish Book Council to tour in 2006 and give lectures on the historical and cultural connections between Jews and Chinese food. Siegel incorporates some of his scholarship on the intersection of Jewish and Chinese cultures along with his kosher Chinese recipes every time he caters this banquet, which has evolved during the past 15 years into one of the most popular Jewish cultural events in Syracuse. The banquet is large; 10 courses are served to up to 200 people. The food is distinctively Chinese

rather than Chinese-American, and often include items such as Beijing Duck, steamed fish Nanking style and lotus root with sticky sweet rice, as well as what arguably are Chinese recipes with overtones derived from Jews living in China during the Song dynasty over 800 years ago. Our synagogue has taken something distinctly non-Jewish and made it acceptable for all Jews who would like to partake of it. This dinner is truly unique. No prepared Chinese food is brought in from kosher Chinese-American restaurants, only raw ingredients. Senior citizens to USYers prepare the food under Siegel's supervision in what transpires into two days of education and learning new culinary skills in an atmosphere often exuberant (volunteers have to have an element of exuberance when asked to make 300 vegetarian dumplings from scratch!). Our rabbi has a hard time not walking into the kitchen for samples during the preparation. For the meal itself, our USYers serve as wait staff, and being chosen the Maitre d' for the year is considered something of an honor. The dinner is structured to incorporate *Havdalah*. We find that the quality (and quantity!) of food brings our Jewish community together for this event, making for a singularly enjoyable evening, both culturally and socially. We thank you for your consideration.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Under 100

Submitted by Ilene McGrath

**CONGREGATION SONS OF ISRAEL**

Leonia, NJ

201-944-3477

Our annual *Tikkun Leil Shavuot* study session celebrates "People of the Book." Each person has chosen and read a book with a Jewish theme or connection and makes a presentation to the group. The program is notable for its high level and wide range of participation, the variety of topics covered, and the stimulating discussions.

The program, which is entering its fifth year, has been regularly attended by 20 to 25 people (from a congregation with fewer than 70 family units). The age of the attendees range from teenagers to senior citizens, including both synagogue regulars and those who seldom are seen in the synagogue. Almost all attendees come prepared with a book they have read. The topics have ranged from fiction to history, from children's books to cookbooks, from humor to the Holocaust, and everything in-between.

Some of the consequences have been increased reading of Jewish-related books, stimulating discussions, revelation of personal stories and viewpoints, and continued reading as a result of the presentations. The cost is merely the cost of refreshments.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Over 900

Submitted by Leann Buchman Blue

**CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM**

Northbrook, IL

847-498-4100

Grab a seat at the Ideas Café, a brand new concept in programming at Congregation Beth Shalom featuring local Jewish thinkers with big Jewish ideas... this is how we billed this new and innovative program.

We did everything possible to make one of our rooms look like a café complete with café tables, candles, lower lighting, dinner and checked tablecloths.

Each month we featured a local Jewish "celebrity" who had an interesting take on some aspect of Jewish life. Our "interviewers" were either Rabbi Carl Wolkin (our rabbi) or Carl Schrag, former editor of the Jerusalem Post. Our topics were:

- November 2 - Aaron Freeman, "Reconciling Jewish Values with American Politics"
- December 7 - Carl Schrag, "American Jews and Israel: What ties us together? What tears us apart?"
- January 11 - Aaron Cohen, "Israel in the Media: What's the Real Story?"
- February 1 - Prof. Barry Chazan, "Are We Shattered Into Pieces? Why Do Jews Always Fight Among themselves?"
- March 1 - Rabbi Benay Lappe "What to do When the Torah Says 'No' but Your Kishkes Say 'Yes' "
- April 12 - Rabbi Yehiel Poupko—"Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Orthodox Judaism, But Were Afraid to Ask"

Our format was always the same with a light dinner beginning at 6:30 pm, followed by the interview portion of

our program, and then a question and answer period. We ended by 7:45 pm, in time for evening minyan. The program was a tremendous success.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Deborah Scheimer

**BETH EL OF SOUTH HILLS**

Pittsburgh, PA

412-561-1168

Beth El Congregation of the South Hills is a congregation of 400 families in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, PA. In 2006, Beth El began a new adult education formal program to teach our members about what it means to be a Conservative Jew. We are studying the *halacha* of the Conservative movement with our Rabbi, Alex Greenbaum, in order to gain insight into who we are. In “Conservative Judaism from A to Z” Rabbi Greenbaum reviews the *teshuvot* of the Conservative movement with the attendees and fields questions about them.

Classes stand alone and are open to all, so the attendees fluctuate from class to class depending on interest in the topic. We typically have 12-15 people in attendance, but some topics have had 20-40. We can spend one session on a topic or more, if required. The flexibility of the learning process appeals to all. We usually meet twice per month, on Sunday mornings from 10:30-12:00 (coincident with Religious School class times) and on Monday evenings from 7:30-9:00.

We use the actual *teshuvot* of the movement as our text. Copies of relevant text from the “Proceedings of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards” and other sources, such as the Shulchan Aruch and Talmud, are distributed and discussed during the class. We are in no rush to “complete” the alphabet, as we view adult education as an ongoing process. We started with topics beginning with the letter “A” (i.e., Aliyot; Assisted Suicide, and Advanced Medical Directives) and a year later have progressed to the letter “H” (i.e., Halloween, Hevra Kadisha, and Hebrew School for Non-Jewish Children). For particularly relevant (and usually controversial) topics, we have been known to discuss them out of sequence and at a different time (such as for a Congregational Lunch and Learn on Intermarriage held after services one week.)

Class topics for upcoming sessions are decided based on a vote by the attendees. Once we complete a letter of the alphabet, we review the topics that begin with the next letter and select our topics from that list Rabbi Greenbaum estimates the length of time each topic is expected to take to study and plans the sessions accordingly. During some class sessions we study more than one topic.

Our class topics and times are advertised in several ways. They are in our KOL, which is our bimonthly newsletter, each week’s Shabbat announcements, our Email “Friday Update” which is emailed to over 200 email addresses weekly on Thursday evenings, and special emails to class attendees. Occasionally class topics and times are announced from the *Bima* on Shabbat mornings.

Our long-term goal is nothing short of understanding what Conservative Judaism stands for. Our short-term goal is the understanding of the laws regarding a particular topic in detail. We believe that as we gain insight both into specific laws and the process of decision-making in the Conservative movement, we will become more committed Conservative Jews.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Over 900

Rabbi Jeni S. Friedman

**TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM**

Roslyn Heights, NY

516-621-2288

Although we often think of the summer as a time of rest and relaxation more for our children (who may be away at summer camp) than for ourselves, during the summer of 2006, the Department of Life Long Learning at Temple Beth Sholom created an opportunity for our adult learners to immerse themselves in what we called our “Hebrew University,” a six-week program of Hebrew language instruction and Israeli dancing.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

**TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM**

100-250  
Submitted by Kat Wellman

San Leandro, CA  
510-357-8505

Brief History of Temple: Temple Beth Sholom is a small United Synagogue congregation situated in the middle of a dozen or more larger congregations in the East (San Francisco) Bay area. A majority of our congregants settled in this region after mustering out of the military at the conclusion of World War II. That means that the majority of our households are headed by an adult 80 years of age or older. As a result a great emphasis of our congregational activity is on prayer and study.

History of Temple Adult Education: Ten years ago most of our adult education was offered in the evenings, on Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. As time went on, fewer and fewer synagogue members drove their cars in the dark and the evening classes were moved to the daylight hours. Today we offer an adult education opportunity almost every day of the week that is specifically provided for a literate, Jewishly knowledgeable and sophisticated retired senior community.

Recently a phenomenal preschool open to the entire community has given us a wonderful reputation as a warm and welcoming synagogue family. About a third of the children in our preschool are Jewish, the rest are Christian, Muslim and Buddhist, African-American, Latinos, Asian and every combination thereof. So our Preschool Director and Rabbi have begun to offer an array of basic Judaism classes in the evenings once again.

Weekly Schedule of Adult Education Classes:

Sundays: On Sundays, we have offered special mini-courses which coincides with our Torah School, allowing the parents the opportunity to attend. A wonderful light brunch is also served. Recent mini-courses taught by our Rabbi have included the following:

- *Jewish History Through the Literature of Our People*
- *Jewish Philosophy, Philosopher by Philosopher*
- *If There Were No Jews There Would Be No Superhero Comics*

This latter class was featured on the front page of our local newspaper, the "Daily Review." (The same article was on the front page of the Metro Section in at least three other local newspapers, "Oakland Tribune," "San Jose Mercury News" and the "Valley News.") Last week we had 30 people from the synagogue and from the community (due to the great publicity) to listen to the Rabbi share his passion.

On Sunday mornings, we have also had classes on *Kashrut* taught by Sophie Miron, past president of our synagogue, in preparation for Pesach and in general for Conservative Jews.

Additionally on Sunday mornings, Erida Parker teaches Biblical Hebrew at all levels to any adult who wants to learn.

For good health and fun, one of our members Sondra Schwartz teaches a gentle exercise class called Ruach Hag-ba'at, using **Qi Gung**, she combines spirituality and meditation along with various exercises to increase movement, flexibility and energy for our members.

Tuesday Morning: After our morning minyan (which contractually must be lay led) our Rabbi leads a seminar on *RaMBaM's Guide for the Perplexed*. This on-going weekly seminar has been meeting for five years. Each week the Guide is read together by the group and the Rabbi leads the analysis. This style of close reading of the text has been a hallmark of our Rabbi's ten years at Temple Beth Sholom. (The group was first assembled to read the entire text of Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews. They began the current study of the Guide after a close reading of the *Mishnah*.) Our dedicated group of six or eight people includes a non-Jewish community member and members of our synagogue ranging in age from late 50s to early 90s.

Tuesday Evening: Recently our new younger members have requested a learners' minyan for Tuesday evenings to be followed by a seminar in Jewish Spirituality. The minyan is lead by new shelikhim with help from our Rabbi who sits comfortably in the back of the congregation. For the past month and a half, this group of mostly new members and mostly young working adults, has been studying the chapters of Abraham Joshua Heschel's *The Sabbath*. Almost

finished with this classic text, the group will continue with Soncino's *Six Jewish Paths to Spirituality*. This new group is growing. We have built up to a half a dozen and continue to grow.

Wednesdays: - Our Talmud study is on Wednesday afternoons. We have been studying Steinsaltz's *Baba Metzia* weekly for about eight years. We are proud to announce that we have just begun chapter 1 Six members and friends of the congregation are there every week. There are often drop-ins as well.

Thursdays: -Temple Beth Sholom is the host to the East Bay Multi-Interest Day (MID) on Thursday mornings from the Fall to the Spring. Scholars from the many outstanding universities and colleges are invited on a weekly basis to discuss their fields of expertise or their personal passions. Twice a year, nationally recognized scholars are brought in for endowed lectures. Once or twice a year, local rabbis are also invited, Topics include everything from *Current Events in israel* to the *History of Jews from Arab Countries*, These scholars have addressed the study of the *Dead Sea Scrolls* and local history, *Jewish Music* and *Jews on Broadway*, as well as every other topic imaginable. Up to 100 seniors attend this weekly. One-half to two-thirds of the attendees are members of Temple Beth Sholom.

**Lunch and Learn:** For the past three years our rabbi has agreed to follow these MID lectures with a weekly "Lunch and Learn." Many of our seniors stay for an additional hour and a half to study World Regions with Rabbi Manhoff whose doctorate is in Comparative Religion. We have discovered a unique format for the Lunch and Learn. The group watches a lecture from a nationally renowned scholar (from the Teaching Company) from a DVD. After the half hour lecture, the Rabbi leads a conversation comparing the religion under discussion to Judaism (often leading to interesting critiques of these outstanding scholars.) Our Rabbi's encyclopedic knowledge of world religions and Judaism, mixed with his 'unique sense of humor has made Lunch and Learn popular with members of many different synagogues of all different denominations. Some 20 to 25 seniors stay after the MID lecture to continue studying with our rabbi.

Fridays: Our Rabbi's visit to our preschool's Tot Shabbat on Friday mornings has become popular with the parents of our youngest students. The Rabbi teaches the children basic prayers and explains to Jewish and non-Jewish parents the holidays being taught in the preschool. His stoly telling is also very much appreciated by the children and their parents. There are 60 to 70 children and 10 to 15 parents celebrating Tot Shabbat on any given Friday morning.

On Friday evenings after our Shabbat service, we offer Israeli dancing with instruction for those who do not know the dances.

Shabbat: Before the Shabbat morning minyan there is a weekly Torah Study. Our rabbi insists on a variety of commentaries for our study of the parasha. Along with Etz Chayim, we open Plaut's *Torah*, Rashi and RaMBaN commentaries, Everett Fox's *Five Books of Moses*, Ellen Frankel's *The Five Books of Miriam*, Stone *Tanach*, Friedman's *Commentary on the Torah* and Robert Alter's *Five Books of Moses*. Torah Study can be as many as 15, most of whom are regulars.

Once a month on a Shabbat afternoon, we host a Nosh and Drash. The Rabbi agrees to forgo a drash during the worship and instead we sit down to an afternoon meal together. During our noshing, Rabbi Manhoff opens a discussion of a subject appropriate to that Shabbat. The vegetarian meal is provided for attendees for free, prepared by members of the Adult Education committee. We have noticed that free food usually attracts a crowd. We can expect from 30 to 50 to join us for an excellent meal and good conversation.

We believe we offer the best Adult Education Program for any congregation of any size in the San Francisco Bay Area (we don't have any comparisons outside our immediate area). It is particularly impressive for such a small congregation (approximately 170 member families). None of it would be possible without Rabbi Manhoff who is a born teacher. We feel so fortunate to have him as our Rabbi.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

500-900

Submitted by Leah Tarlow

**CONGREGATION BETH EL**

South Orange, NJ

993-763-0111

Congregation Beth El is a Conservative, egalitarian community of approximately 500 families. The theme for the 2006-2007 adult education program is "**Conservative Judaism**." Two separate, three-part series were conducted on Sunday

mornings after Minyan. Teachers for the fall series and their topics were: Rabbi Francine Roston teaching about the Conservative movement, our member and JTS faculty Rabbi Len Levin discussing Rabbi Judah HaNasi, and our Rabbi Emeritus Jehiel Orenstein on kashrut. Their insights were practical and generated much discussion. The second series presented Rabbi Mayer Rabinowitz on “Are we a Halachic Movement?” and Rabbi Roston discussing a Conservative approach to Shabbat. Courses for each series were taught one after another, so attendees could participate in each offering, with each course lasting for 45 minutes to one hour per session.

The adult ed program culminated in a three-part Sunday evening series, Sunday@Seven in which three leading voices of the Conservative movement are sharing their personal insights. The three speakers are Rabbi Gordon Tucker, Rabbi William Lebeau, and Rabbi Judith Hauptman. Each speaker was challenged to discuss what being a Conservative Jew means to him/her personally and how this identity impacts his/her faith, practice and approach to Jewish texts. The goal of this culminating series was to promote people’s personalizing and integrating their learning into their personal religious development.

In addition to relying on in-house talent, we paid honorariums to our outside speakers. One speaker deferred his honorarium to a specific cause with which he is closely identified. Our \$5,000 budget was supplemented by gracious donations and a minimal admission per session to defray expenses.

Publicity consisted of postings on our website, large posters in our building, flyers, inclusions in our weekly congregational e-mail and Shabbat handout, and announcements in the Jewish newspaper and also the local press.

## BULLETINS

### **GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Micah Kleid

### **BETH EL CONGREGATION OF BALTIMORE**

Baltimore, MD

410-484-0411

Beth El Congregation of Baltimore publishes a monthly newsletter called *The Voice*. *The Voice* has undergone a number of transformations over the years, none more evident than the one put in place following the establishment of the communications coordinator position. This person’s primary responsibility is to be the in-house reporter and editor for *The Voice*, and as such this person writes a majority of the articles for each issue. This person also edits the articles submitted by the schools, committees, affiliate organizations, congregation members and other members of the professional staff. This person is also responsible for assigning photo stories to the staff photographer, a volunteer, a role which is evident by the increasing amount of photographs in each issue. A professional graphic designer is also on staff to layout each issue. Beth El publishes 11 issues a year, with a double-issue over the summer, and it is distributed to over 2,000 homes. Since the establishment of the communications coordinator position in July 2006, congregants have made mention of the noticeable difference in the quality of the stories and photographs in each subsequent issue.

Standing features in *The Voice* include a listing of Beth El *simchas*; a schedule of services; pictures and information of upcoming *B’nai Mitzvot*; a feature of a new Beth El baby; “Light in the News,” a feature highlighting the accomplishments of a Beth El member; a listing of contributions to the congregation; a calendar of events; and a listing of upcoming adult education programs. Each issue also has a number of timely news (stories based on events that will, or already have, taken place.)

### **GOLD**

250-500

Submitted by Ellen Petras

### **CONGREGATION BRITH SHALOM**

Bellaire, TX

713-667-9201

The *Hineni* is a monthly publication of Congregation Brith Shalom. It is mailed to every member household and posted on the web site. The *Hineni* is the main source of information about synagogue business, events, and activities. Other information is sent by email, but this does not reach every member. Additional regular mailings have been limited because of their cost.

The *Hineni* is produced by lay members of the congregation. Only the design of the masthead and front cover colors (which closely involved a lay member) and the printing are accomplished by outside professionals. The process of producing the *Hineni* begins one month before the issue date with the collection of articles and ads written by the clergy, school principal, the president, committee and auxiliary leaders, and event chairs/publicity leaders. In addition, one member writes articles that do not have a designated source. The president and the rabbi make suggestions for articles and for events to be given priority placement in the issue. Materials also come from the community and the Conservative movement.

The editor reviews submissions to assure consistency in usage and grammar and makes adjustments necessary to fit information into available space. Every effort is made to retain the style of the author rather than to create a newsletter with a single editorial voice. The editor assures there is information on all events and activities that need to be included and checks for accuracy of dates and times. The office provides the synagogue calendar for inclusion in the newsletter. Once all of the information is collected and edited, the editor lays out the document, incorporating photographs and graphics provided by contributors, and sends it to other members for proofreading. Once final edits are made, the document goes to the printer. The printer delivers the printed copies to the synagogue office, where staff bundle it for bulk mailing and take it to the post office. If all goes according to plan the *Hineni* is delivered to members by the first of the month.

**GOLD**  
100-250  
Submitted by Rae Kridel

**CONGREGATION SHAAREY TEFILLA**  
Indianapolis, IN  
317-253-4591

Enclosed are four sample issues of the Shaarey Tefilla *Bulletin*, the bi-monthly Marc Klein newsletter for Congregation Shaarey Tefilla in Indianapolis, Indiana. The congregation was formed 15 years ago and by the standards of many larger congregations, we are still young, but it is that youth that sets us apart. We are Yocheved Samson comprised of approximately 160 family units, most of them with young children still at home, so we are a lively, vibrant community. Newcomers to Indianapolis find themselves at our doors because we are friendly and welcoming. We are “Where Friends Become Family.”

The *Bulletin* was redesigned last year and in addition to incorporating a cleaner, more colorful look, I added a lot of new content to it. There are book reviews, an entire page for kids with games, recipes, and book reviews, a humor column, a “Did you know?” column of Jewish trivia, a “Who’s Who” column and with this last issue, a column where we check in with friends who have, for whatever reason, moved to other parts of the country. The goal was to make the *Bulletin* not JUST where you get the schedule for holiday services or read Rabbi’s letter, but something to look forward to, to enjoy, to prompt you to pick up a great new book or learn something new about a congregant you’ve known for years.

The congregation has outgrown its current building and a new home in Carmel, a northern suburb of Indianapolis, is under construction. This will make us the first congregation in this growing city, where approximately HALF of the Jewish population of Indianapolis now resides. As we move to our new home, we expect to gain many new members, either those who have remained unaffiliated because of the distance or those who choose to give us a second look. One thing that will not happen is that we will not lose our close-knit community, because Shaarey Tefilla is “Where Friends Become Family.”

**GOLD**  
500-900  
Submitted by Linda Newman

**BETH EL SYNAGOGUE CENTER**  
New Rochelle, NY  
914-235-2700

The Beth El Synagogue *Bulletin* is a monthly publication (except in the summer when there is just one issue). Its primary function is the dissemination of information and photographs about past, present and future events, primarily at Beth El, which are of interest to our congregation. Each issue contains a calendar with these events, as well as the Torah portion, b’nei mitzvot and Shabbat beginning and ending times. Page two details all the services taking place during the month, including the Havurah Service, Shabbat Discussion Group, Teen Service, Junior Congregation, Torah for Tots, and daily minyan. The calendar highlights all of the activities and programs for the month at a glance.

Members rely on *The Bulletin* as their primary source of information about the shul. Therefore accuracy is of paramount importance. Three lay members of the congregation, who volunteer in their respective capacities, edit *Bulletin* copy. One of our editors is proficient in Hebrew language and transliteration. Except in the cases of the rabbis, the directors of the Religious School, and Nursery School, all articles are written by lay members of the congregation, who either serve as chairs of various committees, affiliates, or projects of the synagogue, or who are asked to prepare articles on specific subjects. Volunteers, working on their home computers, also design and produce some of the display advertisements for Beth El events and take almost all of the photographs.

Beth El is a multi-faceted synagogue, and we have many varied activities. We pride ourselves on being inclusive, and try to offer something for everyone. The *Bulletin* is our members' source for news of what's happening at their synagogue.

**GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by Laurence Wall

**AGUDATH ISRAEL**

Ottawa, ON

613-728-3501

Agudath Israel has worked hard in recent years to make its Bulletin more content-rich with a more visually appealing layout. We focus not just on our clergy and executive, but on the interesting achievements of our members. In many cases, we find ordinary people doing some extraordinary things. We also keep our members up to date on synagogue and community activities and celebrate the holidays with helpful and interesting articles.

We're proud of the fact that the revamped Bulletin has been an in-house project. We don't use outside companies to prepare each issue. We have a staff member in our shul office that lays out the paper. She has a terrific sense of what is eye-catching. And we print the Bulletin in-house. We've saved thousands of dollars in the process while sacrificing little in terms of quality.

**GOLD**

250-500

Submitted by Adina Noveck Viesel

**B'NAI SHALOM**

West Orange, NJ

973-731-0160

B'nai Shalom of West Orange, New Jersey presents the *Hayenu* newsletter and the *E-Happenings* e-newsletter. Both of these publications are produced by the synagogue's innovative and highly collaborative new Communications Team.

Since its formation last summer, the Team has carefully analyzed the internal communication needs of the congregation including identifying problems related to the synagogue's bulletins. Subsequently, not only were shortfalls corrected but both publications have moved to new creative heights serving as "one-stop-shopping" resources for all congregational information.

The weekly E-Happenings includes summary, detail and link data for all events presented. The monthly *Hayenu* affords members in-depth coverage of synagogue life via professional, creative journalism. In both cases, new venues have been created for member participation such as the *E-Happenings'* Community Postings section and the *Hayenu's* "From Our Members" section. Reaction to these publications and other related projects of the Communications Team has been outstanding.

**GOLD**

Under 100

Submitted by Rabbi Amy Scheineman

**BETH SHALOM CONGREGATION**

Westminster, MD

410-875-2800

Joy Marlowe graciously took on the task of redesigning and editing our newsletter, *The Chalutz*, in January 2004. Our congregation is small (90 families) with limited staff. The newsletter helps everyone stay in touch and we need it to both disseminate important information and help create a sense of community. At the same time, printing and mailing the newsletter was costing an exorbitant amount and we needed to find a way to trim expenditures. *The Chalutz* was reconceived to provide:

- Information for readers to live a fuller Jewish life. This includes, but is not limited to: candle lighting times, Torah and Haftarah portions, and information about Jewish holidays and traditions.
- Community news to help members feel more connected with one another, including information beyond the announcement of yahrzeits and donations.
- A clean, neat, user-friendly, and professional looking format that is attractive and encourages people to read it cover to cover.
- Information about USCJ and broader Jewish community concerns, which had not been included in previous newsletters, to reflect and convey the value of *Klal Yisrael*.
- A newsletter in pdf format (as well as printed format) so that the congregation could preserve resources (paper, printing costs, and mailing costs) by e-mailing the newsletter to those members able to receive it by e-mail, who can then decide whether they wish to print it out or read it on-screen. Printed copies are mailed to those without access to the internet, and are available at the synagogue.

These efforts have resulted in a new vastly improved newsletter that includes much more information than any previously and that creates a stronger sense of community by helping people connect with the congregation and the Jewish community beyond. More people are contributing to *The Chalutz* than ever before, and it contains more material worth reading. *The Chalutz* is becoming an educational organ and we have plans to increase its educational content in the future.

**GOLD with Distinction**

Over 900  
Submitted by Marsha Rehns

**BETH EL OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

Bethesda, MD  
301-652-2606

The monthly *Scroll* was redesigned and re-imagined in September 2006 by a committee of Beth El congregants, all of whom are professional editors and writers. The committee hired a professional designer, who created the design and lays out the issue each month. The designer introduced the use of color, which costs no more than the previous black-and-white bulletin. All assigning, writing, and editing are done by congregants as volunteers with the goal of making the bulletin more readable and compelling.

It was determined that the *Scroll* be used in four ways: to educate about Judaism and the Jewish community, to inform about events, to create cohesiveness within the congregation, and to assist in development. The calendar insert, which replaces separate listings in different parts of the previous design, clearly and concisely informs about upcoming events. Each issue has a timely theme, which includes stories written by and about congregants, so the theme section both educates and unites the congregation. Each issue also has a section that relates to the congregation's annual theme. Pages from the auxiliaries, such as Men's Club and Sisterhood, reveal their breadth of programming. Special features, such as the Hebrew lesson and Ask the Clergy, offer a break from longer articles while providing nuggets of education about Judaism. The redesigned donation pages and attractive ads for synagogue and community events especially benefit from the use of color and have improved participation in all synagogue events and fund-raisers.

As the *Scroll* was being redesigned, the *Scroll* committee conducted a writing and photography workshop for staff and synagogue committee chairmen to encourage them to write and depict more about synagogue events than just the event, date, and participants. From youth activities to Men's Club, the improved writing and photography have offered usable information to people who missed an event and encouraged attendance at future programs.

**SILVER**

Under 100  
Submitted by Doris Pinski

**CONGREGATION BRITH SHOLOM**

Erie, PA  
814-454-2431

Congregation Brith Sholom is celebrating its 110th Anniversary this year. Our Conservative congregation is the heart and soul of the Erie, Pennsylvania community which has unfortunately diminished in numbers over the last 40 years. From a synagogue of over 500 families in the 1950's, we are now about 80.

Nevertheless, Congregation Brith Sholom stands for something sacred and holy, and continues to have a unity of direction, a source of spiritual sustenance to feed the soul of its members, and continues to give educational

nourishment to feed the minds of its member and non-Jewish community. Our approach is to teach that “Torah is to be lived” and we attempt to make the ordinary extraordinary! Over the past 110 years, the rabbis, Board of Directors and Officers have attempted to make Congregation Brith Sholom a very special spiritual and educational oasis.

We are pleased to submit 3 different issues of our monthly *Jewish Center News* which is edited by the rabbi and members of the congregation.

**SILVER**

Over 900

Submitted by Marc Katz

**TEMPLE ISRAEL OF GREAT NECK**

Great Neck, NY

516-482-7800

Temple Israel of Great Neck (New York) is a large, vibrant congregation with a myriad of activities taking place seven days a week, beginning with the early morning minyan and continuing until late into the evening. The Temple’s 8-16 page bulletin, *The Voice*, is written, edited, and the page design is done by lay members of the congregation every other week, for 22 issues per year. The newsletter seeks to cover congregational activities as a regular newspaper would, complete with photos, headlines and tightly written and edited news-style stories.

In addition to timely stories, each issue contains regular features, including:

- Columns by the Rabbi, president and a guest column, usually by a member of the congregation involved in a Jewish-related project or cause, but sometimes by leaders of the Conservative movement such as the Seminary chancellor or United Synagogue president. Another column, by the director of one of the Temple’s three schools, appears in each issue.
- “In Quotes,” a feature calling attention to passages from Jewish prayers and writings frequently overlooked or said by rote, but profoundly written.
- “B’nai & B’not Mitzvah In Our Temple Family” features a photo and write-up about congregation children about to mark this milestone in their life. Special recognition and emphasis is given in the articles to involvement in Jewish activities and recognitions, planned family trips to Israel and plans for continuing Jewish education.
- “D’var Torah,” a weekly commentary by the Temple’s former Senior Associate Rabbi.
- “Service Schedule,” a detailed listing of all Temple services, Torah readings and B’nai Mitzvah.
- Other regular features include “In Memoriam,” listing congregation deaths; “Upcoming Events at Temple Israel”; “Candle Lighting Times”; “Minyan Times”; “Mazal Toy To...”; and “From Generation to Generation,” listing contributions to various Temple funds.

*The Voice*, now in its 49th year of publication, has become an integral part of synagogue life. Members of the congregation look forward to its publication and regularly comment about its content. Temple Israel considers the newsletter a vital link in bringing the message of congregational news as well as news of the greater Jewish community to its membership.

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Michael Schatz

**BETH EL TEMPLE**

Harrisburg, PA

717-232-0556

Today, synagogues must tell and retell the story of what is happening in life at the shul. At Beth El Temple, our communication is mainly through the *Hashaliach*. At one time, the *Hashaliach* was composed by the professional staff. This year, our *Hashaliach* is a true partnership between lay and professional. Under the leadership of congregant Ellen Rabin, Beth El Temple now has a publication with greater depth, more diverse content, and a longer shelf life because information within its pages has ongoing usefulness. Ellen Rabin and congregant Faith Parker write the stories as coordinated with the professional staff and officers.

We, at Beth El Temple recognize that many synagogue newsletters are an opportunity to highlight generous donors. It is our thought that thanking is only one part of the mission in this type of publication. Each month the Editor meets with our Executive Director to discuss objectives for the upcoming issue. Each week the lay person and professional meet to develop the *Hashaliach* so it can be sent to the Graphic Designer (congregant) who does the layout

so that it can be forwarded to the printer. It is exciting that this year we have more pictures and quicker turnaround from sending content to graphic design to its arrival at home.

**SILVER**

100-250

Submitted by Ron Arsham

**TEMPLE BETH SHALOM**

Mahopac, NY

845-628-6133

Our *Temple Times* bi-monthly bulletin is an ongoing project of many dedicated volunteers of our synagogue community. Completely lay written and published, our newsletter is a publication all of us wait by our mailboxes to receive. Not only does it provide incredible information on our synagogue activities and happenings, but it also connects our Temple to the greater Northern Westchester and Putnam communities as well as to the world of the Conservative Movement through announcements and news. Our newsletter always features a *Tikkun Olam* page as well as a story or feature about Israel, which has helped raise awareness of timely issues for our community to take part.

Over the past few years, through the hard work of our advertising volunteers, the *Temple Times* has become a very successful fundraising endeavor for the synagogue. It not only pays for itself but has now become a regular source of revenue for our community. We are truly proud to present this publication to you.

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Mark D. Savin

**BETH JACOB CONGREGATION**

Mendota Heights, MN

651-452-2226

While Beth Jacob's bulletin, *Kol Ya'akov*, has been published for many years, it has undergone significant changes in the last 18 months. While the bulletin always contained a helpful presentation of basic shul data, both its graphics (which were largely standard clip art) and its content were matter of fact.

Members of the Congregation, responding to a need for a publication that really was "the voice of the congregation," undertook a substantial revision of the bulletin in 2006. The work was done entirely by volunteers without any outside professional assistance though the quality of work done by these volunteers could not have been more professional. The graphics and fonts used were revised; the layout was redone; photographs were added to the text. The editors began to seek out articles by congregants bearing on matters of importance to the shul and its community. For example, in the June-July, 2006 issue, we published a lead piece written by a parent about his interaction with a public school that presented an event with inappropriate religious overtones. More recently, we published a congregant's in-depth article about his week working in New Orleans as part of a post-Katrina work project. Great effort has been given to publish news and articles relating to current issues in the Conservative movement, including articles following discussion relating to outreach and ordination. The Hechsher Tzedek program has been publicized and closely followed.

Generally, *Kol Ya'akov* has moved beyond being a bulletin into being a magazine — a place that contains discussion of ideas, as well as notice of events. (This has been made possible in part by the shul's creation of an on-line service "This Week @ Beth Jacob" which now serves to provide notice of immediately current events. The monthly task of producing *Kol Ya'akov*, setting and managing a production schedule, copy, editing, layout, soliciting articles, working with those who have submitted materials for publication is entirely a volunteer effort by congregants. The revised bulletin has been extraordinarily well received. Perhaps the greatest compliment that it has received is that while everyone may not agree with the articles it now publishes, everyone does read it.

**SILVER**

Over 900

Submitted by Marni Meloui

**B'NAI ISRAEL CONGREGATION**

Rockville, MD

301-881-6550

The B'nai Israel *Scroll*, our monthly newsletter, arrives at the beginning of each month. The topics covered in each *Scroll* include: synagogue activities, important holiday information, service times, b'nai mitzvah, articles from the rabbi, president, and cantor, education information, youth activities, library news, and acknowledgement of contributions. In addition to our own events, we include announcements about community programs as requested, along with

advertisements for the Jewish Theological Seminary, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Mercaz, Masorti; other movement affiliates, and other community organizations (e.g. Israel Bonds).

The B'nai Israel *Scroll* is an important tool for profiling the congregation and its diverse programmatic offerings. By publicizing successful completed programs, recognizing lay leaders, welcoming new members, and listing life-cycle events, the *Scroll* is also a useful community-building instrument. Layout is directed by our Media Specialist. All materials are examined by a professional editor before it is sent to the printer. Our publications are distributed to our 1,450+ member families and to community organizations and other parties who have an interest in our synagogue. Our goal is to provide clear and relevant material in a professional manner.

**SILVER**

Over 900

Submitted by Deborah Brosowsky

**TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM**

Roslyn Heights, NY

516-621-2288

The Temple Beth Sholom *Bulletin* is published generally 9 times per fiscal year, September thru June. Usually we publish a combined January/February issue since February can be a slow news month. We try to maintain a yearlong theme if possible. This year we concluded our synagogues 55th anniversary celebration by using the "55" Logo to bring together all our varied programs. Next year our theme will be ISRAEL at 60!

Programs are publicized early on and continuously. We especially love to promote our wonderful and accessible Judaica museum. We try to have as many photos as we can. Our members love to see the activities of our children.

With our "Vision-Statement" as a guideline we do our best to communicate with all of our congregants. We include a monthly article from our Partners in Community Care (PICC) to inform our members of the Jewish Social Services that are available in their community. We have tried to keep our members up to date with the innovations that have taken place in the synagogue, such as our Derech, lifelong learning program and our campaign to improve our Early Childhood Center.

We publish articles concerning the programs and resources of United Synagogue, JTS and any other organizations that our Synagogue feels serves our members and the Jewish community at large, i.e.: Israel Bonds, UJA-Federation, Educational Groups, promotion of Mitzvah projects and social action committees, etc.

Our layout and typesetting is largely outsourced in close communication with the editorial staff of the bulletin. We do not as yet print it in house, but find it more economical to send it out for printing. The proofreading is done by the young adult daughter of an active member and a charter member of the congregation still aids us with the proofing. L'Dor v'dor! We often include a few extra flyers to be mailed with the bulletin for last minute important congregational information. The bulletin is always received before the first of each month.

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Laurie M. Gore

**TIFERETH ISRAEL CONGREGATION**

San Diego, CA

619-697-6001

The *Shofar* is a synagogue newsletter driven by a mandate to feature what the congregation wants to see. Guest columns, photos, and features, reflect a continuing relationship with the congregation and a response to positive feedback and constructive criticism. Increasing reliance on original material generated by the membership and exploiting internal resources and digital technology, we are able to offer a newsletter specifically relevant to our organization. The majority of the work is done by volunteers, from writing and photography to design and production. With an effective interface with other media generated within the congregation, we are able to connect to promotional materials and to the website for a more effective and comprehensive communications program.

**SILVER**

500-900

Submitted by Cindy Schuval

**CONGREGATION B'NAI AMOONA**

St. Louis, MO

314-576-9990

Our goal in publishing the B'nai Amoona *Bulletin*, is to educate and provide information to our Synagogue population. We also post the issues on our website to increase circulation. By including articles from our Rabbis, our Congregants are made aware of current issues and developments in the Conservative Movement which concern our community as well as communities worldwide

Our goal for the Klei Kodesh articles and articles from our departments auxiliaries and committees is to motivate our members to experience our many social and educational activities, at their individually selected level of participation. We pay particular attention to including articles that educate us to understand Judaism, its tradition and where Judaism is headed.

Many organizations, outside of B'nai Amoona, are also represented in our bulletins on a regular basis such as various departments of the Central Agency for Jewish Education, Solomon Schechter Day School, and Missouri Meals on Wheels.

We are proud of our bulletin as it is a great representation of the diversity in programming our shul offers. We recognize our B'nai Mitzvah each and every month, list the upcoming services and layout the pages making them easy to navigate for people of all ages. Our bulletin is printed 11 times a year and is coordinated and edited by a volunteer member of our shul.

**SILVER**  
100-250

**BEIT RAYIM SYNAGOGUE**  
Thornhill, ON  
905-770-7639

Our *Bulletin*, which is produced by a small group of dedicated volunteers in the congregation, is written six times a year, and sent out to the families of all congregants, and the families of the students in our Hebrew School. We also distribute extra copies to visitors and potential members of our synagogue.

At the beginning of 2007, our editor decided to introduce and succeeded in a new layout and design in Microsoft Publisher, aiming for a clean, uncluttered, readable layout. We've received a great deal of positive feedback from our congregants thus far.

This is a particularly exciting time for Beit Rayim. We have a new and dynamic rabbi and we are in the process of planning for a new building, which will be completed in 2009 — so there are many exciting new viewpoints, reports, and activities to include in our Belt Rayim *Bulletin*.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
100-250  
Submitted by Carla Silver

**BETH ISRAEL OF NORTHERN VALLEY**  
Bergenfield, NJ  
201-384-3911

Congregation Beth Israel's bulletin is used to inform their congregants about the activities and programs that will be held during the month. It is a compilation of all their activities including yahrzeits, donations, notices, etc. The office staff and various members of the congregation insert submissions to the bulletin. It is sent to a graphic designer who places each submission on a page. He then returns it to the office staff for proofreading. The office staff, the rabbi and a volunteer from the congregation proofread the bulletin. They then report all changes to their graphic designer. He will then send them the bulletin for final proofreading, and then when all are satisfied the bulletin is sent to the printer.

There is a volunteer staff that helps place any flyers, including the monthly calendar, in the bulletin. The volunteers put mailing labels on the bulletins so that they can be distributed to the congregation. The bulletin is mailed a few days before the end of the previous month so that it arrives on the first of the month for which it is printed.

Congregation Beth Israel's bulletin is distributed ten times a year from September to June. It is not distributed for July and August.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
250-500  
Submitted by Bonnie Bresalier

**COMMACK JEWISH CENTER**  
Commack, NJ  
631-543-3311

We are so proud of our beautiful monthly magazine, *The Luach*. It is published ten (10) times a year with the June issue combining June, July and August. Here is a truly readable bulletin with articles, news, newsletters and advertising.

Our Rabbi, Hazzan, President or a Committee Chair presents Jewish material in article form, or via the monthly articles. News related to USCJ, JTS, Israel and other current events feature prominently in our bulletin and advertising.

Our editor, a congregant, uses considerable talent to ensure layout and design meet or exceed prior months publications. Our congregants love to receive and read the *Luach*.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
100-250  
Submitted by Jan Lewis

**CONGREGATION AHAVAS ISRAEL**  
Grand Rapids, MI  
616-949-2840

Ahavas Israel's bulletin *The Voice —Ha Kol* — is published 10 times a year, September through May, with a summer issue. It is the synagogue's main vehicle of communication. Though a weekly *e Voice* update is sent electronically, there are many members who do not have access to email, so the printed bulletin is how the congregation stays in touch with them.

The 16-page bulletin includes a number of monthly features such as "Divre Harav — Words from the Rabbi," a Presidents Column, "Dear Rebbe: Ask the Rabbi," a monthly calendar, candle lighting times, Tribute forms, Religious School news, Contribution listings, Birthdays, Anniversary and yahrzeit lists and a SCRIP order form for one of the congregation's primary fundraisers. Coming events for the month are featured, announcements printed and Federation and community events highlighted. Photos of previous events, such as a Chanukah dinner, Purim celebration, Sisterhood function are frequently included. Occasionally congregants submit articles about a recent trip, or fundraising effort.

The Voice is edited and created by a lay member and printed at a local printer. Mailings are done by member volunteers.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
250-500

**CONGREGATION OR SHALOM**  
Orange, CT  
203-799-2341

The Or Shalom bulletin is published monthly except for a combined July-August issue.

The bulletin is produced and edited by lay members of the congregation. During the past two years, the office staff has assisted with some proofreading.

The bulletin is mailed to members, advertisers and a few "friends" of the congregation including community leaders. We also use the bulletin as part of a prospect package sent to potential members.

The bulletin is posted on our website at the time of publication.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
250-500  
Submitted by Sybil E. Sanders and  
Belle J. Winston

**TEMPLE ISRAEL OF PALM BEACH**  
Palm Beach, FL  
561-832-0804

*Topics*, the bulletin of Temple Emanu-El of Palm Beach, produced by two members of the congregation with the creative input of a secretary/graphics staff person, is an in-house publication, published monthly, with a combined summer issue for July and August. The two co-editors solicit articles from members of the congregation, write all articles which are not attributed, prepare the copy for printing, and proofread each issue, which is then printed on rented equipment. The finished product is delivered to the Post Office for distribution to members of the Temple; additional copies are available for non-members at Shabbat and special services, as well as mailed to individuals interested in learning about the Temple.

Our guidelines are to create an informative, readable, interesting newsletter which will keep our members informed of all items of interest pertinent to our synagogue community. Included are schedules for activities reflecting the various arms of the synagogue, holiday observances, religious school programs, social announcements, news of the world of books, the Jewish world, and all aspects of the Conservative movement, on the local, state and national levels. We also bring our members news of Masorti, the Conservative Movement in Israel, as well as Israel Affairs.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Larry Rosman

**JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER**

Paramus, NJ

201-262-7691

The Jewish Community Center of Paramus produces 12 bulletin issues per year. We are very proud to have rolled out a completely new and fresh look and feel for our Bulletin this year. Our greatest accomplishment has been how we have done this and been able to cut our costs in half, saving our congregation over \$15,000 per year!

Our volunteer Bulletin Committee is made up of 4 members, along with 3 “proof reading” members. This streamlined group each tackles a different part of the monthly process. Our ad specialist solicits ads, follows up with advertisers and coordinates all payments. Another member handles workflow and content issues, making sure things happen the way they are supposed to. Our Finance Guru oversees all aspects of the bulletin from a monetary standpoint. Our Chair makes sure everything gets done and we put out the best possible product! Each of us is constantly in contact with the committee and everyone is involved in all aspects, making this truly a group effort. Although we are all volunteers, we treat this as if it were a commercial publication.

Our new design and cost cutting initiative have really made this important communication tool for the JCCP so meaningful to us on the Committee, but it is only a start. Our goal is to make this bulletin even more beautiful and to have the entire cost offset by the advertising dollars we bring in.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

100-250

Submitted by April Kirk

**TEMPLE SHOLOM**

Pompano Beach, FL

954-942-6410

Temple Sholom, a congregation in Pompano Beach, Florida, has introduced a brand-new newsletter, “Kol Sholom”. This newsletter is published and produced in-house and is created every other month by our Marketing Chairperson, April Kirk.

The introduction of this newsletter, along with new electronic weekly communications, has enabled the Temple to get fresh information out to congregants in a timely and cost-effective fashion. Attendance at events has increased, and the Temple’s membership is up as well.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Sharon Waxenbaum

**NORTH SHORE JEWISH CENTER**

Port Jefferson Station, NY

631-928-3737

In this world of 10 second sound bites, text messaging and email overload, our Bulletin brings a more tangible sense of the NSJC community into the homes of our congregants each month (September through June, edited by a lay member of NSJC.)

While serving as a marketing device to promote upcoming Shabbat, holiday and program activities, our newsletter also provides a consistent opportunity for our leadership to speak to our members every month: Rabbi, synagogue president, Men's Club/Sisterhood presidents, directors of our Nursery & Religious Schools, Seniors, Chaverim and Youth Groups.

Our members' lifecycle events and news are shared through B'nai Mitzvah photos, a Milestones column, listing of those who have passed away and even the donations posted at the back of each issue gives insight into our community. We highlight activities and events of social concern in the greater Jewish community, offer USCJ and other Jewish website information and even include a Jewish crossword puzzle, space permitting.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Over 900

Submitted by Michael L. Simmons

**CONGREGATION HAR SHALOM**

Potomac, MD

301-299-7087

The general layout of Congregation Har Shalom's newsletter, *The Tablet*, was developed in the mid-1990s by a lay committee (that consulted with a graphic artist) as part of the congregation's communications initiative over ten years ago. We at Congregation Har Shalom take pride in publishing our newsletter eleven times per year, through which the congregation is informed of congregational and community events.

With the exception of the clergy and school columns, laity writes the entirety of the synagogue newsletter. Further, a lay editor who also does the layout of the publication edits, *The Tablet*. While a local printer prints the newsletter, the congregation takes great pride in contracting for newsletter mailing services provided by individuals with learning disabilities.

In addition to providing *The Tablet* to our members and advertisers, Congregation Har Shalom also includes *The Tablet* as part of the materials distributed to prospective members.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

500-900

Submitted by Andrea Ammerman

**CONGREGATION BETH DAVID**

Saratoga, CA

408-257-3333

Congregation Beth David produces four regular publications which allow our members to stay informed about synagogue happenings using different media and various presentation styles. Although we are presenting this application using our 4 bulletins as a "bulletin package," each bulletin could be considered individually if so desired.

Our periodic publications are as follows:

1. Beth David Star

The Star is a formal publication, professionally printed on high quality paper and sent monthly to all congregants. The Star consists of articles and photos about events and activities at the synagogue, formal articles from our clergy, staff and board members as well as relevant news about synagogue and local events and activities. The publication is edited and produced by a lay member of the congregation. The Star is available on-line as well.

Each issue includes the following:

- Formal teaching about an important topic of the day from each Rabbi
- State of the synagogue summary by the President
- Sisterhood and/or Men's Club news written by their respective presidents
- Articles about synagogue events or activities usually written by event leaders
- Calendar of Events for current and following month
- Education and Youth events and activities
- Family Milestones including B'nei Mitzvah, Anniversaries, Yahrzeits and Condolences Contributions
- Advertisements — usually supporting member businesses, or those of other supportive members of the community at large.

## 2. Mid Month Mailer

This mailer is an informal, monthly bulletin mailed (and the link e-mailed) to all congregants. The mailer is compiled by Beth David's marketing staff person and copied and mailed in-house. It contains program overviews and reminders about upcoming community and congregational events and activities.

## 3. Shabbat Bulletin

The Shabbat Bulletin is a weekly publication that is e-mailed to all congregants. A booklet version is distributed to all worshippers at Shabbat services as well. The Bulletin contains the following information:

- General information on the week's parasha and haftarah
- Specific readings and information relating to the sermon being given
- A brief description and timing of upcoming congregational events as well as community events, Sisterhood events, Adult Education events/classes, Religious School events and a schedule of upcoming Youth Services for all ages
- Refuah Sh'leimah list which is read out loud during the prayer for healing
- Yahrtzeit list
- Thank-yous, condolences and mazal tovs for that week.

## 4. Hod-Sheet

Hod-Sheet is the Religious School's monthly newsletter written by the principal of the school. A PDF version of Hod-Sheet is distributed via e-mail to all Religious School families, the Beth David board and posted on the CBD website. Hardcopies are distributed to students and can be found in the synagogue lobby. Hod-Sheet focuses both on activities directly related to the Religious School and to those congregational events which relate to students and their families.

Each issue contains the following:

- Upcoming Events box -- The month's activities related to kids and families can be viewed at a glance.
- Save the Date — a highlighted box drawing attention to an event or activity that will take place the following month.
- Mitzvah of the Month — At our Religious School we highlight a Mitzvah of the Month. The mitzvah corresponds to the Babaganewz mitzvah of the month. Our mitzvah board in the school's hallway highlights the mitzvah, the name of the Jewish month and information and articles about the mitzvah both from Babaganewz and from community newspapers. Hod-Sheet highlights the mitzvah in its header as a reminder to parents to further discuss this mitzvah with their children and to take a look at the board.
- Pinat Ivrit — Our Hebrew corner. This corner of the newsletter highlights Hebrew words which have been used in the issue. It usually includes the monthly mitzvah in Hebrew transliteration as well as a few additional words which were introduced within the body of articles in the issue.
- Articles — Each month there are one or two articles which focus in greater detail on something related to the Religious School. It might be a recap of an important event which has taken place, an in-depth explanation of one of our on-going programs (e.g. Mitzvah of the Month), or a summary of the accomplishments of a particular class based on an update from the teacher. As often as possible, quotes from the students are included.
- Lifecycle — When applicable, each issue also highlights a Mazal Tov to students having their Bar or Bat Mitzvah that month or condolence for a loss.

As a package, Congregation Beth David's 4 period publications serve to keep all members of the synagogue community as informed and involved as possible about all aspects of Beth David community life.

### **HONORABLE MENTION**

100-250

Submitted by Dr. Steven Goluboff

### **AGUDAS ISRAEL**

Saskatoon, SASK

306-343-7023

Our congregation is located on the Canadian Prairies in the City of Saskatoon. Our closest Jewish communities are located in Regina (160 miles), Winnipeg (500 miles) and Calgary and Edmonton (400 miles). We are truly a small and

isolated Jewish community. We strive to maintain a viable and dynamic Jewish community. One of the key elements in achieving this goal is our community publication, *The Bulletin*.

*The Bulletin* is published six times a year. We have no professionals involved in its publication other than the final product that is collated and laid out by a friend of the congregation and printed at a local facility. There are a variety of regular columns from the President, the Rabbi, Sisterhood, Hadassah Wizo, the Hebrew School, the B'nai Brith Youth Organization and our young Schlichim, Israeli couples who have been an integral part of our congregation for the last six years. We have a policy of only publishing original material unless it comes from the United Synagogue. We are pleased to have two regular columns from Israel, both written by former Schlichim. As well as many featured articles by our own talented members, we use *The Bulletin* as a forum for publicizing local events in the community and for thanking our members and friends for their donations to our many funds.

*The Bulletin* is also available on line in glorious colour at [www.saskatoon.uscjhost.net](http://www.saskatoon.uscjhost.net). This has allowed people from far and wide to learn more about our vibrant community.

*The Bulletin* is totally financially self sufficient and supported by local advertisers and page sponsors, a great advantage to a small community with limited financial resources. We have just celebrated the 100 issue of *The Bulletin* and look forward to 100 more.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Masha Ronay

**CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL**

St. Petersburg, FL

727-381-4900

The Congregation B'nai Israel *B'nai Israel Review* is the main information source within the Congregation. It is published as 11 general issues per year plus 3 Holiday Handbook issues for High Holidays, Hanukka and Passover. A year ago, the Synagogue undertook a huge makeover of the general design and presentation of our Bulletin with the guidance of our new layout volunteer. Other improvements have been the inclusion of photographs, improved paper quality and use of color. Holiday issues, which used to include "pull out" sections of holiday information, have been reformatted into smaller, user-friendly "Holiday Handbook" issues and have been a big hit with our Congregants. The resulting improvements to the publication have not only been well received by the Congregation but have also resulted in a 25% increase of bulletin advertising revenue.

The *B'nai Israel Review* is produced with a core group of 2 staff members and 3 lay volunteers. The mechanics of producing the Bulletin begin 6 weeks prior to each issue when the Bulletin Coordinator, and Office Manager, meet to review the upcoming calendar, and with input from the Rabbi and Executive Director, notices are sent out to over 30 staff and lay volunteer contributors to the upcoming issue. The Bulletin Coordinator inputs and follows up all material. Then the material is sent to our lay out volunteer for the creative process of layout and design, including photographs submitted by our volunteer photographer. It is then proofread by 6 lay volunteers and staff with final coordination by the Office Manager before being sent to press. The circulation of each issue includes 425 members, about 100 prospective members, 75 college students away at school and 90 bulletin advertisers and community organizations.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Over 900

Submitted by Jean Bernard

**ADAS ISRAEL CONGREGATION**

Washington, DC

202-362-4433

The Adas Israel *Chronicle* is our congregation's monthly newsletter to our members, prospective members, and community. Two years ago we embarked on a campaign to revitalize and develop the publication to create a stronger and more effective communication tool. This process involved discussions with our volunteer, lay editor, our Communications Committee and a design consultant to evaluate the look and content of the publication. In addition to mailing the *Chronicle* to members and community leaders, free copies are available in the synagogue lobby. Current and past issues of the *Chronicle* are also available on our website.

## CELEBRATIONS AND DEDICATIONS

### **GOLD**

250-500

Submitted by Rance Block

### **TEMPLE BETH EL**

Allentown, PA

610-435-3521

2005-2006 proved to be a banner year for Temple Beth El. With all the excitement leading up to the relocation of our congregation, we were then faced with how to respectfully bid farewell to our old building and welcome in the new one. Although there were significant challenges that faced our congregation during that period such as the relocation into temporary quarters and all the planning, physical work, and issues surrounding the transitory relocation, we chose to view this period as a time of celebration. Programming during the year of construction was significant as it provided the vehicle for the congregation to stay involved and connected. Therefore, we successfully took every opportunity to celebrate milestones at each juncture of our building project.

Although each of these programs could have been submitted for individual awards, we chose to submit them collectively, as each program was a sequential celebration leading up to our relocation into our new building. This submission highlights these programs and affirms that placing a positive spin on a somewhat stressful situation can create good will, ruach and camaraderie in a congregation.

The programs for our *Year of Celebration* included:

- a. The commissioning of an artist to paint a rendition of our sanctuary
- b. Closing services for our old sanctuary
- c. A groundbreaking
- d. Removal of the cornerstone
- e. "Rock Around the Block", a dinner dance honoring our old building
- f. Installation of the cornerstone
- g. March of the Torahs
- h. A Dedication ceremony
- i. A dinner dance honoring our new building
- j. A hardbound Temple Beth El Journal

### **GOLD**

250-500

Submitted by Rabbi David Kunin and  
Howard Sniderman

### **BETH SHALOM EDMONTON**

Edmonton, AB

780-480-6333

In honour of the 75th Anniversary of Congregation Beth Shalom, our congregation embarked on a year-long journey to create a Torah. From young children to the most senior adult, all the members of our community have had the unique privilege of fulfilling the 613<sup>th</sup> Mitzvah — to write a Sefer Torah, while at the same time through effective fund-raising and inclusive community events we also strengthened our congregation.

During the course of almost a year, starting just before Shavuot 5766 (June 2006) and ending with a Siyyum (Dedication Ceremony) in March 2007 in honour of the 75th Anniversary of Congregation Beth Shalom, congregants and friends had the opportunity to write a letter in the congregations new Sefer Torah. The commission of our new Sefer Torah has been generously funded by a family in the congregation in honour of their children to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of our synagogue.

During the year in addition to writing the Torah, we also had a series of major events coinciding with the visit of our scribe. These events included opening and closing services, a cantorial concert and two photo exhibitions. All the events during the year were either free, or priced so that a majority of our congregants could participate. We also reached out to ensure we had the active support of Women's League and our youth, including them in every aspect of the celebration. Our goal was to enable the entire congregation, young and older to celebrate 75 wonderful years.

### **GOLD**

### **BETH SHALOM**

Beth Shalom Congregation is a vibrant congregation located in Jacksonville, Florida. Similar to many other congregations, we have over the years honored our young children (consecration and other events), our young teenagers (B’Nai Mitzvot), our older teens (confirmation), our young adults (B’Nai Mitzvot Reunion Shabbat), but we had never specifically honored our older members. A committee was formed to honor our senior members and the name *Golden Shabbat* was chosen. The committee determined that we would honor all of our members who had reached the age of 75. The event chair obtained a membership roster and with the help of long time congregation secretary, identified members who were 75 years of age or older. We had sixty-two golden members. Committee members volunteered to arrange for decorations for a Friday night dinner for our golden members and their families, to obtain sponsors so that the program would not be an expense to the congregation, to interview honorees to learn their interesting life stories for publication, to arrange for publicity, to organize a dinner and to organize a transportation committee because many of the golden members would not be able to drive. We discussed tailoring the Friday night service to involve as many golden members as possible. Rabbi Sandberg worked with the event chair to do so. We also decided to give each golden member a memento of the evening and to engrave a leaf on our tree of life near the sanctuary entrance in honor of the Golden Shabbat. A date of May 5, 2006 (the 8th day of Iyar 5766) was chosen for the first ever Beth Shalom Golden Shabbat.

The committee met many more times to plan and implement all of the details to make the program successful. Publicity articles appeared in the Beth Shalom *Shofar* and in the *Jacksonville Jewish News* in the months leading up to the program. Several of the committee members worked on the decorations, several others worked on the dinner, and several worked on obtaining a suitable memento (an apothecary jar engraved with the name and date of the event and filled with chocolate candies). One committee member took charge of creating a tribute program (brochure) for the event. One committee member interviewed most of the honorees to obtain their interesting life stories. This member created a beautiful display with names, dates, photographs and very interesting comments and quotes by honorees concerning their Jewish life.

On the night of Golden Shabbat our driving committee picked up those honorees who could not provide their own transportation. Most of the honorees attended the dinner as well as Shabbat services, while some were only able to attend services. Since the Friday dinner started before sundown, we were able to take some photographs. The dinner room and the sanctuary were beautifully decorated with gold being the theme color. After a wonderful dinner, Birkat Hamazon and time for socializing, services began. Many of our golden members participated by reading in English and Hebrew, leading the congregation in songs, and opening and closing the Ark. The Rabbi’s sermon was devoted to the wisdom, beauty and inner strength of our golden members. Services concluded with all of our golden members on the bima leading the congregation in Odon Olam.

In the days and weeks after the Golden Shabbat, committee members, officers of the congregation, the Rabbi and the staff received many thank you’s and wonderful comments from those honored and their families. We also received a number of donations in honor of the event. One golden member, Evelyn Shiller, wrote “Thank you for making us feel so special. The beautiful table settings, the delicious food, the great service, your caring and warmth and your special gifts all contributed to an unforgettable evening, and to think -- all we had to do was reach age 75!” It was truly our honor at Beth Shalom to honor our golden members.

**GOLD**

100-250

Submitted by Harvey Spivak

**CONGREGATION OF MOSES**

Kalamazoo, MI

269-342-5463

Two Torah scrolls were given as a gift by the Congregation of Moses, Kalamazoo, Michigan, to LaJavura, a new Masorti congregation in Valencia, Spain. LaJavura is established in a location where there has not been a Jewish community for many generations.

Alba Toscano, president and founder of LaJavura, came to Kalamazoo to receive the Torahs and bring them to Spain. She was in Kalamazoo for several days, visited people and places in the area, had an interview with the local newspaper and led a Sunday morning cooking program, “A Taste of Valencia.” The giving of the Torahs to Alba and her congregation took place on Shabbat in a moving ceremony that was incorporated into the morning Torah Service.

**GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by Margoe Gutnik

**BETH EL SYNAGOGUE**

Omaha, NE

402-492-8550

On November 19, Beth El Synagogue was the venue for a Hanukkah concert involving children ages 4-12. Organized by our Cantor, Gastón Bogomolni, in collaboration with the Cantor of the Reform congregation in Omaha, the children of synagogues of all denominations in Wyoming, the Dakotas and Iowa, as well as all the Jewish organizations and synagogues in Nebraska were invited to participate. The concert, bringing together 250 Jewish children, was a joint benefit for Omaha's Child Saving Institute and Israel's Wings program, which assists disabled young adults. We received grant funding to underwrite expenses so all income was donated to the two charities.

Due to the participation of a local charity as a beneficiary, and the involvement of all local Jewish organizations, we were fortunate to receive excellent publicity in the community. Beth El Synagogue submitted articles to the Jewish Press as did the publicity coordinator for Temple Israel. All synagogues put articles in their respective bulletins and on their websites. There were links from weekly email newsletters from both Beth El Synagogue and Temple Israel that encouraged people to attend. The Child Saving Institute included information in their newsletter and on their website. Posters were distributed throughout the general Omaha community.

Additionally, we had excellent volunteer involvement from all three synagogues as well as the parents of the participants.

Planning began two years prior to the day of the concert. The two cantors made a practice CD in the spring and spent Sundays rehearsing with local children from the beginning of the school year. All synagogues in five states received the music, a practice CD, letters and emails and numerous phone calls, lyric sheets, encouragement and enthusiasm. Any children not within driving distance were offered home hospitality for the weekend. The Sunday before Thanksgiving was selected so as not to conflict with the always-crowded community December calendar. All children participating received a t-shirt with the concert logo in one of 4 bright colors (which they wore for the performance) and received a concert CD. The children sang 13 selections, divided into age groups, and we had a full band, with special arrangements commissioned for the day. Large photo displays of the two charities were on exhibit as people entered the community court, prior to entering the sanctuary, so everyone could literally see where their money was going.

Why undertake an effort of this magnitude?

1. To showcase our culture, faith and music in an overwhelmingly Christian environment.
2. To focus on the idea of children helping other children through music.
3. To provide programming for small isolated synagogues without the benefit of any clergy.

This "Rededication for our Children" was an overwhelming success, filling our sanctuary to overflowing with more than 900 adults and children as we raised nearly \$5600 for two charities.

**GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by David I. Rothenberg

**BETH ISRAEL CONGREGATION**

Owings Mills, MD

410-654-0800

Beth Israel Congregation's Torah-writing project, entitled "*V'Zot HaTorah: A Mitzvah for Generations*," was the centerpiece project celebrating Beth Israel Congregation's 50th year of service to the Jewish community. The actual project was developed and run primarily by the laity. *V'Zot HaTorah: A Mitzvah for Generations* had three objectives:

1. Writing a new *Sefer Torah* for the congregation, whereby each person who fills in a letter with the *sofer* (scribe) was able to fulfill the 613th mitzvah to write a Torah. This is the first Torah in the history of the Congregation that was commissioned specifically for Beth Israel.
2. Providing congregants with the opportunity to learn and grow as Jews, by taking part in a rich array of Torah related educational and social activities and congregational celebrations. Participating enhanced congregants' sense of community and gave them a chance to get to know each other better.

3. Establishing an Endowment for Education and Lifelong Learning through dedications of portions of the Torah. This is the first endowment to be established by Beth Israel Congregation. The endowment will provide the necessary funds to expand and enhance the educational programs for current and future generations of Beth Israel congregants of all ages.

*V'Zot HaTorah: A Mitzvah for Generations* was unique in that it operated on many levels, involving all age groups and constituencies within the congregation. The targeted educational programming surrounding the letter fill-in opportunities included specifically tailored programs for Religious School students, Preschool students, Brotherhood, Sisterhood, several *chavurot*, as well as general adult education. Additionally, each family had the opportunity to fill-in a letter of the *Sefer Torah* with the sofer-in-residence, Rabbi Moshe Drum of Sofer-On-Site. Over 1,500 individuals participated in the letter fill-ins. The Inaugural Ceremony for the project on November 13, 2005 and the Dedication Ceremony on June 4, 2006 were each attended by 500-600 individuals. Dedications of portions of the Torah have already raised approximately \$800,000, with additional dedications still being made. Over 80 volunteers participated in the many *V'Zot HaTorah* committees. In fact, a number of congregants who took lead roles in the project had never been active in a congregational program or committee before. Therefore, as a by-product of the project, we were able to engage in leadership and membership development as well. Overall, the project touched many congregants on many levels: they served on the committee, they attended Adult Education programs, their children attended educational programs, they came to the opening or closing ceremonies, they filled in letters, and they made dedications. Specific (and unexpected) contributions were made to commission new Torah mantles for all of the *sifrei Torah*, with the Torah mantles reflecting the theme of *V'Zot HaTorah: A Mitzvah for Generations*. The new mantles were unveiled and dedicated at the special celebratory weekend that concluded the Congregation's 50th Anniversary, November 3-5, 2006. The family photos also are forming the basis of other projects to document/celebrate the congregation as a "family of families."

The year-long program further stimulated interest among many congregants in becoming more involved with Beth Israel or becoming more connected to Torah and Judaism. Members made additional commitments to participate in other congregational committees or take on additional congregational leadership responsibilities, enroll in Adult B'nei Mitzvah classes, learn to read Torah, attend other Adult Education programs, etc.

*V'Zot HaTorah* was officially announced to the congregation on Yom Kippur, 2005 and the Torah was completed and dedicated on the day after Shavuot, 2006. However, the project continues to resonate — members are continuing to dedicate portions of the Torah, thereby increasing the endowment; we read from the new sefer Torah every week in the synagogue, and the *V'Zot Ha Torah* Torah mantle is an ongoing reminder of the project. The "birthday present" we gave ourselves continues to bring nachas to our synagogue community.

**GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by Polly Strauss

**THE JEWISH CENTER**

Princeton, NJ

609-921-0100

The Installation of Rabbi Adam Feldman was preceded by six months of activities designed to introduce the Rabbi to his new Jewish Center family while providing exciting and varied volunteer opportunities for its members. Our goal was to involve as many congregants as possible in at least one pre-Installation event and to develop leadership skills among its members. Inclusiveness was emphasized in every step of the process with chairpersons overseeing a variety of subcommittees composed of both new and experienced volunteers. Input, involvement and ideas were sought from the congregation, and professional staff members.

The most ambitious of our pre-Installation events was a series of twenty-nine informal, "Meet and Greet The Rabbi Get Together," over a four-month period targeting various age groups, demographic distributions and interests. The purpose was to introduce the congregation to Rabbi Feldman and to have congregants become a part of the welcoming process. In addition, we used these gatherings as membership outreach, as a means to increase volunteerism and to encourage participation in congregational events. Most of these "get togethers" were held at the homes of congregants for approximately ten to forty guests. A phone squad of ten made an extraordinary effort to contact every single congregant to extend an invitation to attend the "Meet and Greet" of their choice. Approximately 700 people attended a "Meet and Greet." Congregants also attended other "Meet and Greet" activities at the synagogue such as an *erev Shabbat* dinner (250 people), a *Shabbat* afternoon luncheon (300 people), and a New and Prospective Members

Open House (50 people). One dozen volunteers worked with the Rabbi to facilitate the planning and arrangements for a Sukkot Open House at his new home which drew 200 people.

Volunteers became involved in all of the pre-Installation events as well as the Installation by assisting in myriad activities. The community building and sheer number of congregants who either worked on and or attended activities was unprecedented in the history of the congregation. Congregants made new and renewed connections with each other. Leadership skills were honed and many congregants subsequently volunteered to take positions in future synagogue projects, ushering in an era of excitement and involvement.

**GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Vickie Abrutyn

**B'NAI ISRAEL CONGREGATION**

Rockville, MD

301-881-6550

.In honor of its 80th anniversary, B'nai Israel Congregation undertook a project to write a new Torah for regular use by the congregation, to repair an older Torah for use by Jewish servicemen and women overseas, to engage the entire congregation in *mitzvah* and to raise funds to sustain the synagogue's mission into the future.

The organization of this ambitious project began in the Spring of 2005, when goals were defined and committee chairs were appointed to lead the task. To date, we have raised, \$625,000 which will erase our operations deficit and put some funds in our Sustaining Endowment.

From the beginning, congregational education on all levels was a primary goal of this project. The highlight of the educational effort was Torah Day, which was produced and directed by the professional staff. Torah Day included learning opportunities in a variety of forms and on a variety of levels — it truly reached every facet of our multigenerational, 1400-family unit congregation. The educational component was further supported by the rabbis of Sofer-On-Site, who visited the congregation 7 times over the course of the year to teach and to write sections of the Torah.

The *Lekah Tov* Torah Project is a model for creating partnerships between lay and professional leaders and for energizing an entire community around a worthy goal. The project has proven to be a powerful fundraising, educational, and community-building success.

**GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Bat'sheva Slavin

**TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM**

Roslyn Heights, NY

516-621-2288

As TBS Celebrates our 55th Anniversary, we were excited to invigorate our commitment to meaningful programming and life-long learning. We embarked on a year of thought- provoking programs and celebratory events. Our yearlong theme took us on a journey around the world, to Israel, and back home to TBS, where Our Tradition Goes On.

Since this year was a milestone in TBS history, the over all theme, the scope, the size and the way that the "Celebration Programs" were executed, make our presentation unique.

The Committee and vice president of programs began meeting in the spring of 2006, when the concept was created. At about the same time the vice president of programs met with the professional staff to go over and develop the concept. An overall plan was developed, as well as schedules for the programs and the events for the entire year. A calendar meeting was called in June when all the dates were coordinated with all TBS arms, and were placed on TBS Calendar. At that point the program committee was sub-divided to two. One group worked with the portion of the programs that dealt with lecturers and speakers, including a first appearance on Long Island by Dr. Arnold Eisen, the Chancellor-Elect of the Jewish Theological Seminary. The second group worked on the other events. Within each program group, there were designated chair people for each of the events, with many congregates working together.

From our brochure one can learn that there were many programs planned for different interest and age groups, many of the programs were open to the entire community. From our films to lectures, exhibitions, celebrations, and

Friday Night Live, all the programs were well attended. Where it was needed we offered simultaneously to the adult programs a children program, as well as baby-sitting.

The 55th anniversary programs were initially presented during the High Holidays, with our colorful brochure. We also had a 55th Anniversary column every month in our TBS Bulletin. Publicity was sent to all the local and regional Jewish and secular publications, on a regular basis. Each program had its own invitation or flyer that were advertised in our Shabbat brochure as well as from the pulpit. We also placed some of our programs on our Internet site.

The programs had different fundraising components:

1. We minted TBS 55th Anniversary Commemorative Coins that were sold for their Commemorative value as well as a raffle ticket. The prize -- two tickets to Israel on Rabbi Alan Lucas' next congregational trip to Israel. With a portion of the proceeds donated to the Masorti Movement in Israel.
2. We printed a Purim Megilla in honor of our president and his wife. The back of the Megilla gave well-wishers and vendors the opportunity to advertise.
3. We run additional fund raising events: Chanukah Holiday Fair and "Treasures" From Your Attic.
4. Many lectures and celebratory events were sponsored by the generosity of our congregants.

#### **GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Bruce Kuritzky

#### **TEMPLE OF AARON**

St. Paul, MN

651-698-4114

After several years of congregational turmoil, the Temple of Aaron, St. Paul, Minnesota, was looking for a way to reinvigorate its membership. With the arrival of a new senior rabbi, the timing was perfect to create a year-long celebration of the congregation's 50th anniversary in its current location. The membership responded with enthusiasm beyond anyone's expectations to the "Jubilee: Remember the Past, Live the Present, Trust the Future."

Events were planned to include all members of the congregation, past and present, and to make sure that they were open to the community — part of our strategy for growth in the future. The range of programs was vast: arts, education, reunions, publications, parties, special worship services, and more. None of the Jubilee events interfered with regular congregational activities, making the synagogue a hub of constant excitement.

Most importantly, the participation of members at every level was high. Volunteers planned, created, led, shared, and participated in every activity; staff involvement was strictly in a support capacity. Members found new connections and revived old ones through innovative programming. No member, regardless of where they live in the Twin Cities area or age or their physical condition, was prevented or excluded from participating in at least some of the Jubilee activities. The unanimous opinion of the Jubilee leadership is that this program, still in progress, is an unqualified success.

#### **SILVER**

500-900

Submitted by Dorrie Berkowitz

#### **THE FOREST HILLS JEWISH CENTER**

Forest Hills, NY

718-263-7000

An anchor for its congregational family, and an anchor for the community, the Forest Hills Jewish Center turned 75 this year. As befits such an institution, a grand celebration was planned, and the plans were to include both the religious and social aspects of the Center.

Following Kabbalat Shabbat services in the main sanctuary, a celebratory, family-oriented dinner was held in the Heller Family Ballroom. To enhance the warmth of the evening, a *cappella* entertainment was provided by the voices of N'ranena (two of whom are congregants) and by the special 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Chorus. Two of the highlights by the chorus were an *Ashreinu* composed by our own Rabbi Gerald Skolnik, and a *Shehecheyanu*, composed by congregant Heidi Rolnick.

Shabbat services included a presentation of a new Torah mantle to commemorate the anniversary. In addition, many of the Center's past presidents were on hand to receive honors and participate in the service.

The culmination of the weekend came on Sunday, when we literally took our celebration to the streets. The festivities began with speeches honoring the Center's role in the community. The speakers ranged from our city councilwoman, a congregant, to USCJ's Rabbi Jerome Epstein, to our own Rabbi Skolnik. Interspersed with the speeches was a reprise concert by the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Chorus.

The weekend culminated with an elegant cocktail party.

Shabbat services included a presentation of a new Torah Mantle Ballroom. To enhance the warmth of the evening, *a cappella* entertainment was provided by the voices of N'ranena (two of whom are congregants) and by the special 75th Anniversary Chorus. Two of the highlights by the chorus were an Ashreinu composed by our own Rabbi Gerald Skolnik, and a Shehecheyanu, composed by congregant Heidi Nelson Rolnick to commemorate the anniversary. In addition, many of the Center's past presidents were on hand to receive honors and participate in the service.

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#### **SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Cheryl Silberman

#### **HUNTINGTON JEWISH CENTER**

Huntington, NY

631-427-1089

On March 6, 2007, Huntington Jewish Center (HJC) celebrated its 100th birthday. To commemorate this milestone, we embarked on a year-long celebration which included all arms of the synagogue -- Sisterhood, Nursery School, Religious School, Family Life, Men's Club, Chai Club and the general population of the Synagogue. It was a synagogue-wide undertaking and it was a tremendous success.

Our community knew the Celebration was coming in the summer of 2006 as there was a large banner displayed on the front of the Synagogue announcing the Centennial Celebration and there was a new logo on all written material sent from HJC. In addition, there were articles in three newspapers with wide circulation. The first event was a Kickoff Brunch on September 6, 2006 which was attended by Huntington's Town Councilmen and women. Three long-time congregants told stories about their connection to HJC as story-telling was an important part of the celebration. For HJC's actual birthday in March, there was a congregational Shabbat dinner which Congressman Steve Israel attended and addressed. The Centennial Closing Ceremonies were held in the sanctuary where many present and past congregants attended and told their stories.

All arms of the synagogue participated in the celebration. The nursery school focused on the number 100 as the children collected 100 apples for seniors, decorated the Sukkah with 100 paperfruits, and collected 100 cans of food for the needy, among other projects. Sisterhood had a program about famous Jewish women and their inventions. The religious school students interviewed long-standing members of the shul to hear their stories about the synagogue. Our Rabbi had a lecture series. The Congregation put on a show.

The Synagogue was also left with tangible legacies of the Centennial. A Centennial Plaque will be placed at the original synagogue location by the town of Huntington which identifies the building as Huntington's First Synagogue. A Centennial Brick Walkway will be dedicated. A Centennial Garden will be planted in May- a place of beauty, learning and respite. A Centennial Quilt is being crafted to be hung in the social lounge this fall. A Centennial Lapel Pin was made to be proudly worn and a Centennial Book has been written and will be given to each congregant family in May. It contains the history of the Huntington Jewish Center and over 1000 pictures of events that took place at HJC and families who celebrated at HJC over the last 100 years.

This year long celebration gave congregants a sense of pride in the long history of HJC. It encouraged many who have sat out in the past to participate in at least some event or project. And it continued the long tradition at HJC of fostering a cooperative effort between the older members and the newer members and the multi-generational families and the first generation families. We all participated and celebrated together.

**SILVER**

100-250

Submitted by Rabbi Debra S. Cantor

**CONGREGATION B'NAI SHOLOM**

Newington, CT

860-667-0826

Congregation B'nai Sholom was founded in 1955 by a small group of dedicated Jewish families from Central Connecticut, who shared a common desire to observe the High Holidays and build a strong Jewish community in their new home. Fifty years later, this active, vibrant Conservative congregation was determined to celebrate its Jubilee year so as to reflect its proud history, special character and deep Jewish values. The congregation viewed its 50th anniversary as an opportunity, not only to celebrate, but to reflect on our past and our future.

Involving members old and new, past and present (including students, teens, adults and seniors), we honored our founders and leaders through the decades, raised the public profile of the congregation, and generated funds as well. There were four major components of the Jubilee celebration, which was held October 28-29, 2005: 1) The Friday evening "Jubilee 50th Anniversary Shabbat" service, followed by a special *Oneg Shabbat*; 2) The "Shabbat @ the Center" program on Saturday morning, entitled "*Bereishit: Back to Our Beginnings*"; 3) The "Golden Jubilee" Gala dinner dance on Saturday night; and 4) The "Friday Night Live" speaker series which ran monthly through the year.

Next year, we plan to embark on our first-ever (but hopefully not last!) congregational Israel trip. Fittingly, the theme for this past year's "Friday Night Live" series has been "Next Year in Jerusalem." So our hope is to conclude celebrating our 50th anniversary in time to celebrate Israel's 60th!

**SILVER**

500-900

Submitted by Margie Gutnik

**BETH EL SYNAGOGUE**

Omaha, NE

402-492-8550

Beth El Synagogue hosted a community Tu B'Shevat family event on Sunday, February 4, from 1:30 to 3 p.m. at the visitor and education center at Lauritzen Botanical Gardens to celebrate the New Year for Trees. Open to the entire Omaha community, this event encouraged the entire synagogue membership, the greater Jewish community and the entire Omaha community to learn about this holiday's roots and its focus on the ecological observance of nature as well as experience the beauty of our local Botanical Gardens in the middle of an icy winter. This was the second year this event was held. After a successful first event held in 2006, the Gardens have requested that we host this as an annual celebration. We are already on their calendar for 2008.

The day of the event, participants took guided "tours" around the inside gardens led by Beth El volunteers, stopping at four "stations" along the way. At each stop, the tour guides sang and/or read poetry related to the holiday and nature, led a small discussion and tasted the fruits and nuts grown in Israel related to one of the seasons of the year. As space to walk around the Gardens is limited, the tours were repeated multiple times during the event to accommodate all those attending. During the event, Israeli music played throughout the Gardens and before or after a tour, there were a variety of nature related arts and crafts, "planting" activities and cookie decorating available for adults and for children to enjoy. Our community Shlichah showed a film about Israel and used it along with a giant floor map of the country so people could have fun with a trivia quiz. All who attended received informational brochures about JNF and blue boxes. We capped the event with a duet concert of Sephardic music sung in Ladino and Hebrew featuring our Cantor, Gaston Bogomolni and a congregant.

Garden admission and activities were free during the event, generously underwritten by a donor. Activities and crafts were underwritten by Beth El Synagogue. Synagogue volunteers did all the preparation and setup, including continually replacing trays of the items for tasting. Volunteers from the congregation led the tours of the Gardens, worked alongside the staff of the Gardens to manage the arts and crafts activities, baked the cookies (in the synagogue kitchen) for cookie decorating and staffed that activity, handed out JNF blue boxes and information materials and cleaned up all materials at the end of the event.

Beth El was responsible for all content and providing all materials and food for this event. Beth El publicized the Gardens and the community event to our congregational membership via articles in our monthly newsletter, the KOL, fliers in our mid-month mailing, on our website and to the entire Jewish Community with articles and photos in the *Jewish Press*, our local community newspaper. Lauritzen Gardens staff publicized the event in their membership newsletter, on their website and with an ad in the Omaha World-Herald, the local Omaha newspaper.

On a freezing cold Super Bowl Sunday, more than 275 people of all ages attended this unique event. It was an afternoon that allowed us not only to celebrate Tu B'Shevat in a beautiful setting showcasing an outstanding Omaha attraction but also offering a "taste" of Judaism to the greater Omaha Community.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Michael Schatz

**BETH EL TEMPLE**

Harrisburg, PA

717-232-0556

A successful fund-raising program consists of a good concept, a good committee, and good execution. Beth El Temple had a great 80th anniversary because of the efforts of many dedicated volunteers in our two major programs for the 80th anniversary. Great publicity and great programming in tandem yield success.

Beth El Temple in Harrisburg used the 80th anniversary as a prelude to a major capital campaign to begin in fall 2007. The successful tribute to Cantor Balaban will lead to the lobby of our facility being dedicated in honor of our Cantor Emeritus. The fall Art Show generated significant positive energy that show that the synagogue is truly a gathering place. As we recognize the combination of music and art for successful fundraising campaigns, the identification of Beth El Temple through the 80th, anniversary branding which was evident all year long, reinforces the heritage established by prior generations for the future.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

500-900

Submitted by Linda H. Weinroth

**CONGREGATION ETZ CHAIM**

Marietta, GA

770-973-0137

A common practice in the South is to hold a Baccalaureate service. This service is not school-sponsored, but it is school-sanctioned and honors the graduates of a given high school. Usually a group of parents plans the service, which is often held in a church. Since it is not school-sponsored, there is no restriction regarding bringing religion into the service, which can sometimes create uncomfortable feelings for Jewish students and even be offensive.

Often times, Jewish students choose not to participate because of the locale and content. For this reason Congregation Etz Chaim began celebrating High School Graduation by holding our own Baccalaureate Service honoring our graduating seniors. This service has become a highlight for families and has given us an opportunity to provide one last and lasting positive experience connected to the synagogue.

Students have the opportunity to participate in the service by reading something that they have written or by sharing an inspiring reading that they have found elsewhere. Each senior is presented with a yearbook as well as a book to take to college. In the past we have presented "Sacred Celebrations". We are currently using "Jewish U.," a book that gives the seniors lots of food for thought on how to maintain their Jewish identity when they are living independently in a college community.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Carole Klein

**MORRISTOWN JEWISH CENTER BEIT YISRAEL**

Morristown, NJ

973-538-9292

The Federation of Metrowest, NJ, offered institutions the opportunity to purchase a 6ft tall fiberglass lion which would be crafted by members of the institution and unveiled at the JCC in honor of Yom Yerushalayim. Morristown Jewish Center Beit Yisrael purchased a lion and felt it was important to dedicate a day of learning and celebration in honor of this momentous anniversary, The Fortieth Anniversary of the City of Jerusalem. The day began with the blowing of the Shofar. After a brief talk by the Rabbi about the reunification of Jerusalem, a video montage of images from the 1967 War, with emphasis on the march through the Lion's Gate was shown. The montage included mostly original footage from the 1967 war. Children from Preschool through 8th grade marched through the sanctuary and joined the cantor for a zimryah of Jerusalem songs.

Following the ceremony, adults were invited to listen to Leil Leibowitz, former Israeli consulate spokesperson, speak on the momentous decision of Aliyah. At the same time, children (and any parents who would like) participated

in program entitled, "A Walk Through the Gates of Jerusalem." The Walk began by each family receiving a tour book of the Old City of Jerusalem and her gates. The floor of the Ballroom had the outline of the Old City on it. At the appropriate points, archways were placed and marked with: the name of the gate, a picture of the gate, a history of the gate, and a map showing its location on the wall of the Old City. As families wandered in and out of the gates (beginning at the Lion's Gate) they were given the opportunity to participate in activities to enhance their knowledge of Old City geography and the important sites and history associated with the gates.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
250-500

**CONGREGATION OR SHALOM**  
Orange, CT  
203-799-2341

2006-2007 marked a double celebration -- the 25th anniversary of Congregation Or Shalom and the 25th anniversary of the tenure of Rabbi Alvin Wainhaus as spiritual leader.

The outline of this year of celebration began last Spring with the idea of several "megaprograms"-- a program commemorating the Paper Clips Project, a concert by Debbie Friedman and the culmination of the year -- a Gala Weekend.

Most of the work was done by a large volunteer committee which, in turn, split into several subcommittees. Local and state-wide elected officials were invited and came to the gala dinner-dance.

This anniversary year was heavily publicized in the local media. This effort was also helped by the Rabbi's rather unique story (from an urban, ultra-Orthodox background to a suburban Conservative synagogue).

As a gift to the Rabbi, an Educational and Cultural Fund was established in his honor with the proceeds from the gala weekend.

### *EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION*

**GOLD**  
Over 900

**B'NAI TORAH CONGREGATION**  
Boca Raton, FL

The Ruth and Edward Taubman Early Childhood Center at B'nai Torah Congregation is an accredited program by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We are also a participant in the Model of Excellence Program.

We have achieved laboratory status for our early childhood program and have educators spending time in our laboratory with our staff serving as mentors. The staff has taken many hours of workshops in early childhood and Judaic studies, as well as Torah Study with B'nai Torah's rabbinical staff. Our intense study is ongoing.

Our philosophy has been clear. The pre-kindergarten years are a time when children need to be prepared for the school years ahead and that best happens when we prepare them for life ahead. We teach our children to get along with each other, we teach our children to share, and we gently guide and model them into respectful and responsible behaviors. This is done in the loving embrace of Jewish tradition.

**GOLD**  
250-500  
Submitted by Laurie Berger

**BETH AHM ISRAEL**  
Cooper City, FL  
954-431-5118

Beth Ahm Israel's Early Childhood Program opened its doors 29 years ago. The school has grown and flourished through the years. Our families include children as young as 6 weeks through 5 years of age.

We offer a flexible schedule in which parents can choose from 3 or 5 half- days (9:00am — 1:00pm) or full-days (9:00am — 3:00pm). We offer extended care as well. Each day the children are provided with healthy snacks and kosher catered lunch. Our enrollment is at 75 students at this time. Our early Childhood Program is licensed (license #45259) and has obtained the Gold Seal Award Of Excellence through Broward County Florida Department of Children and Families Childcare Licensing Department. We are proud to be a VPK (Voluntary Pre-k) provider school.

Our Early Childhood director has a Masters Degree in Psychology, a CDA (Child Development Associates Degree), carries a State of Florida Director Credential Advanced Level License. The director grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home attending Hebrew Academy of Greater Miami from Nursery through ninth grade. Our teaching staff carries the necessary credentials for licensure with many holding Bachelors and/or Associates Degrees in Education and related fields. Classes and training in secular and Judaic studies are required each year. Each teacher is a member of the Jewish Early Childhood Professional of Broward County (JECPC) through Orloff CAJE of Broward County of which the director is President. The director is a member of NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children).

Our curriculum integrates all aspects of Jewish studies within our secular program. Hebrew vocabulary and language is used daily. Morning prayers and blessings are said daily. Lessons in midot tovot, tzedakkah and mitzvot occur weekly. We explore each Jewish holiday and Shabbat through many avenues (e.g., art, music, plays, pretend play, use of appropriate materials, reading, etc). Boys are required to wear a kippah for morning prayers, eating and anytime we are in the synagogue. We celebrate Shabbat every Friday morning with a Kabbalat Shabbat service. Families are welcome to join us and are invited to Friday night family Shabbat evening services as well.

Each room has a mezuzah on the doorway that is at child height. Judaic symbols for holidays, Shabbat, etc. are in books, on posters and in children's art displayed in the classrooms. Each classroom has their own self-decorated tzedakkah box that they fill each month and empty into a bigger tzedakkah box that will go to a designated charity of our choice.

Beth Ahm Israel's Hazzan heads our music enrichment class once a week and leads the Friday morning Kabbalat Shabbat each week along with the director. Rabbi visits the children for each holiday (blows the shofar, joins them in the sukkah, Chanukah presentations, Tu B'Shevat planting, Purim celebrations, Passover Model Seder, and special Shabbat celebrations. Pre-Kindergarten attends our Ganon Judaic Program once a week. This class is a great introduction into our Religious School.

Each classroom is furnished in accordance with licensing rules. Designated play centers are created in each classroom. Cubbies and appropriate shelves are used to store materials. Children have access to these during free play and center play time throughout the day. Children's art is displayed throughout the classrooms and hallways. Each grade level has an assigned time to go out on our age appropriate playground. Items for both toddler and pre-school age children are available to use.

We follow all laws of kashrut. We are not open on Shabbat and Yom Tovim.

Family involvement is very important to our program. Our families are informed that we have an open-door policy. They are welcome to join their child/children in the classroom when able. We have special events throughout the year opening up the school to our families. Taste Of School Night, Grandparent Shabbat, Mother's Day Shabbat, Lag B'Omer Daddy Day and Shabbat, Read To A Child Day and every Friday morning Shabbat families are welcome to join us. Each event includes any family member or friend in case a child does not have a grandparent, daddy etc. available to attend. Communication is vital to us and information is relayed verbally, written — weekly newsletters, lesson plan outlines, flyers, phone calls, parent meetings, etc. A parent/teacher/student orientation is held each year prior to the first day of school. Our annual Back to school/Taste of School Night is held toward the middle of the year to orient the families on a sampling of what the children have been working on throughout their days.

We also have a very involved PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) to work together for the growth and success of our program. Monthly meetings, planning and running events, fundraisers, room parent liaisons and parent get-together nights are all part of what makes our PTO successful.

Learning is a journey and a process. We strive to nurture the spirit in each child; building a love for Jewish life through respect for self, others and the world, giving tzedakkah, learning the role of Hashem (G-D), what our connection to Israel means, learning of mitot tovot and all the traditions and customs of Jewish life. Each child has the opportunity to develop socially, emotionally, cognitively, creatively, physically and spiritually. Our program is geared to enhance each child's natural ability to explore and learn. Each child is seen as unique. Self esteem, confidence, security and safety is paramount. Our enriching environment is filled with warmth, love, understanding, guidance and trust to help our children express themselves, problem-solve, and make decisions. Our overall goal is to instill a love of learning, to be able to embrace Jewish values and identity, to learn about our rich traditions and build a spirit of unity and sense of community for our children and families to take with them forever.

**GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by Adrienne R. Cohen

**THE FOREST HILLS JEWISH CENTER**

Forest Hills, NY

718-263-7000

It is hard for young children to develop a love for, a connection to and an appreciation of Israel if they do not have family there or have visited the country. For these children Eretz Yisrael is abstract.

In order to bridge the gap for them and make Israel more real and concrete, we studied the country, the people, their lifestyle and the geography. This was not done just once, during the year, but Israel was discussed in every classroom almost every day.

At the end of the school year we invited the parents and the congregation to visit the classrooms and see how important Israel became to the children and how much they learned about our homeland.

**GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Fern S. Moscov

**CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM**

Pittsburgh, PA

412-421-2288

Beth Shalom Early Childhood Department is housed in our beautiful synagogue. Our preschool staff and I had great input for the design of our preschool resulting in an area that is attractive, inviting, and state of the art. In fact, an architect visited our school when designing a preschool for another Synagogue. The sinks, water fountains, bathrooms, and playground were designed with the young child in mind. Our Board did not hold back on anything when it came to our young children and their needs.

We have been in existence for 19 years with the same Director, and many of the staff who started with us are still working in the preschool. The families in the community know what we stand for and are the ones who recommend us to other families, and we are proud to not have to advertise because of that.

Our school provides a strong Judaic and general curriculum. Our Rabbis, as well as our Synagogue members, are very supportive of our program. Our children are used to seeing the Rabbis on an almost daily basis and often will say to their parents, "This is my Rabbi."

The minute the children walk into the Synagogue, the message to them is that "Jewish life happens here." As the children walk down the hallway to the school entrance they are surrounded by beautiful artwork depicting various holidays. There are mezuzot on the door posts and our boys wear kipot. We go to Shul and have Kabbalat Shabbat and celebrate every Jewish holiday as well as Thanksgiving, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Veterans Day, and President's Day, to name a few.

**SILVER**

Over 900

Submitted by Rachel Mathless

**TEMPLE ISRAEL GREAT NECK**

Great Neck, NY

516-482-7800

Seven years ago in response to a question posed by a four-year-old pre-schooler at Beth HaGan — teachers met to explore ways the concepts set forth in the Torah and scientific truths could come together in a coherent, comprehensive entity, which would be understood in a developmentally appropriate manner. And so, the Torah Science Fair was born.

In this unique program, children from Toddlers to four-year-olds present projects depicting a wide and varied spectrum of knowledge. Our teachers have expanded on the concept of *Torah U'madah B'yachad* (Torah & Science together), bridging the gap between the scientific and Judaic world. In doing so, they have taught the children to make new associations, and internalize new forms in a tactile, sensory hands-on approach.

To begin, teachers either present a provocation, or dilemma, or are presented with one from the children. Sometimes, as an outgrowth from the Parshat Hashavuah, or as part of a holiday discussion or in the telling of a story about a biblical personality, an idea will begin to take root. When a four-year-old class began the discussion of the creation of man on the 6th day, the plan was formulated to learn about human musculature, and the inner working of the organs critical to sustaining life. The four-year-olds built skeletons, and local doctors, members of the community, and parents were called upon to share their areas of expertise in the field with the class.

One three-year-old class began with the Tower of Babel and the development of languages. From their actual building the tower and examining tall structures in the environs, children learned how a building stands, about foundations, reinforcement and architectural mathematics. They learned how to say many words in different languages and gained an understanding of the physical world around them.

From the story of Joseph and his coat of many colors, two-year-olds learned about primary and secondary colors, cooked every plant and vegetable imaginable, to obtain dyes, and learned how to weave thread into fabrics.

From the fourth day of creation, children studied refraction, reflection, light and its behavior, from the Exodus from Egypt, the children studied survival in the desert and the desert Habitat, from the birth of the twins Jacob and Esau, children studied and observed the differences and similarities of our own five sets of twins, from Noah's flood came the study of the water cycle, rain, clouds and water evaporation.

From the story of Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yochai, who lived in a cave with the son for 13 years to escape Roman persecution, the children learned about cave life. They grew stalagmites and crystals in their classroom and made the bats and spiders and creepy crawlers, which live in caves. They drew cave paintings and "planted" the carob tree, which grew outside the cave of Rabbi Shimeon.

Other displays included making the musical instruments from the Bible such as harps, tambourines, cymbals, drums, lutes and the study of sound waves and vibrations — how we hear.

**SILVER**  
Over 900

**TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM**  
Roslyn Heights, NY  
516-621-1171

We are so proud to say that the Early Childhood Center at Temple Beth Sholom provides a warm, safe and caring atmosphere in which children can grow emotionally, socially and intellectually. Children are provided with a quality education, and we offer an enriched program geared to the developmental growth needs of young children. We are guided by the philosophy that "play is children's work."

Creativity, individualization, intellectual stimulation and interpersonal relations are elements of our program. We give each child the opportunity to explore new ideas and to experience the satisfaction of his/her own efforts. Content related to Jewish living through identification with culture and tradition is incorporated in our program. Through the celebration of Shabbat and the Jewish holidays, and of Israel, our children experience the beauty and joy of their heritage.

**SILVER**  
Over 900  
Submitted by Leslie Slan

**CONGREGATION HAR SHALOM**  
Potomac, MD  
301-299-7087

Our school provides learning and positive social interaction opportunities for all children through a quality, inclusive and developmentally appropriate, integrated Judaic and secular curriculum. We strive to meet the individual needs of each and every child and encourage them to explore, investigate and study their environment through meaningful, authentic and relevant, hands-on experiences. As an inclusive preschool and In order to make sure that we are meeting all our students needs, we contract with an interdisciplinary team of special needs consultants who serve as a resource to our teachers and families.

We strongly believe that it is not only the child attending our school, but the entire family and we provide many family programs and opportunities for family involvement. Parents are always welcome in our classrooms, whether to volunteer or just come in and visit. Every classroom has one way windows so parents may watch their child without their child seeing them. We provide many family education programs and parent workshops throughout the year.

Most of our curriculum is approached through the Project Approach, a long-term, investigation of a topic based on what the children already know, want to know and how to find the information. It involves lots of questioning and collaborative experiences. This approach lends itself very well to the integration of the curriculum based on the interests of the children and all the domains, cognitive, social, emotional, physical and spiritual are brought in through the topics being studied.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Amy Snyder

**KEHILAT SHALOM**

Gaithersburg, MD

301-869-7699

The Kotel Project took place in one of our three-year-old classes. The project began at Hanukkah time as the children learned about the Temple being ruined. After learning that the Kotel is a part of the Temple that still exists in Israel, the children collected boxes, painted them to look like stone and created their own Kotel for their classroom, it is a large, prominent area of the classroom, one of the first things that catches your eye as you enter the room.

The Kotel has become an integral part of this classroom environment. As the children are introduced to and celebrate Jewish holidays and life cycle events this area of the room becomes Israel. The learning and celebrating happen near their Kotel. The children are able to feel the holiness of this place.

For Yom Ha'atzmaut the other classes in the school have been invited to visit the Kotel. This gives all of the students in our school a hands-on opportunity to experience and feel the holiness of the Kotel. The children in this classroom are proud of their Kotel and are eager to share this special place with other classes.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

500-900

Submitted by Helen Bekerman

**TEMPLE BETH AM**

Margate, FL

954-968-4545

Dear Committee:

It is with a great sense of pride in our quality Early Childhood Center, that we apply for the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Award of Excellence for our overall Early Childhood Center program. Throughout our 16 years we have been the recipients of many accolades including the coveted Gold Seal Award of Excellence from H.R.S. and Child Care Licensing for the past consecutive 11 years. Through the years I personally represented Early Childhood on the Broward Board of the Central Agency for Jewish Education, as well as serving on the Central Agency for Jewish Education merger subcommittee and the family education sub-committee. Our school was chosen by Central Agency for Jewish Education to host hundreds of educators from across Broward, Dade and Palm Beach counties for their Spring in-service conference for two consecutive years. Many of our staff instructed specialty classes for the educational professionals present. We have had the distinct honor of being chosen by H.R.S. Child Care Licensing, to host directors of licensed Broward County Early Childhood Centers at our first ever directors forum. I have personally served as a professional mentor for C.D.A. candidates and our exemplary program has served as a model school, instrumental in the training of early childhood student candidates from Coconut Creek High School as well as Lynn University.

Temple Beth Am Early Childhood Center, "The Place Where Memories Are Made", opened in January of 1989 with four classrooms and is now exceedingly proud to boast an enrollment of approximately 200 wonderful children and a staff of 35 incredibly outstanding employees. Our teaching staff, the fundamental strength of our program (four-year degreed, C.D.A., Masters degreed) strive to create unforgettable secular and Judaic memories for our children.

Our 17th year has posed many unique challenges, including those caused by decreasing, shifting demographics and the waning desire for Conservative Temple affiliation. With the fallout of Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> as well as our current war situation, economic and security issues have proved extremely vexing to our overall picture. Security as well as economic issues have been at the forefront when young families are considering school choice. Our target population has expressed a desire to participate in more family oriented activities within a secured environment. Parents want to stay close, reinforce the family bonds and share experiences as a family unit. Out of this desire a new program has emerged. It is entitled "Mishpacha" (Family). MISHPACHA family programming serves as the bridge bonding our young families to the Temple. Our programming caters to young families in the pre-school as well as families that have children in Hebrew School Kindergarten thru Second Grade. We look upon the Early Childhood Center as the first entree to the larger Temple Beth Am family. Special Shabbat and family programs are geared toward this younger age group. Our focus is to turn them on to Judaism. To ignite a spiritual spark that they will carry throughout their lives. Our hope is to have Temple Beth Am become an integral component woven throughout the tapestry of their family's life.

Our mission is to provide the highest quality educational experience, being responsive to the individual needs of the total child in a creative, warm, nurturing, Jewish environment. Our learning centers and hands-on approach affords a child the opportunity to explore, discover and create with the optimum child/teacher ratio in our developmentally appropriate, accepting, nurturing environment. The hours of our school session are tailored to accommodate our working parents. We offer a multitude of programs ranging from "Mommy & Me" for children 4 - 36 months of age and their parents, and children attending school on their own from 14 months through 6 years of age, (Toddlers through Kindergarten). We also offer Parent Education spanning the topics of child development, life cycle events, Holidays, Judaica, etc.

Our school houses an indoor gymnasium -- classes in developmentally appropriate skills, aerobics, gymnastics, etc., media center housing a comprehensive library, big book library, teachers resource library, school wide television station, school wide post office (official school stamp), woodworking shop, school wide garden, and computers for children of all ages and skill levels with appropriate software and three state-of-the-art playgrounds. Our heated in-ground pool enables our families to secure swimming lessons for their children, keeping them water safe in Florida.

We have an extremely supportive, productive School Board that meets on a regular basis. A monthly agenda is followed with all aspects of the school program including curriculum, personnel issues, special events, community outreach, financial reports, etc. addressed. A representative of the school board also sits on the Executive Board of the Temple, having voting rights, on issues related to Temple policies.

Our parents and our students extended families are embraced and integrated into our total school programming. They have the opportunity to join our PA organization (Parents Association) thereby fostering close ties between home and school. A monthly newsletter is generated containing school news, Rabbi's column, Director's column, parenting tips, etc. Our parents raise funds to enhance our school program as well as enrich our curriculum by executing programs such as Project Author and Meet the Masters. Our parents also plan and supply the manpower for community events: Hanukkah Happening, Craig Taubman "My Jewish Discovery" concert, Purim Carnival, all clearly establishing Temple Beth Am as a leader in the community. I have played an instrumental role along with the C.A.J.E. Family Educator in writing and implementing a community wide Jewish Parenting series "Raising a Mensch" that was presented at Borders book store, in Broward County.

Within our school programming we foster positive interactions, transcending all ages, colors, shapes and sizes, with our "Grandma's Reading Group," relationship with Regency Senior Residence, adopted a less fortunate sister school, the Lauder Kindergarten in Warsaw, Poland, etc. Enrichments to our curriculum are numerous: "Meet the Masters," introduction to classical composers, photographers and artists. High Touch, High Tech science exploration enrichment, Woodworking shop, school wide Post Office, Hebrew, Project Author (children's book publishing), Broadway Extravaganzas, sister school etc Afternoon private enrichment classes are offered: Computers, Dance, Gymnastics, Tennis, Spanish, Karate, Golf, Tennis, Hip-Hop, etc. Judaica is webbed throughout the entire curriculum

continually stressing Jewish values. Our Judaica specialist working closely with our students, parents, and teachers, strives to instill an understanding and love for the beauty of our Judaic heritage by catering to a child's natural curiosity and ability to learn through their senses. The staff strives to lay a foundation upon which we can continually build, positively influencing the people they will become. Activities range from songs, dances, foods, crafts, holiday stories, prayers, mitzvot, tzedakah, comprehensive values curriculums; Holiday interactive learning stations, plays, creative dramatics, prayers, Hebrew, Israel, holidays, Shabbat celebrations, Jewish parent education, Teacher in-service etc.

Our continuing ongoing sister school relationship with a preschool, student population at poverty level, affords us the opportunity to foster a wonderfully mutually enriching union between two very different groups of children and staffs. Our sister school visits our facility by donated school bus trips and once here they share and participate in some of our thrilling totally sensory days; ex: "Fall In Florida" -- leaves imported from the East are scattered over the entire playground. Children rake leaves, play and move on to other interactive areas; clothes washing on scrub boards in metal tubs, apple sorting and picking, leaf rubbings, farmers market with huge suspended ceiling scales, etc. "Winter Day" -- tons of ice/snow blown onto the playground, sledding downhill, snowball fun, etc. Thanksgiving dinners are cooked by our children and then delivered to our sister school children's families to enhance their holiday. Our students earn money and then donate it for supplies for our sister school as well as holiday gifts for the individual students at the school.

This past year Hurricane Wilma left much devastation in its wake. Temple Beth Am was exceedingly fortunate, and our facility sustained minimal damage. We were therefore able to reach out to those in need and lend a helping hand to our neighbors of Faith Christian School. This ecumenical coming together has truly been a life altering experience for all involved. In extending our hand of friendship and opening our school building to them we have embraced each other and have forged a bond of care that can never be broken. The children of the Faith Christian School have participated with our students during many of our special activities throughout the school year and the staff of Faith Christian participated with our staff during many activities as well. Our neighbors were exceedingly grateful for our hospitality and in turn this act of kindness has enriched all of our lives forever.

All of the above is a broad overview of our quality, award winning Early Childhood program. It clearly enumerates the great importance we place on our role as the leading Jewish Early Childhood Center in Broward County. Our future poses many challenges. Within the framework of all of the innovations we have instituted within the last year I believe that we have proved that we can meet the challenges that lie ahead and embrace the opportunities yet to come. Again, we thank you for your consideration and for the distinct pleasure of applying for the Solomon Schechter Award of Overall Excellence in Early Childhood Education.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
500-900  
Submitted by Ronnie Becher

**BETH EL SYNAGOGUE**  
New Rochelle, NY  
914-235-2700

The Jewish and seasonal calendars fuel our curriculum. We begin to instill in children a love of and appreciation for their Jewish traditions in a developmentally appropriate manner. As we move through the calendar year, our students experience Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and the holidays through song, cooking, art, literature and dance. Great attention is paid to documenting the children's work through their own words, either dictated or written, and through photos. Our Nursery School is committed to hands-on, experiential learning.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
250-500  
Submitted by Sharon Wolfson

**HAR TZEON-AGUDATH ACHIM**  
Silver Spring, MD  
301-649-3800

Congregation Har Tzeon-Agudath Achim Early Childhood Center is a full day, multi-age preschool. We are a year-round program with 2-, 3-, and 4-year-old children. We have completed our fifth year with an enrollment of sixteen children. We are licensed by the Maryland Department of Education Child Care Office and with Health and Human Services. We are also part of the Early Childhood Department of the Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning.

Our professional staff is committed to enriching the lives of young children by creating a stimulating and educational classroom, while integrating Judaic and general studies materials. Observance of *Mitzvot* such as *hamotz*

*tefilot* and *tzedakah* are a part of our daily routine. Celebration of *Shabbat* and *Havdallah* are two of our many weekly events. All of the Jewish holidays are encompassed in our program.

Enclosed with this summary, you will find a beautiful Passover *Hagaddah*. This idea was formulated by our children, with the help of the staff. We made a web of what we knew and what we wanted to know. We told and retold the wonderful story of *Pesach* again and again until the class could act out the story on their own. We looked at many *hagaddot* and discussed what we needed in our own *hagaddah*. The class decided on the various parts and the costumes and set designs. Photos were taken by the director. The English was written the way the students asked or said the words. At our class *seder* we were able to follow our *hagaddah*. The children were very excited and had a great sense of accomplishment. For several months after *Pesach*, the children wanted to “play” *Pesach* over and over again.

## ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

### **GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by Andrea Hirschfeld

### **B'NAI ISRAEL**

Millburn, NJ

973-379-3811

It is one of life's greatest privileges to teach others — and it is a great feat of teaching if as a by product of our teaching others learn how to learn, ask questions, and remain involved and lead others in their communities as they continue in life. The B'nai Israel Religious School has strived to achieve these goals and is, after six years of leadership under Education Director Janice Colmar, seeing the fruits of these efforts. A by-product of the quality religious education provided by the CBI Religious School is the growth of community among the students and families of the school. Communities that have more social networks perpetuate greater levels of commitment to the health, achievements and safety of their members. As our community relationships have expanded, so has the number of interfaith families who enroll their students in the CBI Religious School. A telling comment to Mrs. Colmar by a spouse in an interfaith marriage during the synagogue-sponsored April 2006 Family Trip to Israel was “you understand that my husband has made the greatest sacrifice religiously. He has chosen to give you *his children* religiously to educate.”

The B'nai Israel Religious School is located at 160 Millburn Avenue in Millburn, NJ, with 535 families in the synagogue. We have been an accredited Framework of Excellence School since August 2003. All students in grade 3 and up receive a minimum of 5 1/2 hours of instruction and are required to attend at least 10 Shabbat services with their parents. The 2006 Hebrew School enrollment reached 238 students from K-7. By the end of 1st grade, 90% of students are enrolled. Our students, therefore, actually receive 7 years of Jewish education. The students reside not only in the local Millburn community but are enrolled from neighboring communities of Essex, Morris, and Union Counties — all areas with other Judaic educational opportunities. The Cantor, Rabbi and Education Director are included in our teaching staff, meeting with students weekly. Students develop a comfortable relationship with the senior staff, which results in B'nai Mitzvah ceremonies that are collaborative and personal. Further, students feel welcome in the shul on Shabbat and most far exceed their Shabbat attendance requirement. This includes students from our Kulanu (special needs) program. There has also been a developing core of younger students ages 6-11 who lead Anim Zmirot, Ashrey, Kabbalat Shabbat, and read Megillah on Purim in the main sanctuary. All this actively contributes to building our community of educated laity.

Our entire synagogue community embraces the education of their students. There is a symbiotic relationship between the school and various arms of the congregation. Men's club, sisterhood, the parent's association, Israel affairs committee and social action committee (hearts and hands) all support our students and benefit from their involvement. Within the school, peer leadership develops among post-B'nai Mitzvah students and younger students starting with the 1st grade. Further, parents and students of all ages collaborate on programs such as our Mitzvahthon and Purim Shpiel. These relationships have fostered a commitment to the quality of education and the expanding community development as evidenced by the fact that a major capital campaign is being committed for the construction of a completely new two-story structure over the next three years. This comes at a time when shul membership is growing, but the priority by a survey of members has been determined to be the school wing and not the sanctuary.

### **GOLD**

### **TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM OF ROSLYN HEIGHTS**

Over 900  
Submitted by Sharon Solomon

Roslyn Heights, NY  
516-484-4980

Temple Beth Sholom Religious School is proud to be one of the largest religious schools on Long Island. With over 300 students from grades Gan (Kindergarten) through Zayn (7th grade) we have dedicated, professional Jewish educators. Among our faculty we have specialized professionals, i.e., Hebrew Music teacher, Jewish Artist and Israeli Dance teacher.

Students attend Gan (Kindergarten) and Aleph (1st grade) once a week, on Sunday. Our program offers the children experiential learning which introduces them to Jewish Holidays, Bible Stories, Hebrew AlephBet, Hebrew Immersion, Prayers, Music and Jewish Cooking. The students learn about Mitzvot and take part in our "Mitzvah of the Month" projects.

Students in Bet (2nd grade) attend twice a week and students in Gimmel (3rd grade) through Vav (6th grade) attend three times a week.

Our students are required to attend Religious School by Gimmel (3rd grade) in order to qualify for Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Our Religious School curriculum includes Bible/Parashat Hashavua, Prayer, Hebrew Language, Jewish History, Current Events, Hebrew Music, Jewish Art, Israeli Dancing and Mitzvot/Ethics, Library/Jewish Literature Programs. Our Hebrew program includes an extra help and one-on-one program for students who need extra help in language as well as development. We also provide Hebrew enrichment classes as well, for students who are highly motivated and academically gifted.

Grades Gan through Hay are designed to have a grade-level Shabbat program at which time the class leads a service either on a Friday night or Shabbat morning when we celebrate Shabbat as a community. Our Gan, Aleph and Bet students receive Shabbat books and Gimmel classes receive their first Siddur. Daled and Hay are given age-appropriate books about Israel as well.

During their Bar/Bat Mitzvah year our Zayn (7th grade) students are enrolled in our *Gesher* Program that is part of our community high school -- Machon Beth Sholom. This program focuses on current Jewish topics, Jewish current events, Modern Israel, Mitzvot and challenges that face Jewish teens today.

Children in grades 3-7 with special learning needs have the opportunity to enroll in our Tikvah program that meets twice a week. On Sundays they meet in a classroom setting where they are taught Holidays, Bible, music, Jewish art and Mitzvot. During the week each child meets with a special education teacher for 30 minutes for one-on-one instruction to learn Hebrew and prayers on an individual basis.

TBS Religious School is proud of our outstanding Jewish art program that focuses on all grade levels.

TBS is proud of our family/child-friendly services. Our school requires students to attend Minyanim (Junior Congregation) for students in grades 3-7. We have Mini Minyan services for all children through 7 years of age; Minyan Yeladenu and Mishpacha Minyan are geared for 2nd/3rd graders through 7th graders.

Parents take an active role in their child's religious education and Jewish experience. They serve on' Board of Education, the Parent/Teacher Association and on many school and synagogue committees.

Our Religious School provides an enriching experiential Jewish experience for its children. Our clergy are involved in all aspects of our educational needs and our lay leadership supports the highest goals and standards of Jewish instruction and educators. Our teachers are of the highest caliber and are very caring and nurturing.

**GOLD**  
250-500  
Submitted by Ava B. Phillips

**TEMPLE BETH TORAH/TAMARAC JEWISH CENTER**  
Tamarac, FL  
954-721-7660

The award that I am submitting is for Elementary Education. There are many categories to my book. Curriculum is very specific. It includes grades K-9<sup>th</sup> grade. There is a small section on 10-12<sup>th</sup> grade which takes place in a community school sponsored by Central Agency for Jewish Education. There is also a separate unit on our special program – a 2-year B'nai Mitzvah Program called *Bdarheimu*. This is a program devised by our Educational Director, Mordecai Silverman who felt that we need a program for children with certain special needs. Please read it carefully. It is a terrific program.

Enjoy my book. I had fun writing it and I truly enjoyed getting the material together.

**SILVER**

500-900

Submitted by Jack Rosenbaum

**TEMPLE BETH AM**

Margate, FL

954-968-4545

The Rabbi Solomon Geld Religious School maintains the high educational standards set forth by the **Framework: Aims of the Conservative Synagogue School**. Since we were last honored in 2005, our school board has offered religious school in the model set forth by the Framework that includes two days per week for 5 1/2 hours per week with a requirement for *Shabbat* attendance and learning, ten times during the school year. In the spirit of maintaining our high standards we have gone beyond the minimum requirements and have offered a third day of optional Hebrew *ulpan* learning. This is in addition to a new family education programming and continuing as a pilot school for the exciting USCJ Melton Research Center's **ETGAR** curriculum for middle school students.

**New innovations** include the **Jewish Life Experience Encounters Program** which includes the *GARIN* intergenerational family program for K-3rd grades. Current 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3rd graders have begun a letter writing campaign with the Givon elementary school in Neshar, Broward County's Partnership 2000 sister city. This program will continue into the next school year utilizing the internet and face-to-face discussions through video conferencing. A concerted effort is made between the synagogue spiritual leaders, the Early Childhood department and the school to bridge the gap between ECC families and the school to woo young families to our shul and retain them.

We offered 8th graders the final piece of the ETGAR program, Holocaust education. This was taught by our Education Director and 80% of the graduates, a record for our synagogue, went on to Judaica High School where the ETGAR cycle was completed.

Parents come into our school building each day to pick up their children, thus affording us the pleasure of "schmoozing" with our families and offering personal encouragement to attend functions of the school. A bonus is direct contact with teachers and allowing parents to observe the workings of the school and assuring that flyers get into the hands of parents.

**FAMILY EDUCATION**

**GOLD**

100-250

Submitted by Karen Schlossberg

**BETH HILLEL SYNAGOGUE**

Bloomfield, CT

860-242-5561

We are a religious school that believes in finding every opportunity to learn about and celebrate Judaism as a community whenever possible. Each year we connect the Religious School families into our Purim eve celebration by preparing the children to help lead the Megillah reading in some manner. This Purim we were afforded a unique opportunity as the holiday fell Motzei Shabbat into Sunday. The Rabbi and Educator decided that the Saturday Evening service would be the appropriate time for the school to celebrate with the congregation. Children (and adults) dressed in costume. Along with the Megillah reading we had a wonderful computer generated screen cast of the Hebrew and English of the Megillah reading for people to follow. Children had "edible" groggers that they made in school from water bottles decorated with sticker and filled with a trail mix and candy mixture. After the reading the children entertain the congregation with songs that they learned in school.

The Sunday part of the celebration for the Religious School children and their parents was held at an Assisted

Living Facility with which the synagogue has an ongoing relationship. The Assisted Living Facility offers us a room to use on Sunday morning for our K-1 class. In exchange, our religious school principal meets periodically with residents to “celebrate” holidays by teaching about them through discussion and ritual items and bringing song sheets with holiday songs that she sings with the Jewish residents.

Purim was an opportunity to expand the holiday “celebration” with the residents by organizing a celebration for both the school families and the residents. Prior to the celebration the children baked several dozen hamantaschen and created an illustrated Megillah. For the first hour of the morning the children assembled Mishloach Manot baskets to distribute to the residents at the end of the program. In addition to other items, we used the hamantaschen that the children baked to put into the baskets. Students, faculty and parents came in simple “costume items” (crowns and necklaces) that the children distributed for the residents to wear. Our principal reviewed the “mitzvot” of the holiday with all the participants and explained how the rest of the morning would run. Then the children read the Megillah Esther from the illustrated version that they created which was displayed as they read. The children then performed the songs that they sang the previous night for the congregation. Song sheets were passed out and we all sang some songs together — in English, Hebrew and Yiddish. Finally we all enjoyed a snack of Hamantashen and beverages before we passed out the Mishloach Manot baskets. It was a wonderfully received program that helped to strengthen the bonds between the two organizations. More events are planned for the future including Shabbat evening services at the Assisted Living Facility, and plans for the Assisted Living Facility to bring Jewish residents to some of our Family Education Programs including our Model Seder.

**GOLD**

250-500

Submitted by Sarah Klionsky

**OHAVI ZEDEK SYNAGOGUE**

Burlington, VT

802-864-0218

There is a little miracle that happens most Monday mornings at Ohavi Zedek Synagogue. Considering the venue, it’s not unheard of to happen. In a classroom decked out with Hebrew posters, books, toys, puzzles and little chairs and low table suitable for little legs and adopted by some Mommies and Daddies, it is a “Garden” where “hummingbirds” are hovering over the nectar of the buds of knowledge, drinking deeply at our “Bubble’s” well of kinder-teaching.

It is surprising that the idea of “Bubbles, Babies and Bagels” hasn’t taken on a more universal acceptance. Watching these beautiful youngsters’ eyes light up spotting the yet warm bagels and healthy cream cheese soon to be decorating faces and enjoyed by tummies. How heart warming!

Getting a homey welcome from all who gather here, establishing a comfort zone in their being proud of their heritage, doing handiwork of their own creation symbolizing Sabbaths and holidays, what can be more exciting?

Songs that are sung in an ancient yet ever new language, Hebrew, with English and Yiddish tucked in for good measure, and the word, the written word? How important is that, to instill the love of the written word at such an early age!

So, here’s to all the Mommies and Daddies and Babies and Bubbles. Long may the echos of their voices, their laughter, their beings overflow into the haven that is Ohavi Zedek Synagogue.

By Ruth Baskin adapted by Sarah Klionsky

This is a program that has been running for many years at our synagogue and it truly multi-generational. Parents with young children attend this song and story hour, hosted by our Rabbi, Bubbles in our community, and the Jewish educator and outreach professional.

The only costs are bagels, cream cheese and songbooks. Many of our families who have joined the synagogue over the past three years have had their first entry to the community through Bubbles and Babies. We broadly define who can attend, calling it a Jewish themed playgroup. This has opened the door widely and has contributed to the program’s success.

“The men heard the voice of God according to their capacity and the women according to theirs, the old discerned the Divine voice according to their capacity, the young according to theirs ...“ Exodus Rabbah 5:9.

Ohavi Zedek Synagogue, a Conservative congregation serving 400 member families living in Northern and Central Vermont, is blessed with a broadly diverse community. We are elderly, life-long Vermonters whose children have moved out of state, as well as young families whose parents and grandparents live far away. We are traditional, two-parent Jewish families, as well as Jews by choice, single parents, partners of non-Jews, and same-sex couples. Our reasons for being Jewish, our approaches to observance, our comfort with Hebrew and Torah, and our theological outlooks differ as widely as we do. Our diversity challenges us to recognize the many, varied faces of authentic Judaism, and encourages us to approach Torah as a living text that speaks to each of us according to our own particular capacity.

Family D'Vrei Torah brought our multi-generational community together for six Shabbatot around the common interest of Torah learning. A series of mini-courses explored selected parashot through classroom instruction in the Hebrew School, seminars for parents and shared at-home projects for families — activities that prepared participants to share their learning as part of the Shabbat morning sermon and discussion. After services, students, parents, and other interested congregants shared lunch and engaged in a culminating activity expanding on the theme from the parashah.

Family D'Vrei Torah enhanced our confidence as interpreters and teachers of Torah, encouraging us to read Torah for personal meaning, and allow us to share our varied perspectives with one another in the context of the regular Shabbat service. Along the way, we forged deeper ties as a community, nurtured our commitment as a community of learners, enriched our shared Shabbat experience and fostered Jewish education in our homes. This program was created by Ruth Horowitz, our Torah Educator and Sarah Klionsky, former principal, with the support of Rabbi Joshua Chasan.

### **Nuts and Bolts**

The synagogue hired a Torah Educator to design and teach six five-part mini-courses based on selected parashot. Each mini-course included two 45-minute lessons with each of two different Hebrew School classes, one two-hour lesson with parents, a discussion in conjunction with the Torah reading at the Shabbat service, and a 45-minute culminating activity for students, parents, seniors and other interested members of the community. Each class, Daled through Zayin (fourth through seventh grade) participated in three different mini-courses.

Though specific activities varied according to participants' ages and abilities, during each mini-course, participants read sections of the parashah in translation, compared and discussed commentaries from traditional and nontraditional sources, and formulated personal responses through drama, debate, poetry, or other means. At-home projects allowed parents and children to create collaborative responses to the text. During and after Shabbat services, students and parents shared their learning with the rest of the congregation.

Additionally, the Torah Educator trained teachers and parents of students in Kitot Pre-school through Gimmel (3-9 year-olds) in our "Torah Time" program. In this program, which began as a pilot for Kitot Pre-school through Aleph, each student was assigned a Torah portion from Genesis to read and explore at home with his or her parents, with the challenge of sharing their findings with the class through a three- to five-minute classroom activity. Parents borrowed books, asked great questions, and began to be "students" of the text as they began to "unpack" the text with their 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10 year old. Parents were required to participate, so there was 100% participation. Parents became conveyers of Torah values, not only to their kids, but to the whole class. This contributed to building a strong sense of community in and out of the classroom. In some classes, parents brought snacks appropriate to their Torah themes. Each family project was then followed-up with a lesson by the teacher.

### **GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Michael A. Ferman

### **BETH DAVID B'NAI ISRAEL BETH AM**

Toronto, ON

416-633-5500

Our family education has been extremely successful for the past couple of years and it is continually growing and expanding. We have consistently seen an increase in program participation for the past two years and are creating niche programming to appeal to various interests. This past year over three dozen new families joined our synagogue, which can in part be attributed to our very successful family programming. It is the goal of our family educational programs to

provide experiential, educational, enjoyable, as well as exciting experiences for the participants. Our ongoing aim is to strengthen individuals' connection to Judaism through our interactive and dynamic programming.

Our family education program is primarily informal in nature. We provide a plethora of activities, including Shabbat dinners, a Sukkah bus-hop, musical Havdalah programs, a Tu B'Shevat seder, apple picking for Rosh Hashana, interactive storytelling followed by a related arts and crafts project, as well as many other opportunities for intergenerational interaction. We launched our inaugural *Friday Night Live* program in May 2006. Boasting the largest family Shabbat dinner ever at the synagogue, participants attended musical Kabbalat Shabbat services, followed by a delicious, catered meal. The Rabbi hosted an "Ask the Rabbi" event, while the youth participated in seven simultaneous age-appropriate programs learning about Israel. Each participant received their own copy of *birkat hamazon* with accompanying songs.

On a Saturday evening in January, congregants of all ages attended the Baycrest Apotex Centre, which is Toronto's Jewish Home for the Aged. This program, at our Cantor's initiative, involved our Rabbi providing an explanation about Havdalah, a tour of the beautiful facility, meeting many of the residents and learning about their personal stories, as well as experiencing a musical Havdalah, which was followed by Israeli dancing.

**GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by Miriam Kraemer Gray

**TEMPLE EMANUEL OF THE PASCACK VALLEY**

Woodcliff Lake, NJ

201-391-0801

Mitzvah Clowns is a national organization which trains adults and children as clowns with a goal of visiting the elderly, the sick, and the lonely in order to bring smiles to their faces. This noble enterprise involves training, costumes, willingness to engage strangers who may be unable to respond, and an abundance of dedication. I learned about this group through a workshop at C.A.J.E. and following the workshop, I knew that this program was an important addition to our Family Education programming and most certainly a meaningful Mitzvah for our children and their parents.

We have since January 11, 2004 visited only nursing homes and assisted Living facilities. Because of time constraints and because we view this as a Family Program, we are unable to go to Day Care Centers because many parents are not available at 4:00 p.m. That being said, we are busy throughout the year visiting facilities on Sundays and bringing joy to the many people who look forward to the diversion and love the attention. Each clown spends time with the residents, engages them in conversation, listens to their complaints or stories from their youth, and makes them feel special.

Indeed, this has been a learning experience for us. We trained as clowns and then learned about the essence of doing Mitzvot. Imagine sitting in one of the vans going to a Nursing Home and listening to talk of strategies to make Mrs. X smile because at our last visit she wasn't happy. Listen as the clowns decide who will make balloon animals and who will tease a resident with our noisemakers. For us, this is a labor of love. For the residents, this is a welcome breath of fresh air in a routine lifestyle.

"We will go, young and old, sons and daughters...." Exodus 10:9. Fathers, mothers, teens, and pre-teens, we go. We visit the lonely, we bring smiles to their faces, we leave behind stickers and balloon animals and a promise of returning soon. We receive in return a family event that will always be a cherished memory because our satisfaction in doing the deed is so meaningful. Imagine parents and children clowning together and bringing smiles to strangers who soon become our very special friends.

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Eileen Cohn

**CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM**

Atlanta, GA

770-399-5300

Children's Services at Congregation Beth Shalom

The children's services at Congregation Beth Shalom have been called "one of the best things about our congregation." The program includes Tot Shabbat, introduced in 1998 which is designed for pre-school-age children and their parents to come together and have fun as they learn about Shabbat. This program was conceived by congregants, and has continued to run successfully over the last nine years primarily under lay leadership. A group of 12 volunteers leads the

service on a rotational basis every week of the year, including summer months and the holidays. The service attracts between 25 and 30 participants on a typical Shabbat; however we have had as many as 60 in the service. Mini-Minyan was introduced in 2000 to serve the needs of children in grades K-2. Almost 60% of the children who participate in Mini-Minyan have moved up from the Tot Shabbat Program, and once they move up typically their parents also move up as leaders.

One of the most successful parts of the children's services at Beth Shalom is the friendships that have developed and grown over the years. Many non-members attend the Tot Shabbat services which are open to everyone. Some current members will tell you that they came to Tot Shabbat even before they joined Beth Shalom, and it was in fact their primary reason for joining the synagogue. Families who first met in Tot Shabbat have become active synagogue participants, and many of these volunteers have become active leaders in the synagogue. New programs, such as Mommy and Me and the Family Field Trip Group also have emerged from the children's service program.

#### Day School Integration Initiative

As the number of children enrolled in Jewish day schools continues to rise, there is a growing concern that these students have no connection to their synagogue communities. Including these children in the synagogue community is a shared concern of day school families and Congregation Beth Shalom. Once the day school population at Beth Shalom exceeded that of the religious school, a Day School Committee was created. The committee has formulated ideas to not only include the day school students, but that focus on bringing day school and religious school families together as a community. It was suggested that both groups work together on mitzvah projects that can reduce any competition that may exist between the two groups, while benefiting those in need.

The Family Mitzvah Cub was proposed at the first Day School Open House as a way to bring families together. The group has baked honey cakes for residents of a senior center, learned about composting and the value of Ba 'al Tashchit (not destroying the earth), hosted a family Havdallah Talent Show, and is scheduled to host a synagogue Family Mitzvah Day next month. There has been a noticeable change in the outlook of the congregation, and many day school families have expressed their appreciation for these and other new programs aimed at including our day school children. It is recognized that this will be a gradual process that will only be truly successful when day school and religious school families can begin to think of themselves as one synagogue community.

#### **SILVER**

500-900

Submitted by Rachel Ginsburg

#### **PLAINVIEW JEWISH CENTER**

Plainview, NY

516-938-5865

Students from 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades participated eight times per year on Sundays, for two hours, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., to study Jewish History with one of their parents. The first hour was designed to research the historical era that we were dealing with. We divided the parents and children into four groups and each group was asked to write a presentation on an historical personality that was assigned to them. We provided them with the reading material, computers for research, and a questionnaire that guided them in collecting the specific information (see attached sheets for the lesson plans). The second hour was a craft project that the children and parents did, together, as a reinforcement of what had been taught during the previous hour.

At the end of the year, we had a live Jewish History museum where all the craft projects were displayed. Some of the children and their parents wore costumes of the personalities they wrote about. It was like a live wax museum. When you touched the personality on its arm, he or she gave you a short presentation about the personality.

#### Goals were:

- I. To bring parents and children together to learn Jewish subjects as equal partners (because all material is in English and was not taught previously to the children or their parents).
- II. To use hands-on techniques as part of the teaching tools. (Doing crafts)
- III. By participating in this activity, we are reinforcing the materials that had already been taught in the classroom, for achieving better integration. The museum event helped, one more time, to integrate the material that was taught all through the year.

#### Justification:

- I. The idea of parents and children studying together is not a new one. The innovative aspect of it is the living museum at the end of the program, which exhibits all that was done during the course of the program.
- II. This program can be applied to almost any subject in the curriculum of the religious school. It can be applied to Torah study, Israel, Jewish Life Cycle, Mitzvot, Jewish History, etc.
- III. This kind of program can encourage teachers to be more creative in teaching Jewish subjects. It shows them how to use crafts, drama, computers, and museums as part of their class activities.

Our program of parents and children learning together for 6th & 7th graders has been in effect for many years and we call that program our Tallit & Tefillah Club. Last year we implemented the Limud program for our Bet and Gimel classes (2nd and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders). (I am enclosing lesson plans for both of these grades.)

We have two teachers in the Limud Program. One of the teachers is also an art teacher.

We used three history books:

1. The History of the Jewish People by Jonathan Sarna & Jonathan Krasner (Behrman House, publisher).
2. Understanding Jewish History by Sol Scharfstein (Ktav Publishing House).
3. Introduction to Jewish History by Seymour Rossel (Behrman House).

The following budget includes expenses for the entire year as well as the expenses for the museum event, the culmination of the Limud Program.

Budget

Expenses

|  |              |            |
|--|--------------|------------|
| 2 teachers — 1 hour \$1,550.00 x 2 hours | \$3,100.00   |            |
| Art supplies for the museum & projects   | 217.26       |            |
| Food                                     | 112.56       |            |
| Prizes                                   | <u>61.23</u> |            |
| Total Expenses                           |              | \$3,491.05 |

Income (only from the museum event)

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| from raffles, food & donations to defray the cost | <u>\$807.00</u> |
| Total Cost  | \$2,674.05      |

The Conservative ideology encourages intergenerational study and a connection to our past. I think that our program reached some of those goals. It was a requirement for the children but only strongly recommended for the parents. Most parents came and responded very positively to the program.

It is our philosophy to have as many programs as we can, to involve intergenerational Jewish learning. We are giving questionnaires to parents and children, asking them to evaluate the program.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500  
Submitted by Ellen Morgenstern

**TEMPLE BETH AHM**

Aberdeen, TX  
732-583-5054

Temple Beth Ahm, a congregation of approximately 300 families, is located in a populous area of New Jersey where there are many other synagogues. To distinguish ourselves among our peers, our Membership committee has adopted the theme "A Family Place — A Spiritual Home" with an emphasis on intergenerational programming. All of our membership recruitment programs are planned so that individuals and families of all ages and religious backgrounds will want to come together for spiritual, cultural and educational events.

Our spiritual / religious programming includes a Tot Shabbat (Age 0 — 2nd Grade) and Mini Minyan (Grades 3-6) led by parents and involve both children and grandparents. A Bedtime Stories Friday Shabbat is held once a year where grandparents and parents can observe children interacting with our rabbi dressed as they are in preparation for bedtime. Once each month, there is an Early Friday Shabbat service where the main prayers are recited, but where there is also congregational dancing and ruach interspersed throughout the service. Singles and Seniors enjoy these services

even though they may not have children involved. Once a year there is a Melave Malka geared toward families with a special guest speaker or family activity.

The remainder of our Family Education programs are planned according to season. In the Fall we have either a Brunch & Learn or Temple BBQ that includes an educational aspect and attracts 75% of our members; this is followed a short time later by a family oriented speaker. Chanukah programming includes a Congregational dinner, a concert of Jewish music by a college *a capella* group, and Family Bingo on Christmas Eve to address “The December Dilemma.” In the middle of winter we plan a fun Ethnic Shabbat involving a themed dinner and dynamic speaker who involves everyone in learning about Jews from far-off places. Finally, in the Spring we plan a program with a guest speaker or unusual entertainer in conjunction with Purim, Yom Hashoah or Shavuot that attracts individuals of all ages. Our year culminates with a Congregational bike ride for young and old.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

100-250

Submitted by Michelle Weiss

**CONGREGATION ETZ HAYIM**

Arlington, VA

703-979-4466

For the past two years, Congregation Etz Hayim has enjoyed tremendous success with its Family Minyan program. This program consists of a Shacharit service held on Sunday mornings for the first half hour of the religious school program in which families are encouraged to participate together in an age appropriate, informal environment. During this service a variety of activities may occur — there may be a close look at one of the prayers said during the service, a discussion of current events from a Jewish perspective, or a celebration within the community.

Some of the expected and achieved goals of the program include:

- To have parents and children pray together to help both strengthen their *tefillah* skills
- To give students an opportunity to showcase the prayers they have learned, and new ideas they have come to understand
- To create a community feeling through families coming together

We have measured the success of this program through parent and student feedback, hearing the improved abilities of the students’ *tefillah* skills as they now have a more tangible goal to work towards, and monitoring attendance, which has remained consistently high. We have also had parents bring their parents, cousins, aunts and uncles, friends and relations to family minyan.

In the initial year of the program, the service was held bi-weekly, with a structure that kept focus exclusively on the prayers recited. In the second year, we increased the program to be every week of religious school, and increased the diversity of the program to include:

- “Ask the Rabbi” segment where Rabbi Bass answers questions submitted by students and parents. Rabbi Bass has answered questions about Kashrut, cloning, etymology, theology, and ethics to name a few.
- A “Jewish Moment In History” covering a notable (and preferably positive) moment in Jewish history, the anniversary of which is within the week of the service. The information is collected from the History Channel and the Jerusalem Post.
- Holiday celebrations both secular and religious. This year, we enjoyed a special program for Super Bowl Sunday to teach students and parents that good sportsmanship is a Jewish Value.

It is our plan to continue this program in future years, improving it each year as lessons are learned, and new families join our school. Specifically, next year we hope to include guest speakers, and find more creative ways to incorporate current events.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

500-900

Submitted by Linda H. Weinroth

**CONGREGATION ETZ CHAIM**

Marietta, GA

770-973-0137

For the past six years we have offered special programming to involve families in learning together about some aspect of Judaism. The university programs that have been held thus far are Shabbat University, Passover University, Tefillah

Tech, Lifecycle University, and Kaleidoscope University. With a wealth of courses available to the participants, there was something of interest for congregants on many different levels.

The response to University Programming has shown us that there is a thirst for this type of learning experience. This program will be discussed in greater detail in the accompanying materials.

## FUND RAISING

### **GOLD**

250-500

Submitted by Rance Block

### **TEMPLE BETH EL**

Allentown, PA

610-435-3521

Temple Beth El (Allentown, PA) embarked on a \$7M capital campaign in late 2002 in an effort to raise sufficient funds to build a new facility for the congregation. The campaign ran from November 2002 through the present. The end result of the Capital Campaign was the establishment of a new home for the congregation. The first services were held in the new building in January 2006.

The capital campaign proved to be successful financially and also had a very positive effect on the congregation. The campaign provided a vehicle for which congregants rallied together for the benefit of the congregation and worked in partnership to ensure the success of the campaign.

Since we did not contract with a professional fundraiser, the capital campaign was a true grass roots effort by dedicated congregants who understood the significance of working as a team to raise the necessary funds, where every dollar raised went directly into the campaign.

### **GOLD**

250-500

Submitted by Doris Jacobson

### **TEMPLE BETH EMET**

Anaheim, CA

714-772-4720

Torat Emet, the writing of a Torah, was the program that honored Temple Beth Emet's 50th year as the 1<sup>st</sup> Conservative Synagogue in Orange County.

We launched this project at our 50th Anniversary Jubilee reception. Our Board and committee felt that the writing of a Torah was the most significant way to honor our synagogue and its congregants.

Throughout the year, as our congregants took the opportunity to subscribe letters, parshas, verses and sentences within the Torah, we also had educational programs. One program enabled us to learn where our Torahs were written, how old they were, and where they had been prior to Temple Beth Emet.

We culminated our project and 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee celebration with the Torah dedication. Each person present was privileged to write a letter with his or her own hand in the Torah. When this was completed we all marched, danced and sang as we brought our Torah into the Ark.

In addition, it was decided to donate an existing Torah to Congregation Beth Israel in New Orleans, an Orthodox Synagogue, devastated by Hurricane Katrina. That Torah will soon be at home within another Jewish community.

Our 50th celebration year was truly a Jubilee Year. We received a Torah and we gave a Torah! This experience has touched all the members of Temple Beth Emet and will continue to do every Shabbat and Yom Tov. During this year, we embraced our history and that of our Jewish Community.

### **GOLD**

### **TEMPLE BETH AM**

500-900  
Submitted by Michael Greenberg and  
Gary Grossman

Margate, FL  
954-968-4545

Synagogues need to keep up with sources of funding to make sure that they are not “under funded.” Often, in the past, traditional fund raisers, dues and High Holy Days appeals were enough to cover the costs of operating and flourishing as a synagogue. For many mature congregations, that no longer works. They are often under funded as they leave the rapid growth cycle and become stable, ongoing, mature, institutional entities.

The good news for Temple Beth Am is that we are a mature, powerful and strong institutional entity. But our rapid growth cycle days are over. To make sure that we are not under funded, that we have enough resources to continue to be the largest and most creative Conservative synagogue in Broward County, we established an Endowment Fund Campaign.

Our goal is to insure that the current membership and future generations are able to enjoy the highest quality of programs, services and professional leadership. That’s the underlying reason for this Endowment Fund.

By the High Holy Days 2005, we were already at more than half of our goal, and only a fraction of our families had become involved. How did this happen? We hired a consulting firm to run the campaign and teach our volunteers how to make solicitation calls to our members. Volunteers met on many occasions for a phone-a-thon, trying to set up appointments to meet with prospective contributors. At one point we had 17 volunteer solicitors who were assuming 222 assignments. In addition, mass mailings were sent to the entire congregation for solicitation.

Many of those able to make significant gifts had done so. No gift was considered too small, and all gifts would be recognized on the Central Recognition Wall of Honor. We hope that every single one of our members will stand up and be counted. We look forward to a most successful Endowment Campaign in which we surpass our goal.

**GOLD**  
Over 900

**HAR ZION TEMPLE**  
Penn Valley, PA  
610-667-5000

Madregot is the special needs program of the Jane Fishman Grinberg Religious School of Har Zion Temple, located in Penn Valley, Pennsylvania. Individuals with learning differences and disabilities including autism, neurologic impairment, cerebral palsy and others are welcomed into a nurturing Jewish learning environment. The plan for fundraising was three fold. We needed to raise awareness of our Madregot special needs program and raise funds to supplement the program. We also wanted to involve the entire Har Zion Temple community in this fundraising effort.

Interested members formed a committee to decide on exactly how to accomplish our goals, and we quickly decided that we needed something simple, yet effective. The committee consisted of clergy, senior staff, members of the school committee, lay leaders and the Madregot subcommittee chair. We decided to sell cut-out figures in the shape of children that could be decorated tne connected hand-in-hand throughout the synagogue. Each figure sold for \$18 and we encouraged congregants to purchase a minyan (10 figures) or a village (20 figures); but most importantly, to participate.

Education was an important piece of this endeavor because we did not just want to raise funds, but also wanted our Har Zion community and the community at large to get a closer look at this very special program. We wanted all of our children to understand what it is like to be different and to learn differently. The Midrasha High School students presented a lesson on special needs to the 13 classes in the Religious School. From our youngest children in the pre-school to our more mature members in Active Adults, everyone contributed to the success of the fundraiser. The professional staff, clergy and laity were extremely supportive and we received participation from the community and the congregation at an overwhelming level. Over 270 families participated in the fundraiser and we raised over \$22,000. Some 1200 figures adorned the walls of our synagogue and we were transformed into a supportive and loving community of people helping each other, hand in hand.

**GOLD**

**CONGREGATION AGUDAT ACHIM**

250-500  
Submitted by Risé Routenberg and  
Ann Zonderman

Schenectady, NY  
518-393-9211

Congregation Agudat Achim accomplished the most ambitious, ongoing fund-raising project in its 115-year history in April 2006 with the publication of *Divine Kosher Cuisine* cookbook. This all-volunteer, two-year effort involved 204 participants from a congregation of 350 families. It produced a full-color, full-text, all-occasion cookbook now selling worldwide from [www.divinekosher.com](http://www.divinekosher.com), and numerous online and onsite booksellers, synagogue and Judaic gift shops. Already in its second printing, the cookbook is funding educational synagogue programs. This long-term project has met its projected first year goal, generating an initial cash installment.

The cookbook has garnered critical acclaim for culinary, photographic and text content from Jewish and non-Jewish food writers across North America.\* It has won the 2006 Middle Atlantic Region McIlhenny-Tabasco Cookbook Award for excellence,\* the only kosher cookbook to win.

Risé Routenberg and Barbara Wasser, retiring chefs/co-chairs of the synagogue's all-volunteer, kosher catering service, *As You Like It* [a 2003 Solomon Schechter Gold Award winner\*], proposed the project to the congregation in 2004. They envisioned the essential components for a unique kosher cookbook: wide-ranging culinary expertise, a 30-year storehouse of closely guarded recipes and a tradition of reliable, hands-on volunteerism that would staff the project.\* A 10-member steering committee formed to coordinate the project under general areas of finance, production and marketing, which subdivided as necessary. The congregation was mined for experts and helpers in each category. A talented and enthusiastic staff of volunteers assembled.

Rabbi Robert Kasman, our *Kashrut* Authority, continues to be an important resource.\* Initial seed money to self-publish and market the cookbook was raised by creative mailings, personal solicitations and elegant taste-test parties,\* which sparked congregational and community interest, and stimulated donations from congregants and funding from local corporations. More than 400 recipes were selected, using exacting criteria that included a home-testing team of 140 volunteers.\* An aggressive publicity and advertising campaign was launched, which continues. An international email print and broadcast media list was compiled, which receives newsworthy press releases.\* Print ads are placed in key national magazines, strategically pegged to special cooking, home entertaining and gift-buying seasons. This publicity generates continuing media interest and results in book reviews, interviews and timely articles featuring our recipes.\*

The cookbook brings great pride to the synagogue and continual local press coverage.\* Paralleling the wide geographic marketing program, our congregants continue to reach out to family, friends and colleagues across the country, in person-to-person marketing that produced hundreds of pre-paid orders, long before publication.\* The project has also created mutual fundraising opportunities for other synagogues and Jewish centers across the country. The chef/coauthors present food preparation demos and do book signings at well-attended programs.\*

**SILVER**  
250-500

**COMMACK JEWISH CENTER**  
Commack, NY  
631-543-3311

Our Junior Congregation room was desperately in need of a renovation. Ugly brown paneling on all four walls. Nothing to inspire our youngsters to feel a part of the enthusiasm we were experiencing in other areas of our shul life. Enter Bonnie Bresalier and Robin Farbman, two moms of Religious School students, both with a creative side just waiting to be unleashed on this drab room.

First we obtained the poster series "350 years of Jewish life in America." In order to frame and display the posters, we solicited \$36 in donations for a "share" in the poster. The response was enthusiastic with many families "purchasing" an entire poster for \$108. The fifteen series set sold out in record time raising \$1,620 to cover the cost of framing and all the paint needed for the rest of the project. Our students painted a beautiful mural on one wall based on a painting of Jerusalem by Israeli artist, Bracha Lavee. The children loved the involvement and really took ownership of the project and did a fabulous job. Robin and Bonnie faux painted two walls, convinced Men's Club and Sisterhood to donate the funds for an entire cork wall to display future art projects by our students. The final wall was a blank canvas just begging for a facelift, so we conceived our "L'dor V'dor wall. Bricks were faux painted then "sold" for \$36 each.

Metal plaques are attached for each brick. With over 200 bricks available, this wall netted over \$7,000 for us to continue our children's based projects.

Our congregation responded enthusiastically by personal solicitation, "please buy a brick", "OK!", messages via e-mail and phonetree, and order forms in our monthly bulletin. Close to 150 families have participated one way or another.

We are so proud of the final results, a beautiful Junior Congregation room with a wonderful informative and educational poster series; a beautiful mural painted by our students; a L'dor V'dor wall dedicated to our members and their families; we also solicited funds for a new Aron Hakodesh, some additional artwork and a beautiful handcrafted mezuzah to grace our doorway. All told we raised about \$10,000 for this project.

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Dr. Fred L. Harris

**JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF PARAMUS**

Paramus, NJ

201-262-7691

The *Membership Lottery* is an annual event, in which Congregants are offered the opportunity to purchase chances to win one or more of a number of prizes, which include:

1st Prize: Free membership for a family for one year

2nd Prize: 2 free seats for the High Holidays

3rd Prize: A leaf on our Tree of Life

4th Prizes: 1 of 4 guaranteed parking spaces on the High Holidays

Members participate by buying any number of chances, from 1 to 10, or more if they so choose. As more chances are bought, the price per chance goes down. One chance is \$18, 2 are \$34, and so on, up to 10 tickets for \$100. Proceeds from the lottery go into our General Operating Fund with no restrictions or specified purpose.

What is most unique about this program is that a small number of people can raise a significant amount of money. It has been run successfully at the Jewish Community Center of Paramus for 9 years.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

500-900

Submitted by Arlene Maze

**CONGREGATION ADUDAS ACHIM**

Austin, TX

512-735-8400

Chili Cook-Off Agudas Achim held it's Second Annual Chili Cook-Off. Our goal was not only to earn much needed funds for our congregation, but to bring our congregation, Jewish community and greater Austin community together for a fun family event filled with good food, good music and good company.

Volunteer co-chairs joined with our synagogue staff to recruit 100 additional volunteers to help with Logistics, Food and Drink, Children's Activities, Registration and Recruitment of Teams, Volunteers, Rentals, Music, Ticket Sales and Publicity. Over 600 people attended the event and were treated to all the chili they could taste and an afternoon of live music, featuring six local bands.

Twenty-two teams entered the competition and prizes were awarded for the Best Beef Chili, Best Turkey Chili, Best Vegetarian Chili and People's Choice Award. The event raised \$5000 for our congregation and plans are in place to make this an annual event.

**HAZAK**

**GOLD**

250-501

**TEMPLE BETH EL**

Allentown, PA

Submitted by Rance Block

610-435-3521

Temple Beth El (Allentown, PA) embarked on a \$7M capital campaign in late 2002 in an effort to raise sufficient funds to build a new facility for the congregation. The campaign ran from November 2002 through the present. The end result of the Capital Campaign was the establishment of a new home for the congregation. The first services were held in the new building in January 2006.

The capital campaign proved to be successful financially and also had a very positive effect on the congregation. The campaign provided a vehicle for which congregants rallied together for the benefit of the congregation and worked in partnership to ensure the success of the campaign.

Since we did not contract with a professional fundraiser, the capital campaign was a true grass roots effort by dedicated congregants who understood the significance of working as a team to raise the necessary funds, where every dollar raised went directly into the campaign.

**GOLD**

250-501

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Throughout the year, as our congregants took the opportunity to subscribe letters, parshas, verses and sentences within the Torah, we also had educational programs. One program enabled us to learn where our Torahs were written, how old they were, and where they had been prior to Temple Beth Emet.

We culminated our project and 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee celebration with the Torah dedication. Each person present was privileged to write a letter with his or her own hand in the Torah. When this was completed we all marched, danced and sang as we brought our Torah into the Ark.

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**GOLD**

500-901

Submitted by Michael Greenberg and  
Gary Grossman

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954-968-4545

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**GOLD**  
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**GOLD**  
250-501  
Submitted by Risé Routenberg and  
Ann Zonderman

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Schenectady, NY  
518-393-9211

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**SILVER**  
250-500

**COMMACK JEWISH CENTER**  
Commack, NY  
631-543-3311

Our Junior Congregation room was desperately in need of a renovation. Ugly brown paneling on all four walls. Nothing to inspire our youngsters to feel a part of the enthusiasm we were experiencing in other areas of our shul life. Enter Bonnie Bresalier and Robin Farbman, two moms of Religious School students, both with a creative side just waiting to be unleashed on this drab room.

First we obtained the poster series "350 years of Jewish life in America." In order to frame and display the posters, we solicited \$36 in donations for a "share" in the poster. The response was enthusiastic with many families "purchasing" an entire poster for \$108. The fifteen series set sold out in record time raising \$1,620 to cover the cost of framing and all the paint needed for the rest of the project. Our students painted a beautiful mural on one wall based on a painting of Jerusalem by Israeli artist, Bracha Lavee. The children loved the involvement and really took ownership of the project and did a fabulous job. Robin and Bonnie faux painted two walls, convinced Men's Club and Sisterhood to donate the funds for an entire cork wall to display future art projects by our students. The final wall was a blank canvas just begging for a facelift, so we conceived our "L'dor V'dor wall. Bricks were faux painted then "sold" for \$36 each. Metal plaques are attached for each brick. With over 200 bricks available, this wall netted over \$7,000 for us to continue our children's based projects.

Our congregation responded enthusiastically by personal solicitation, "please buy a brick", "OK!", messages via e-mail and phonetree, and order forms in our monthly bulletin. Close to 150 families have participated one way or another.

We are so proud of the final results, a beautiful Junior Congregation room with a wonderful informative and educational poster series; a beautiful mural painted by our students; a L'dor V'dor wall dedicated to our members and their families; we also solicited funds for a new Aron Hakodesh, some additional artwork and a beautiful handcrafted mezuzah to grace our doorway. All told we raised about \$10,000 for this project.

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Dr. Fred L. Harris

**JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF PARAMUS**

Paramus, NJ

201-262-7691

The *Membership Lottery* is an annual event, in which Congregants are offered the opportunity to purchase chances to win one or more of a number of prizes, which include:

1st Prize: Free membership for a family for one year

2nd Prize: 2 free seats for the High Holidays

3rd Prize: A leaf on our Tree of Life

4th Prizes: 1 of 4 guaranteed parking spaces on the High Holidays

Members participate by buying any number of chances, from 1 to 10, or more if they so choose. As more chances are bought, the price per chance goes down. One chance is \$18, 2 are \$34, and so on, up to 10 tickets for \$100. Proceeds from the lottery go into our General Operating Fund with no restrictions or specified purpose.

What is most unique about this program is that a small number of people can raise a significant amount of money. It has been run successfully at the Jewish Community Center of Paramus for 9 years.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

500-901

Submitted by Arlene Maze

**CONGREGATION ADUDAS ACHIM**

Austin, TX

512-735-8400

Chili Cook-Off Agudas Achim held it's Second Annual Chili Cook-Off. Our goal was not only to earn much needed funds for our congregation, but to bring our congregation, Jewish community and greater Austin community together for a fun family event filled with good food, good music and good company.

Volunteer co-chairs joined with our synagogue staff to recruit 100 additional volunteers to help with Logistics, Food and Drink, Children's Activities, Registration and Recruitment of Teams, Volunteers, Rentals, Music, Ticket Sales and Publicity. Over 600 people attended the event and were treated to all the chili they could taste and an afternoon of live music, featuring six local bands.

Twenty-two teams entered the competition and prizes were awarded for the Best Beef Chili, Best Turkey Chili, Best Vegetarian Chili and People's Choice Award. The event raised \$5000 for our congregation and plans are in place to make this an annual event.

**HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION****GOLD**

250-500

Submitted by Ron and Leora Isaacs

**TEMPLE SHOLOM**

Bridgewater, NJ

908-722-1339

Temple Sholom Hebrew High School currently boasts 100 students from grades 8 through 12. Its co-directors, Rabbi Ron Isaacs and his wife Dr. Leora Isaacs are known for their work in both classroom and family education, having served as family educators to Camp Ramah in the Poconos for 15 years, and co directing its Shabbat Plus Adult Learning experience. The other faculty members, all members of Temple Sholom, hold degrees in education and are master teachers. One current faculty member was herself a student in the school back in the 1990's, and another former graduate is serving as a teacher in Temple Sholom's Religious school.

Students take both required and elective courses, and are evaluated on the basis of attendance, in-class participation, completion of home work assignments and projects. Progress reports are issued to parents and students

twice yearly. Each year an award is presented to the student (s) who has generated the outstanding confirmation project. Projects are judged by the faculty and many of them are used as part of the school curriculum because of their excellence.

Co-curricular activities, including class trips, social action projects, a tzedakah snack bar, and special events (including an intergenerational event where parents and students learn together) are part of the yearly cycle of events. The school also has its own film library, an active Board of Education with representation by a senior student, class parents, and many others who serve its needs as volunteers. The retention rate of students is extremely high—most students complete 5 years of Hebrew High and the excellence of the school has continued to foster a desire by prospective Jewish families to learn more about the synagogue and its educational opportunities. It is with pride that we submit this application on behalf of our Hebrew High.

**GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Gila Hadani Ward

**TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM**

Roslyn Heights, NY

516-621-2288

Machon Beth Sholom is the supplementary Hebrew High School of Temple Beth Sholom. Serving post-bar/bat mitzvah teenagers from Grades 8-12, MBS is an incredible way for our teens to retain their Jewish ties, to strengthen their Jewish identities and socialize with other Jewish teens.

For Grades 8-10, the MBS program is held on Sundays from 11AM — 1PM and on Mondays from 7:15PM — 9:00PM. For Grades 11 and 12, MBS is held on Monday evenings from 7:15PM — 9:00PM.

MBS extends beyond the classroom, however. Our Youth and informal Jewish educational programs are very much an integral part of the high school program. Involvement in United Synagogue Youth (USY) and Kadima is part of our school curriculum (USY and Kadima membership is included in MBS Tuition) and is encouraged for non-MBS high school students.

**HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE AND EDUCATION**

**GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by Beth Richardson

**TEMPLE BETH-EL**

Poughkeepsie, NY

845-454-0570

The Anne Frank in the World exhibit was brought by Temple Beth El to the greater Dutchess County area to help the community promote tolerance. The community created the “Hudson Valley Coalition to Promote Tolerance” as a way to involve schools, temples, colleges, and everyone in the area. The venue was Locust Grove which is the historic site of Samuel Morse. Many grants were procured so admission fees were waived for all who attended.

The more than 100 docents worked every day to ensure that the message of Anne Frank got out to all. The exhibit consisted of panels sent from the Anne Frank Center in New York City as well as films, computers, and a model of Anne Frank’s room in Amsterdam built by a local artisan. This model of the room will now travel with the exhibit.

The exhibit was open for a month, but there were many activities that happened before and after the actual exhibit times. Local schools were contacted and over 3,000 students came to learn at the exhibit as well as 20,000 adults.

**GOLD**

100-250

Submitted by Sol Krongelb

**YORKTOWN JEWISH CENTER**

Yorktown Heights, NY

914-245-2324

The Yorktown Jewish Center builds interest in the study of the Shoah throughout the year and promotes remembrance of the victims by creating a new, original program for each year's Yom Hashoah commemoration. Planning for each Yom Hashoah program begins in the Fall of the preceding year with the selection of a theme to be researched and developed into the final program. We then proceed to research appropriate material and decide how to most effectively present the program using a combination of oral delivery, live choral and instrumental music, slides and video as appropriate. We also try to identify and incorporate the personal experiences of our congregants or their families whenever these stories fit in with the selected theme.

While our synagogue has given the Adult Education Committee responsibility for the Yom Hashoah commemoration, it was felt that Holocaust remembrance had to involve the entire synagogue. All arms of the synagogue including Sisterhood, Men's Club and the Religious School are therefore asked to participate in the planning and presentation of the program. Exhibits associated with the program give congregants an opportunity to browse as they arrive and help set the tone for the evening. A table set up with Yahrzeit candles provides each attendee the opportunity to light a personal memorial to the victims.

This submission describes *Pieces of a Life, Is There Justice in Forgiveness?* and *If Not Now, When?*, the commemoration events for 2005/5765, 2006/5766 and 2007/5767, respectively, along with other activities in the synagogue which are related to these programs and which contribute to Holocaust study throughout the year. We have found that our congregants have been profoundly moved by these programs and by the synagogue activities which are linked to them. This entry is submitted with the hope that other congregations will be able to adapt elements of our approach to their own Holocaust programs with equally effective results.

The accompanying program booklets for *Pieces of a Life, Is There Justice in Forgiveness?* and *If Not Now, When?* along with a DVD of *Is There Justice in Forgiveness?* are part of this submission.

**SILVER**  
500-901  
Submitted by Beth Richardson

**TEMPLE BETH-EL**  
Poughkeepsie, NY  
845-454-0570

Anne Frank – A Living Legacy was a fund raising event that helped to create a community-wide awareness of Anne Frank and of the Holocaust. The venue was the Franklin D. Roosevelt Estate, Wallace Visitor Center.

Community involvement included a wide variety of guest speakers, such as a U.S. senior ambassador, college president, cantor from the Netherlands, temple high school students and interfaith choirs.

Temple community members wrote messages of hope that were published and given out so their voices can be heard now and in the future.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
500-900  
Submitted by Rabbi Paul Silton

**TEMPLE ISRAEL OF ALBANY**  
Albany, NY  
518-438-7858

1. Volunteers and the Rabbi determined that, in keeping with the meaning of Yom Kippur, a Day of Atonement, a day of finding meaning to our lives in the forthcoming year, it would be inspirational to hear from individuals who have moved beyond their average life to a life of deeper meaning, a life through which a legacy of caring beyond the norm will be noted. In combination with these heroes and heroines speaking to what amasses to a crowd of approximately 1200, they receive a Shofar on a stand with an inscription depicting this award and the date, and receive recognition with a bronze plaque which is mounted upon a large decorative stone in our pathway of trees, our "Forest of the Righteous." To our knowledge, this is the only one of its kind in the United States. This last point of recognition is modeled after the Yad Vashem's "Avenue of the Righteous among the Nations". To produce this event, underwriters were solicited and a named contribution was established as part of an endowment campaign.
2. The theme(s) are developed by Rabbi Silton in concert with volunteers, usually participants in the Holocaust, Religious, and Adult Education committees. Through discussions with the head of our community Holocaust

Education Group, Holocaust Survivors and Friends, headed by Shelly Shapiro, several candidates' qualifications are reviewed for educational message, public appeal, interesting stories, and relevancy in today's world. Background information is gathered and the selection is determined.

3. Following these selections, potential participants are contacted in priority order to determine availability. Travel arrangements are made through solicitation of mileage from generous donors. Individual biographies are requested with publicity photos. Individuals and/or their children, who were affected themselves or through family members were affected, are invited to also be honored with special recognition.
4. Using all background information and the photos received, publicity announcing this program begins over the summer with the onset and distribution of the Adult Education Brochure. Following that, the synagogue bulletin reiterates the information, and sometime around Labor Day publicity articles are placed in the community Jewish periodical. Approximately a week prior to Yom Kippur, articles with photos are placed strategically in several local newspapers, and the day of Kol Nidre, television reporters are invited to meet and interview these honorees. Either immediately before or immediately following Yom Kippur, the speakers have been requested to speak at our Education Center and also several secular schools, and quite often the day school, and they comply gladly.
5. Temple Israel has always been a forerunner in the education of the Holocaust. Its outstanding teenage dance troupe, Tzamarot, is annually requested to perform the very dramatic and moving "Song of the Ghetto," choreographed by the famous Fred Berk, z"l, at the community wide Yom Hashoah program.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Over 900

**TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM**

Roslyn Heights, NY  
516-621 2288

It is the mission of the Yom Hashoah Committee of Temple Beth Sholom to ensure that our children not only remember those that perished in the Holocaust, but they also know the history of our people. Our sages have taught us that knowledge will give our children the power to cope, confront and take direction to make a difference for all mankind.

The goal of our committee, clergy and educators is to vary the mediums we use to disseminate information about the holocaust for we know people learn and are touched by different teaching methods.

We have had concerts, photo journal exhibits, films, dramatizations and speakers of various ages and backgrounds, address the topics of the *shoah* "Never Forget," "Never Again," our program aim at moving its listeners to the realization that it is up to each individual to make a difference; to empower each to want to engage in democracy and social action to help create the changes they want to see in the world.

**INCLUSION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

**GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by Beth Giladi

**CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL**

Millburn, NJ

973-379-3811

Most congregations are sensitive to individuals with special needs. There are programs, mostly in the religious schools, for integrating students with learning issues into the educational program. Congregation B'Nai Israel decided to look at the issue of inclusion of individuals with special needs as a more global issue — with amazing results.

Firstly, we recognize that individuals with special needs are not all of school age, nor are they all able to attend school. If we are to be inclusive and welcoming, we must find ways to welcome everyone who wishes to be a part of our community. We therefore hired a special educator for our staff whose job description was derived wholly from our need to find ways to include our special needs community.

Thus, over the past year we have developed individualized programs for school age children, a monthly

minyán for autistic teens, hired developmentally disabled adults to help with program and reached out to local adults, creating new categories of membership and including developmentally disabled adults in our committees and social groups. As we write this we have just received a grant from Legacy Heritage Innovation Project to further our work.

**GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by Martha Friedman and  
Roberta Devery

**THE JEWISH CENTER OF PRINCETON**

Princeton, NJ

609-921-0100

In 2006, a team of dedicated professionals determined to expand the Religious educational experience of our students with learning differences, created the Yachdav (inclusive) program serving students from Gan through post Bar Mitzvah.

The Yachdav program offers many levels of service intervention and support to address the varying needs of our Religious School students, their families, and staff including special training programs for both the Religious School teaching staff and Yachdav program support staff to learn to identify and support students with varying learning styles, a Parent support group run by a licensed social worker, and a referral system for teachers and parents to request a consultation with the Yachdav coordinator.

The Yachdav program offers 3 levels of educational placement for our religious school students: 1) unique classroom environment with a 1:3 teacher to student ratio for students who need support in both Hebrew language and Judaica subjects and work best in small groups, 2) Hebrew language lab with a 1:3 teacher to student ratio and mainstream Judaic studies, and 3) mainstream classroom placement for both Hebrew and Judaic studies with program modifications made by the Yachdav program staff. The Yachdav program is directed by a pediatric occupational therapist with 12 years of Hebrew teaching experience, in addition to public school based experience with special needs children.

**GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Suzanne K. Levy

**B'NAI ISRAEL CONGREGATION**

Rockville, MD

301-881-6550

As a community, B'nai Israel Congregation is committed to the value that all people are created *b'tzelem elohim*, in the Image of God, and that all people are to be valued.

B'nai Israel Congregation prides itself in its long-standing practices of including *everyone* in its programs, education and religious services by meeting individual physical and/or educational needs. In the early 1980's, we were the first synagogue evaluated for accessibility by a Jewish community organization (Jewish Social Service Agency—JSSA) and had one of the highest ratings for a Jewish institution within the Metropolitan Washington area.

Since 2005, our Special Needs committee has met at least 4 times a year to insure that our commitment to inclusiveness is implemented at all levels. The mission of this committee is “to welcome and provide for the access and inclusion of all populations within our synagogue community who have physical, developmental, mental and/or emotional needs. The committee will be proactive in creating awareness within the synagogue and the Jewish communities of the availability of resources and programs.”

B'nai Israel's commitment to inclusion is evident in all areas of synagogue life, from worship to education to various social action projects. Its effects reach people of all ages, from children in our Nursery School, Talmud Torah or High School to elderly adults in the congregation. Our programmatic goal is to make B'nai Israel a most inclusive and welcoming community.

**GOLD**

500-901

Submitted by Andrea Ammerman

**CONGREGATION BETH DAVID**

Saratoga, CA

408-257-3333

The Congregation Beth David Mission Statement begins as follows: A synagogue is a Beit T'filah: a House of Worship; a Beit Midrash: a House of Study; and a Beit Knesset: a House of Assembly. Congregation Beth David, as a Conservative synagogue exists to fulfill these functions. Above all, our mission is to actively transform *all* people's Jewish lives through prayer, study and community....

### **Goal A**

Over the course of the past decades and through the present, Congregation Beth David has been consciously working towards lifting challenges towards inclusion layer by layer. The Rabbi, staff, and Board of Directors have been seeking to make accommodations for the disabled as a result of our commitment to our mission that we be a Beit Tefila, a Beit Midrash and a Beit Knesset to all of our congregants.

Congregation Beth David has implemented the following important accommodations to eliminate barriers within the synagogue:

- 4 permanent front row handicapped parking spaces.
- Additional temporary parking spaces are designated during High Holy Days and other major congregational programs (using 8 portable handicapped signs that have been purchased).
- Four 1000 Watt light poles in the parking lot.
- Handicapped access ramps installed in parking lot and entrance to congregation grounds.
- Bima remodeled to include ramp and railing to Torah Table.
- For regular sized services, Torah Table is kept at ground level for even easier access.
- 1 handicapped stall in each of the men's and women's bathrooms.
- 1 handicapped sink in each of the men's and women's bathrooms.
- Greeters and ushers during services to help seat and accommodate physically challenged congregants and guests.
- Synagogue mezzuot lowered to accommodate young students and the wheelchair bound.
- Designated, convenient seating for handicapped members with space for their families during the crowded High Holiday services.
- Assisted listening devices are provided at services and lectures.
- Large print siddurim are available.
- Transliterated siddur (with associated page number in regular siddur) now available (transliterated by Rabbi Pressman).

Congregation Beth David is now working to eliminate the following remaining physical barriers:

- Leveling of door sill into the synagogue to make transition into the building with wheelchair and walkers smooth.
- Designated, convenient seating for handicapped members with space for their families during all services.
- Pneumatic front doors.

### **Goal B:**

#### **Programming for adults:**

Beth David's adult programming includes:

- Classes
- Brunch and Learn lectures during Religious School hours
- Conversations in Jewish Learning guest lectures
- Scholar in Residence learning weekend
- Adult Bnei Mitzvah Program
- Shabbat, Holiday and Sunday service/minyan
- Book Club discussions
- Hazak
- Adult Torah Readers' Club

At this time, the adult accommodations needed in our community have been mostly physical in nature and the

accommodations listed in Goal A were those needed to assist our adults with special needs to fully participate in our adult programs.

**Programming for children:**

Beth David's children's programming includes:

- Religious School classes for grades PreK-7th
- High school classes for grades 8-12
- Youth Groups: Jr. Kadima, Sr. Kadima and USY
- Affiliated Cub Scout pack
- Shabbat and High Holiday services for tots and youth
- Torah Readers' Club and Torah Leaders' Club
- Trope classes
- Bnei Mitzvah training
- Family Education programs
- M'yuhad special need program

At this time, the accommodations for children with special learning issues are administered as part of our "M'yuhad" special needs program which is part of the Religious School.

The purpose of the M'yuhad program is to allow all Jewish Students a Jewish education, to enable them to become part of the Jewish community and feel connected to Judaism. Congregation Beth David has an on site Credentialed Learning Specialist who oversees our M'yuhad Program. The Learning specialist is responsible for making sure that:

- The students with special learning needs are properly identified through the use of special confidentiality forms, teacher requests for case review, gentle discussions with parents. Students that have an IEP (Individual Education Plan) are asked to submit them to the Learning Specialist.
- Make sure that proper accommodations are given to Special Students in the Religious School — this can come in the form of a M'yuhad buddy,\* a one-on-one tutor or teacher or an alternative learning plan. The Learning Specialist reviews all students that have been identified with a "special need" and works with the family to ensure that their child receives the Jewish education they need. She develops a "Jewish IEP (Individual Education Plan)" and works with the teachers, classroom aides and buddies to make sure the accommodations needed are implemented. The Learning Specialist is always available during Religious School hours to supervise, work with a student or give support should the need arise.
- Make sure that proper accommodations are put into place for special students to become a bar/bat mitzvah with pride and dignity. These accommodations are made on a case by case basis and may include minimal service participation as needed, a Sunday or Thursday service instead of Shabbat; allowances for partial/shared Torah and/or Haftorah readings; use of alternative tools to insure success (e.g., transliteration, memorization, audio tapes).
- Make sure that teachers, classroom aides and buddies understand the accommodations the student needs. The learning specialist teaches a year long class in Hebrew High titled "What Makes a Good Teacher" — in it all students who wish to be Classroom aides or M'yuhad Buddies are taught about confidentiality, accommodations and proper attitude to help Special students feel welcome and part of the community.
- Make recommendations for accommodations in Youth Group and Hebrew High programs. Although, the Learning Specialist is not available during Youth Group and Hebrew High functions, she gives recommendations for proper accommodations to insure that all students have a positive experience.

\* M'yuhad Buddies support our Religious School program for students with special needs. The M'yuhad program helps provide a Jewish education to students with various forms of learning challenges. M'yuhad Buddies are matched with one particular student and "shadow" them throughout their Religious School day. They have a unique opportunity to bond with one child and truly make a difference in their lives. The M'yuhad Buddy works one-on-one with students with various leaning challenges within the established classroom settings for as long as the student is able to do so in a reasonable way. If the M'yuhad Buddy and teacher determine that the student is no longer learning in that setting, or is being too disruptive, the M'yuhad Buddy works with the student outside the classroom. This may be by actually sitting down and doing the same work in a quieter setting, or it may be by taking a walk and having a discussion orally. The M'yuhad Buddy works with students with various learning challenges including: ADD, ADHD, Pervasive

Developmental Disorders (Autism and Aspergers), Auditory and Visual Discrimination disorders. In addition the Myuhad Buddies are required to keep a journal and report back to the Learning Specialist. In so doing they can identify in detail any learning challenges that their young learners may be experiencing.

**GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Yaffa Fuchs

**CONGREGATION BETH EL**

Voorhees, NJ

856-675-1166

Congregation Beth El's Project Lev, now in its fourth successful year, is a unique Religious School Program, open to the Jewish Community, for Children with Special Needs. Specifically, it's a program for children who are developmentally and/or physically challenged -- children with autistic spectrum disorders, Fragile X Syndrome, Down Syndrome, Pervasive Developmental Disorder and children with cognitive, physical, social and emotional deficiencies. The students we serve are of all grade levels and are both verbal and non-verbal communicators. The program is designed to accommodate between eight and fourteen children in any given year.

Launched in September 2003 with a grant from the Jewish Community Foundation, of the Jewish Federation of Southern New Jersey, Project Lev has been the only program of its kind and open to all children in the Jewish Community. About fifty percent of our population comes from other synagogues in the community. Some require partial or full scholarship which we readily supply.

Because of the varying skills and levels of disabilities, our program is designed to meet the individual needs of each child. Each child has an individual education plan with goals and objectives, works with an aide and is monitored by our Special Needs coordinator.

Now in its fourth year, the program has evolved to include *Project Lev Phase II: Toward the Age of Mitzvoth*, a Bar/Bat Mitzvah component, and *Project Lev Shabbat*, a monthly Shabbat Service geared for children and adults with Special Needs.

The program is facilitated by one program coordinator, and seven to ten volunteer aides, Sundays, from 10 to 12. The curriculum is rich and varied and individually designed to meet the needs of each of our students. All students are included in school wide events, grade level events and weekly specialty subjects such as, music, art and Chugim (clubs.)

**SILVER**

Over 900

Submitted by Rabbi Michael Ungar

**CONGREGATION TIFEREH ISRAEL**

Columbus, OH

614-253-8523

Congregation Tifereth Israel's "Special Needs/Inclusion Committee" was formed at the urging of congregational members in response to a High Holiday sermon in the Fall of 2006 on this topic. The committee is led by Helen Miller, a congregant who works with students with special needs at a local day school. There are well over a dozen active members on the committee including parents of children and adults with mental/physical disabilities, a wheelchair-bound congregant, and a congregant who is hearing-impaired.

The committee accomplished the following in its brief existence:

1. Completed a needs/resource assessment for individuals with special needs encompassing religious school, services, physical plant, social programs, etc.
2. Conducted two Friday night services for families with special needs individuals, and one Saturday morning service. New siddur created for each service (see enclosed). Attendance of about 30 people at each service. These services will be offered on a regular basis next year.
3. Obtained magnifiers for prayer books.
4. Reproduced sections siddurim large-print. Large-print Siddur is often too heavy for those who would use them; smaller booklets are more manageable.
5. Reviewed policies for B'nai Mitzvah for children with special needs.

6. Secured funds for reconfiguration of main restrooms to allow for full wheelchair accessibility. Construction to take place this summer.
7. Secured funds for retrofitting of main entrance doors with power-assist capability; work completed two months ago.
8. Communicated with High Holiday security to ensure availability of handicap -- and especially van accessible -- spaces.
9. Began planning of Board of Trustees Awareness training.
10. Initiated contacts with Federation to plan a Shabbaton for the community at a nearby accessible camping facility.
11. Assisted in preparations with our Cantor for the Adult Bar Mitzvah of a member with TBI (traumatic brain injury) who also has visual impairment. (He was great and even read from the Torah!)

In addition to these accomplishments, for several years Tifereth Israel has hosted the community's Sunday morning Keshet program for children with disabilities in our building; high schoolers are given the opportunity to assist in these classes. Every year, our 7th Grade receives disabilities awareness training. Our religious school has the most extensive tutoring/enrichment program of any congregation; we employ 16 tutors in our religious school for this purpose. Every child celebrates Bar/Bat Mitzvah in a setting that is appropriate to the abilities of the child—including a service for a child with autism in 2006 who recently was called to the bimah for an ark opening to mark the one-year anniversary.

We are very proud of our accomplishments and look forward to continuing to offer greater accessibility in a building that was constructed in 1929!

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Marian Kromberg

**CONGREGATION KNESES TIFERETH ISRAEL**

Port Chester, NY

914-939-1004

In 2006, KTI began the first major renovation of our sanctuary in more than 50 years since the building was dedicated. Our goal was not only to improve the sanctuary aesthetically, but also to create an accessible, welcoming and inclusive place to worship.

To that end, we lowered the bimah and added a handicap-accessible ramp with a railing. With the bimah now fully accessible to all, we went further by having a new Torah Reading Table designed that would continue our goal of inclusiveness and accessibility. The new table can be raised and lowered with a simple lever with no interruption in the service.

We believe innovation design can be a model for other congregations seeking to follow our lead in making the sanctuary, the bimah and Torah reading accessible and inclusive for all worshippers.

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Rabbi Avi Friedman

**SUMMIT JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER**

Summit, NJ

908-273-8130

While our building may be trapped in the 1950's, our members and staff are certainly firmly entrenched in the 21st century in terms of attitude and approach to the members of our community with special needs. Among our regular Shabbat attendees are several adults with developmental issues. Our congregation takes pride in looking out for these individuals, providing rides, including them in programs, giving them honors and making sure that they feel a part of our congregation.

In our Religious School, we take particular pride in our most recent endeavors to be completely inclusive. Our current kindergarten class includes one student with a severe visual impairment. We have adjusted the course materials to make it easier for her to participate and learn. As noted above, we have made some modest accommodations in our physical structure to meet the same goal. In the very same class, we also have a young student with Down syndrome who has had a very successful year thanks to the support of an aide in the classroom.

In order to develop even better relationships between special needs students and their typically developing peers, we have become a part of a pilot program in partnership with Metro West Federation's Partnership for Jewish Learning & Life. Our Religious School has become a sister school with Yaldeinu – the special education program of the Partnership. The six participating families

made a two-year commitment to (1) attend a one-hour-long seitsitization workshop as a family to prepare for the experience, (2) have their pre-school age student attend six Yaldeinu sessions learning side by side with Yaldeinu students, and (3) in the second year, participate in special monthly Shabbat Services at the SJCC during which the Yaldeinu students and the SJCC students participate in a specially designed Junior Congregation program.

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Marsha Birenbaum

**SHAARE ZEDEK SYNAGOGUE**

University City, MO

314-727-1747

We are committed to including all of our members' participation in worship. This past year we have begun several initiatives to promote inclusion of all our congregants, as well as welcome the participation of visitors or relatives to our services and programs.

Built in the 1950's, our sanctuary's bima sits on a stage, with steps leading to lecterns and Torah table. Many of our congregants had difficulty climbing the steps, and members or visitors in wheelchairs were unable to ascend the bima. One of our members, confined to a wheelchair since his 20's, had not had an aliyah since his Bar Mitzvah.

We decided to build an extension of the bima, to be closer to the congregation, and to add two side ramps with handrails, leading to a new lectern. The result is a more intimate sanctuary, with access for all to have Torah honors and aliyot. Additionally, the member mentioned above was able to have his first aliyah in over 30 years.

Other initiatives to promote inclusion include the purchase of assistive listening devices for the hearing impaired, as well as the addition of large print siddurim. Our renovated parking lot includes additional well-marked handicapped parking spaces, and our building entrance leads to an elevator that runs continuously during Shabbat and holidays.

We are proud of our efforts to include all of our members in our programs and services, and look to continue ways to encourage participation.

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Bennett Schwartz

**B'NAI SHALOM**

West Orange, NJ

973-731-0160

B'nai Shalom's renovation campaign included a new sanctuary. In order to make it wheelchair accessible, we installed double entry doors. The bima also a ramp that is wide enough for a wheelchair.

Our new sanctuary also has a center shulchan. The shulchan has a step which converts into a ramp for a wheelchair and is also wide enough for a wheelchair. The table on the shulchan was also made to accommodate wheelchairs. The table is adjustable and can be lowered to allow those in a wheelchair to receive an aliyah.

We have a number of large print siddurim. We received a grant for the hearing impaired and this system is also available in the sanctuary.

**ISRAEL/MASORTI AFFAIRS**

**GOLD**

100-250

Submitted by Sonia Milrod

**NORTHERN HILLS SYNAGOGUE BETH EL**

Cincinnati, OH

513-931-6038

Supporting Israel is a key core value of Northern Hills Synagogue-Congregation B'nai Avraham (Appendix 1). In 5766, forty-four members visited Israel; in 5765 fifty-eight visited. Of a 205-family congregation, that's a high percentage. Each year, all those visiting Israel are acknowledged in a special recognition on Sukkot. Many of our members have

made *aliyah*. Right now we have three young people who are spending the year in Israel on a variety of programs, and three young people are in the process of making *Aliyah*. One is currently serving in the Israeli army. Our Rabbi consistently supports Israel from the *bimah* and in his regular email and bulletin communications with the congregation. (Appendix 1)

Although we do not have an Israel Affairs program, we always incorporate Israel programming into our regular adult and youth education programs. This year, Northern Hills Synagogue had a special focus on Israel education. Northern Hills Synagogue invited two other Cincinnati area Conservative Congregations, Ohav Shalom and Beth Israel-Hamilton, to apply for a grant from “The Council on Jewish Life and Learning of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati”, for ARTZEINU — Our Land, a series of four educational programs on Israel.

The program was designed to educate the community about Israel and make people feel a personal connection to Israel. The overarching theme was getting participants to understand why Israel is where it is now geographically, religiously and culturally. The program centered around three themes: history, culture and religion. Each of the four programs was designed to have multiple sessions to deepen understanding of these themes.

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Trudi M. Perlman

**BETH EL SYNAGOGUE**

East Windsor, NJ

609-443-4454

The Books for Israel Project is an international grass roots effort which began in October 2002. Since the 2000 Intifada began, Israel’s teachers and children have suffered the fear and isolation that indiscriminate attacks impose, equivalent, if not worse than the U.S. attack on 9/11.

This Project is not only about books. It is about standing with all of Israel’s children and teachers. The book drives and book donors working with Books for Israel “adopt” a school cluster and work directly with the lead volunteer teacher for that cluster. Many of our participants have become international pen pals, and many of our book donors have visited their schools in Israel. The people-to-people work is as important as the books -- maybe even more important!

The Books for Israel Project is a way for those of us living in the diaspora to make a positive impact on Israeli children in a direct, simple, yet very meaningful way. As of July 2005, over 41 tons of donated English literature and reference books have been delivered to over 200 of Israel’s Jewish, Druze, Bedouin, Christian, Bahai, and Muslim public schools from book drives launched by concerned synagogues, churches, schools, youth groups, community centers, and individual book donors throughout North America and England. Those books are needed due to lack of funds for the schools, having to divert these funds to defense programs to keep the children from being hurt or killed

Beth El Synagogue has participated in this program since we first heard about it over three years ago. To date, Beth El Synagogue has shipped more than 4 dozen bags of books to Israel, the most recent shipment being in January, 2007. With the help of Rena Cohen from Rockville Maryland and her late sister Jade Bar Shalom (who recently passed away due to a brain tumor), who developed the program internationally, they coordinated book drives between North America and Europe and schools in Israel.

Beth El Synagogue was “twinned” with DeShalit Junior High School Aleph in Rehovot, Israel. We have formed a loving relationship with the students and the lead teacher, Amanda Caplan. Several of our members, including our cantor have either visited the school or met Amanda in person. She could not express enough her gratitude for all we’ve done to enhance the educational possibilities of the students in her school and surrounding schools. Because of our donation, DeShalit Junior High School Aleph was able to create its first library which gave impetus to obtaining a computer to catalog the books, appropriate shelving, and a dedicated room. In addition, any books that were below or above the grade level appropriate for the junior high students were given to other local schools in the area.

*JUDAICA AND FINE ARTS*

**GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Ellen Zarrow-Nissenbaum

**TEMPLE EMANUEL**

Newton, MA

617-558-8100

Temple Emanuel, Newton has a long history of connection and promotion to Judaica Arts. Our original building, situated on Ward Street in Newton, was a colonial building, which fit into the architecture of the surrounding community and was adorned with Judaica art that befitted the decor of that structure. The decorative accents above the entranceway, which depicted the tablets of the Ten Commandments, the mezuzot, the ark in the main sanctuary, and the display cases outside the sanctuary, all enhanced the artistic appreciation of the synagogue. The smaller chapel's outer wall was composed of four stained glass windows with illuminated symbols of the major holidays. A large embroidered tapestry of Judaic symbols, created by Sisterhood women for the synagogue graced the foyer. There was also a Judaica Shop and display cases, which displayed beautiful items of Judaica, *flanking* the main sanctuary doors.

1996, Temple Emanuel renovated the old facility creating an entirely new structure. The challenge was to maintain some familiarity with the old Temple Emanuel within a modern structure. This was achieved by keeping some of the old architectural elements and placing them conspicuously in the new building. The Ten Commandments lintel had a new home on the upper foyer wall of the new entrance. The tapestry was placed on the rear entrance wall, which is easily viewed from the second floor near the chapel as well as the front office and by all who leave the synagogue by that exit. The main sanctuary ark was preserved and stands in the small chapel, while the four stained glass windows became the basic design element of an octagonal shape for the chapel. The new home of the stained glass windows allowed the placement of display window cases to be placed into five of the outer walls of the octagonal chapel. The center case houses our Holocaust scroll, which is removed each year for the Yom Hashoah service. The four other window display cases are maintained by Sisterhood as the Sisterhood Museum.

**GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Bat-sheva Slavin

**TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM**

Roslyn Heights, NY

516-621-2288

About Us: Temple Beth Sholom was founded in 1951, The Judaica Museum was established in 1969 under the direction of our founding Rabbi, Rabbi Mo S. Hyams. The Museum's main gallery is located in the Temple's lobby, and a second Art Gallery is in the Wingate Center. The Museum exhibits may be viewed during temple regular business hours, Without entree fee.

Mission: Temple Beth Sholom Judaica Museum's mission is to present Judaica visual objects that signify the observances of Judaism, the history of the Jewish people, and the vision of the modern State of Israel. Our mandate is to maintain, and increase a rich and important Judaica collection. Through educational programs and experiences that seek to preserve, explore and celebrate Jewish values and traditions. Our purpose is to connect the community to Jewish heritage and help develop a deeper understanding of the Jewish experience for people of many backgrounds.

Permanent Collection: Temple Beth Sholom Judaica Museum's collection of artifacts is from the Diaspora: Egypt, England, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Israel-Modern and antiquities, Morocco, Poland, Russia and Yemen. The collection includes: silver ceremonial objects, fiber art, ceramics, wood work; sacred scrolls and books, paintings, fine art, photographs and many more.

**Highlights:**

"The Tree of Life Shtender" by David Moss and Noah Greenberg

Collection of antique and modern Tzedakah (Charity) Boxes

Major collection of antique and modern Chanukah Menorahs

Hagaddah from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, from Florence, Italy

Activities: Temple Beth Sholom Judaica Museum presents four original exhibitions annually. The summer exhibition is drawn exclusively from the collection. The other exhibitions are based on year- long themes, and may include traveling exhibitions and loans from other institution, artists, and private collections.

The museum sponsors Exhibition Openings and programs that feature: Meet the Artist Receptions, Lectures,

Recitals, Concerts, Movie Premiers, Holidays and Life Cycle Events. Programs are created for different age groups and are a joy for the entire family.

Highlights of past Exhibitions: "Israel: the Art and Vision," "A Soldier's Story," "350 Years of American Jewry," Holiness Becometh Thy House- Painting of Psalms and Meditation," "Tikkun Olam."

**SILVER**

100-250

Submitted by Martin Kaufman

**BETH SHALOM CONGREGATION**

Jacksonville, FL

904-268-0404

Beth Shalom Congregation of Jacksonville, Florida presented its ongoing exhibits in their Gallery of Jewish Culture for the year 2006-2007.

This popular gallery is not only available to the Congregation but is open for viewing to the entire Jacksonville community.

Crossing the spectrum of events and experiences in Jewish life, it has brought a better understanding of the contributions Jews have played throughout history. Even though the Jewish population is small, the impact which certain individuals have made reinforces our importance and prominence upon the world.

The exhibits range from "Experiencing Israel through the eye of the camera," Jewish Pulitzer Prize Winners, Jewish Nobel Prize Winners, and Jewish members of the United States Congress. The students of our school have been made aware of the reason why we are so proud of our Jewish heritage by being exposed to these exhibits.

*KADIMA AND USY*

**GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Ali Schlamowitz

**NORTH SUBURBAN SYNAGOGUE BETH EL**

Highland Park, IL

847-432-8900

The past two years in BEANS USY have been outstanding. In the 2004- 2005 school year, our membership number was at 116, but in the last two years we've had 133 and 132 members. This is the result of a tremendous effort on the part of the USYers, running up to 4 membership drives a year and spending hours on the phone and updating the database. Last year we contributed over \$12,000 in tzedakah to Tikun Olam, and this year we divided that money with our new endeavor, the 1.5 Million Penny Project.

Our USY chapter has two independent tzedakah funds running simultaneously. We fill them through events like our Schach Car Wash, Hamentashen baking, Coat Checks, Purim Tax, selling "No Bread" shirts for Passover, and running our own Thrift Store. We have also continued a BEANS tradition known as the Kosher Kandy Korner. We sell snacks to Hebrew school children twice a week, and collect a significant portion of our total TO money from it. Little by little, we achieve more... in tzedakah and in membership.

Our religious and educational life has far exceeded expectations. Our "Virtual Israel-ity" program was a total immersion in Israeli culture: we danced Israeli dances, ate Israeli food, and assembled packages for Israeli soldiers. Aside from our typical Saturday Morning Teen Minyans, we had a Teen Minyan Sukkah walk, a Teen Minyan Tashlich, afternoon Teen Minyans, and a Super Teen Minyan Shabbaton. We added to our repertoire this year by writing and performing a Purim Shpiel for Beth El's Purim seudah. The skit included musical numbers and a creative telling of the Purim story.

There is something else that BEANS has accomplished this year that transcends mere numbers and statistics. We held more USYer-led programs, where our very own members planned an entire program all the way from the brainstorming to the evaluation of it. We learned these skills from LTI this year, and truly put them to use. The

rewarding process of creating our own unique programs proved to us that the quality of a program triumphs over the quantity of programs we have each year. Some of these programs include Human Bop-it, SarBEANS, and Virtual Israel-ity.

Communication within our chapter has dramatically increased due to our new USYer-designed website and the addition of Facebook “events” for our chapter programs.

Our Executive and General Board spent countless hours crafting the amusing write-ups and designing the pages of our chapter yearbook. In addition to this yearbook being a history of our standout year, we consider it a work of art, and we hope you have as much fun reading it as we did making it.

**GOLD**

100-250

Submitted by Amy Worth

**TEMPLE REYIM**

Newton, MA

617-537-2410

Temple Reyim USY is the place to be for Jewish youth in Newton. Our chapter is the most fun and active in all of New England, and we have won several regional awards over the past five years, including New England Gold Chapter of Excellence for two consecutive years, Most Improved Chapter, Greatest Membership Increase, and Certificates of Merit for nearly every program we have run. We are thrilled to announce that for the first time in thirty-four years, the NERUSY (New England Region USY) President is from Temple Reyim.

Temple Reyim USY runs groups for students in grades 5-6 (Kadima), 7-8 (Jr. USY) and 9-12 (Sr. USY). Each group has an advisor, and Sr. USY has an Executive board of seven USYers, and several other USYers serving as chairs of various events throughout the year. Each group has a social event every 4-6 weeks. In addition, we offer monthly Friday night Shabbat programs, Saturday morning Shabbat programs and lounge nights, all for grades 7-12. We are actively involved in NERUSY (New England Region USY) events, sending large delegations to several conventions and dances during the year.

Some other highlights of the past two years include:

- Increased membership for the past five years.
- Increased Tikun Olam contribution for the past five years.
- Learn to Lead program to encourage USYers to lead Shabbat services.
- Social Action/Tikun Olam events including volunteer trips to agencies in the greater Boston area, and several community service projects at Reyim.
- Israel and Social action themed Shabbatot and Lounge Nights, and fundraising initiatives.
- Chaverim G'dolim, our big brother/big sister program matching Sr. USYers with Kadimanicks for three special events this year.
- TRUSY Treasures incentive program to encourage kids to attend events and bring friends.
- Holiday celebrations, including Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur teen services, and leading Purim festivities for the entire congregation.
- Monthly 20-24 page newsletter (B'YACHAD), our website, [www.reyim.org/usy](http://www.reyim.org/usy) and a TRUSY toolbar with links to Jewish and Israeli newsgroups.

The USY Board meets twice a month with their overseeing advisor/youth director. The board plans the calendar of events, calls USYers to encourage them to attend, and designs educational material and games to use during events. The Jr. USY Board meets once a month with their overseeing advisor as well. The synagogue's Youth Committee meets once a month, and includes a chairperson, and 10-14 parents of children of all ages. The Youth Committee guides our programs, sets policy, and fundraises for the youth program.

**GOLD**

Over 900

**CONGREGATION HAR SHALOM**

Potomac, MD

301-299-7087

Congregation Har Shalom's Youth Department has been fostering the development of Jewish Identity in children and teenagers for many years. Our program includes five youth groups that focus on informal Jewish education and creating

relationships between young Jewish peers. Each of our youth groups focuses on a different aspect of Judaic inclusion beginning with creating comfort in the physical synagogue environment to creating a spiritual connection between the youth and Judaism. During the early years of involvement, we focus on creating fun and educational programs in our synagogue facilities. By inviting our youngsters to participate in fun activities on site we hope to establish a sense of comfort in the physical space of Har Shalom. As the children get older, we infuse more Jewish education and reinforce their cultural and holiday learning done in their formal classrooms. During the later years of involvement (Kadima and USY) our teens become the advocates and governing bodies of their youth groups. The teens plan activities focusing on Social Action, Tikun Olam, and creating social relationships among their peers. Our teens participate in and lead regular Shabbat services and activities. Our teens become the driving force behind the success of our youth groups because their passion for Judaism translates into amazing programs and gatherings.

Our Youth Department has increased the interest in all youth groups through exciting events and activities, fostering continued involvement among our youth. We continue to reach out to our local community by participating in a plethora of Social Action projects throughout the year. Our teens also strive to raise funds for a number of organizations through their Tikun Olam fundraising programs. The passion and commitment to Judaism and Jewish values is initiated in the early years of involvement in hopes that it will continue to go throughout their academic years and many years following. Ultimately, it is the involvement of our youth that creates the vibrant and energetic nature of our congregation.

**SILVER**

Over 900

Submitted by Carol Schauer

**TEMPLE EMANUEL**

Newton, MA

617-558-8121

Three years ago, Temple Emanuel took bold steps to integrate our formal and informal youth education initiatives. Prior to that time, the two areas functioned as separate silos. The reorganization allowed the creation of the “Harry Kraft Director of Informal Youth Education” reporting to the Educational Director. This new model engaged the Director in religious school life (“where the kids are”) through community service programming. In addition, this allowed the youth to become aware of and engaged in informal activities in the temple including youth services with Shabbat dinners, temple retreats, USY and grade level activities, community organizing for teens, and B’nai Mitzvah projects. This organizational change was brought about through careful planning by the youth director, youth committee, religious school committee, educational and professional staff, and the temple professional and lay leadership.

The integration of the formal and informal youth education has resulted in exponential growth in the department. Over 350 youth are engaged in various programs or activities within the shul. More youth are participating in not only our traditional youth groups but they also have become part of the community. A 5<sup>th</sup> grader might be enjoying the games in our Solomon Youth Lounge after religious school. Many 7th graders help operate booths at the Purim carnival and numerous teens play on our USY basketball team. Our youth are involved, they are in the building, and many feel a connection with the shul that is warm, meaningful and real. The blending of the formal and informal education silos continues to provide our youth with many opportunities to feel connected to Temple Emanuel and being Jewish. With the support of the leadership of the synagogue and its excellent youth committee, the Harry Kraft Youth Department is poised to continue its fine work towards the important goal of keeping our children connected to Judaism through informal youth education.

1. Summer programs have been attended by Anna Penchansky in 2006, as she went on Wheels. She is also going on Summer in the City in 2007. Daniel Meltzer is attending the Wheels East program in 2007. Unfortunately we have not had any participants in Hanegev’s encampment over the past 2 years.
2. Scholarship is offered to those families who require financial help to send their children to a convention and summer program. There is a scholarship line written into the youth budget for each year. In 2006-2007, we are budgeted for \$1500. We have given out \$1250 for USYers to attend International Convention in Boston, as well as Sub-regional Spring Convention, and Regional Convention. In 2005-2006, we were budgeted for \$1000 and spent all of it.
3. Our Youth Commission is led by Helene Papilsky and Debbie Zané. They serve as the chairs of the committee. There are 6 members on the committee. They range from having children in the youth groups to being a past

president of the synagogue to the current auxiliary's vice president. The Youth Director also serves on the committee. The Kadima and USY Presidents also attend the meetings when asked for a report. The Youth Commission meets once every 6-8 weeks. An agenda is written up with bullet points to be discussed.

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Sarah Robinson

**SHAARE ZEDEK SYNAGOGUE**

St. Louis, MO

314-727-1747

The Kadima evening was themed "Our First Shabbaton," and all of the programming was built around it. We led a kid-friendly Kabbalat Shabbat service with stories, games, and songs and then followed it by a Shabbat dinner (complete with french fries and chicken nuggets). We sang Shabbat songs and taught each other our favorites from camp. After dinner we played a trivia game about Israel (with candy as prizes) and did a Shabbat-appropriate art project/social action project where we used foam stickers to make cards for the residents of a local retirement home. To end the evening, we ate non-dairy ice cream sundaes and had a discussion where we compared and contrasted three fictional Jews and their versions of observance and discussed the idea of what makes a good Jew.

In the morning, after kimah and breakfast, we talked about our favorite USY moments. After breakfast we led a Shabbat morning service (again kid-friendly) and acted out the Parsha instead of reading Torah. Our Vice President Religion/Education planned and led a Lunch 'n Learn after services about the idea of becoming an adult and taking responsibility. After nap time (free time) we had a snack of graham crackers and pudding and then created our own Havdalah service. We ended the program with a friendship circle.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Submitted by Ami Monson

**ADATH JESHURUN SYNAGOGUE**

Elkins Park, PA

215-635-6611

AJ USY Chanukah Celebration With **Gam Yachad** - Organization For Mentally Handicapped Adults

On Sunday December 17, 2006, from 1:00 P.M. — 4:00P.M. the Adath Jeshurun United Synagogue Youth Group hosted a wonderful and vibrant Chanukah celebration with Mentally handicapped Adults through a local Philadelphia organization called GAM YACHAD.

20 handicapped adults came to our synagogue and celebrated the holiday with 10-15 of our USYers. The program included painting *Menorot*, singing and dancing, and a wonderful *Latka* lunch with lots of other goodies.

In observing the USYers with the Gam Yachad Adults and staff, it was beautiful to see the patience, creativity, and the amount of enthusiasm our teenagers showed with the adults who have special *needs*. In one short program, our USYers succeeded in making the Mentally Handicapped Adults the owners of their own individual accomplishments, while being part of a team. Our AJ USYers were a ubiquitous presence, working to make sure the program came together in a fun and caring manner. They mastered the difficult task of being mature adults with those who have real needs to which they are not accustomed. The best part of the program besides everyone dancing and singing together was the fact that our USYers were able to be trusted and be principled without being judgmental.

The theme and emphasis of the year for our USYers has been Social Action and *Tikkun Olam*. This program took that theme to a whole other level. For 3 short hours our USYers put away their cell phones, laptops, and I-Pods and went back to the grassroots education they have been taught in the synagogue about true *Derech Eretz Kadma Letorah*. The correct way of treating and helping others.

According to Ann Rappaport, the Gam Yachad Coordinator, "It's hard to believe that one roof and four walls could contain all that bursting joy yesterday! I can't even tell you the last time when we've had such a successful and rewarding Gam Yachad program!"

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
250-500  
Submitted by Rebecca Gordon

**BET TORAH**  
Mt. Kisco, NY  
914-666-7595

The Bet Torah USY and Kadima youth have a tremendous energy, good will, and Jewish spirit that is contagious. Their presence and involvement in so many activities at Bet Torah greatly enhances congregational life.

Year to year our USY and Kadima chapters grow and improve:

- Bet Torah boasts a 75% post-b'nai mitzvah retention rate: USY is a big part of why
- The USY membership has increased 26% versus last year
- Kadima members (who paid their own dues) increased 36% versus last year
- Event participation for 2006-2007 is impressive. There has been constant activity in and around Bet Torah since our teens left for Encampment this past August. To date, USYers have enjoyed 39 events and Kadimanicks have participated in 18 events
- The USY and Kadima spirit of Tikun Olam (TO) sours. To date, USY has donated \$1,500 to TO and they have led/helped lead many programs (often with help from the Kadimanicks). For example, they helped run two carnivals for the mentally and physically challenged, they ran our Purim Carnival, they sold Israeli products at events, participated in a panel discussion on how to save the environment and spent an afternoon cleaning the shoreline of the Hudson River
- The Jewish spirit and ruach of our teens is tremendous. Our post bar/bat mitzvah USYers and Kadimanicks have led Havdallah at High Holidays, at Youth Shabbat and at local Jewish Youth events. They chanted all of the Torah portions during the High Holiday services and have led benching and Israeli songs at luncheons and Friday night synagogue dinners. Several of our USY teens even teach a tefilah class in our Hebrew School. USYers and Kadimanicks are always present at Youth and Shabbat services and can be found at Bet Torah whenever events are taking place.

Our USY and Kadima members exemplify the best in Jewish youth and no doubt will one day, sooner rather than later, become the adults who make a difference in the Jewish community and our world. In our minds, they are winners and deserve this award.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
250-500  
Submitted by Scott London

**TEMPLE BETH DAVID**  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL  
561-694-2350

4. There is 1 Kadima and 1 USY chapter at Temple Beth David. In Kadima, there are 31 members, 15 are active. In USY, there are 22 members, 14 are active. Membership for Kadima over the past 2 years is 32 in 2004-05; 27 in 2005-06; and 31 in 2006-07. Membership for USY over the past 2 years is 16 in 2004-05; 18 in 2005-06; and 22 in 2006-07.
5. The youth department does have a Youth Director, Scott London, who is the only professional leader. He serves as the advisor for USY, Kadima, and Chalutzim (3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>). He is a member of JYDA and the current Secretary for JYDA. He has attended the last 4 International Conventions, as well as all Regional Conventions over the same time period. He is in his first year at TBD, originally working in the Hagesher Region.
6. There are 2-3 Kadima events depending on the sub-regional calendar as well. Kadima meets regularly on Tuesdays, with an occasional Saturday night event. There are 3-4 USY events, also depending on the sub-regional calendar. USY meets regularly on Thursday nights.
7. On Yom Hashoah, the USY group views "Paper Clips" movie, and this year, we will be having a speaker, a Holocaust survivor, speak to the group as well. The teens also helped the Men's Club pack the Yom Hashoah candles. Around Hanukkah time, the USY group makes latkes and sings songs in honor of the holiday. We also eat gelt and spin dreidel. The USYers had an event where the cost to attend was \$6.13. Each person that attended became a member of 613 mitzvah club. Also, during Sukkot, the USYers fulfill the mitzvah of eating in the Sukkah. We listened to music and ate. USYers will have the chance to eat Israeli food, as they will make tomato and cucumber salad, eat falafel, and bissli chips.

8. The synagogue does not sponsor a teenage congregation, but we do have a junior congregation, which is for 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. It is part of their Religious School curriculum. The pre-teens lead the majority of the service, as well as act out the current week's parsha. We meet twice a month with approximately 10-12 students attending.
9. On the monthly calendar for the youth department there is 1 Friday night and 1 Saturday morning service scheduled. These are not included as events, but as requirements for both the Kadima and USY boards. They do not lead services for the congregation, we just attend. We also participate in weekday minyan on nights where we have a Kadima or USY event, as the start time for each group coincides with the start time for minyan. In March, the USYers and Kadimaniks also had the honor of leading Friday night services for the congregation. The Youth Director gave the Dvar Tefilah.
10. The youth department does not have a newspaper, but the Youth Director does submit an article for the synagogue's newspaper each month.
11. The synagogue has a confirmation class, where many of our USYers are enrolled.
12. Both the Kadima and USY groups had a joint event where we learned about 5 cities in Israel, about the people, the culture, and then built each city out of food. We were aided by having the Schlichah from the area help with slides.
13. Tikun Olam has become very high on the priority list. Over the past 5 years the USYers make pareve pies (pumpkin, apple, and cherry) for Thanksgiving selling them to the synagogue members. All proceeds go directly to Tikun Olam. This year was our largest amount sold, as we topped 120 pies. Kadima and USY each hold their own Chinese auction, where Kadima raised \$83 and USY raised \$57. The Youth Director also introduced a new program, a Wing Bowl, where contestants eat as many chicken wings (Kosher, of course) against other contestants and the audience bets on each round as to who will eat the most in a 2 minute period. This year TBD USY and Kadima have raised nearly \$800 for Tikun Olam, also a new chapter high.

### KERUV-EDUD

#### **GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Ali Schlamowitz

#### **NORTH SUBURBAN SYNAGOGUE BETH EL**

Highland Park, IL

847-432-8900

The past two years in BEANS USY have been outstanding. In the 2004- 2005 school year, our membership number was at 116, but in the last two years we've had 133 and 132 members. This is the result of a tremendous effort on the part of the USYers, running up to 4 membership drives a year and spending hours on the phone and updating the database. Last year we contributed over \$12,000 in tzedakah to Tikun Olam, and this year we divided that money with our new endeavor, the 1.5 Million Penny Project.

Our USY chapter has two independent tzedakah funds running simultaneously. We fill them through events like our Schach Car Wash, Hamentashen baking, Coat Checks, Purim Tax, selling "No Bread" shirts for Passover, and running our own Thrift Store. We have also continued a BEANS tradition known as the Kosher Kandy Korner. We sell snacks to Hebrew school children twice a week, and collect a significant portion of our total TO money from it. Little by little, we achieve more... in tzedakah and in membership.

Our religious and educational life has far exceeded expectations. Our "Virtual Israel-ity" program was a total immersion in Israeli culture: we danced Israeli dances, ate Israeli food, and assembled packages for Israeli soldiers. Aside from our typical Saturday Morning Teen Minyans, we had a Teen Minyan Sukkah walk, a Teen Minyan Tashlich, afternoon Teen Minyans, and a Super Teen Minyan Shabbaton. We added to our repertoire this year by writing and performing a Purim Shpiel for Beth El's Purim seudah. The skit included musical numbers and a creative telling of the Purim story.

There is something else that BEANS has accomplished this year that transcends mere numbers and statistics. We held more USYer-led programs, where our very own members planned an entire program all the way from the brainstorming to the evaluation of it. We learned these skills from LTI this year, and truly put them to use. The rewarding process of creating our own unique programs proved to us that the quality of a program triumphs over the quantity of programs we have each year. Some of these programs include Human Bop-it, SarBEANS, and Virtual Israel-ity.

Communication within our chapter has dramatically increased due to our new USYer-designed website and the addition of Facebook “events” for our chapter programs.

Our Executive and General Board spent countless hours crafting the amusing write-ups and designing the pages of our chapter yearbook. In addition to this yearbook being a history of our standout year, we consider it a work of art, and we hope you have as much fun reading it as we did making it.

**GOLD**

100-251

Submitted by Amy Worth

**TEMPLE REYIM**

Newton, MA

617-537-2410

Temple Reyim USY is the place to be for Jewish youth in Newton. Our chapter is the most fun and active in all of New England, and we have won several regional awards over the past five years, including New England Gold Chapter of Excellence for two consecutive years, Most Improved Chapter, Greatest Membership Increase, and Certificates of Merit for nearly every program we have run. We are thrilled to announce that for the first time in thirty-four years, the NERUSY (New England Region USY) President is from Temple Reyim.

Temple Reyim USY runs groups for students in grades 5-6 (Kadima), 7-8 (Jr. USY) and 9-12 (Sr. USY). Each group has an advisor, and Sr. USY has an Executive board of seven USYers, and several other USYers serving as chairs of various events throughout the year. Each group has a social event every 4-6 weeks. In addition, we offer monthly Friday night Shabbat programs, Saturday morning Shabbat programs and lounge nights, all for grades 7-12. We are actively involved in NERUSY (New England Region USY) events, sending large delegations to several conventions and dances during the year.

Some other highlights of the past two years include:

- Increased membership for the past five years.
- Increased Tikun Olam contribution for the past five years.
- Learn to Lead program to encourage USYers to lead Shabbat services.
- Social Action/Tikun Olam events including volunteer trips to agencies in the greater Boston area, and several community service projects at Reyim.
- Israel and Social action themed Shabbatot and Lounge Nights, and fundraising initiatives.
- Chaverim G’dolim, our big brother/big sister program matching Sr. USYers with Kadimanicks for three special events this year.
- TRUSY Treasures incentive program to encourage kids to attend events and bring friends.
- Holiday celebrations, including Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur teen services, and leading Purim festivities for the entire congregation.
- Monthly 20-24 page newsletter (B’YACHAD), our website, [www.reyim.org/usy](http://www.reyim.org/usy) and a TRUSY toolbar with links to Jewish and Israeli newsgroups.

The USY Board meets twice a month with their overseeing advisor/youth director. The board plans the calendar of events, calls USYers to encourage them to attend, and designs educational material and games to use during events. The Jr. USY Board meets once a month with their overseeing advisor as well. The synagogue’s Youth Committee meets once a month, and includes a chairperson, and 10-14 parents of children of all ages. The Youth Committee guides our programs, sets policy, and fundraises for the youth program.

**GOLD**

Over 900

**CONGREGATION HAR SHALOM**

Potomac, MD

Congregation Har Shalom's Youth Department has been fostering the development of Jewish Identity in children and teenagers for many years. Our program includes five youth groups that focus on informal Jewish education and creating relationships between young Jewish peers. Each of our youth groups focuses on a different aspect of Judaic inclusion beginning with creating comfort in the physical synagogue environment to creating a spiritual connection between the youth and Judaism. During the early years of involvement, we focus on creating fun and educational programs in our synagogue facilities. By inviting our youngsters to participate in fun activities on site we hope to establish a sense of comfort in the physical space of Har Shalom. As the children get older, we infuse more Jewish education and reinforce their cultural and holiday learning done in their formal classrooms. During the later years of involvement (Kadima and USY) our teens become the advocates and governing bodies of their youth groups. The teens plan activities focusing on Social Action, Tikun Olam, and creating social relationships among their peers. Our teens participate in and lead regular Shabbat services and activities. Our teens become the driving force behind the success of our youth groups because their passion for Judaism translates into amazing programs and gatherings.

Our Youth Department has increased the interest in all youth groups through exciting events and activities, fostering continued involvement among our youth. We continue to reach out to our local community by participating in a plethora of Social Action projects throughout the year. Our teens also strive to raise funds for a number of organizations through their Tikun Olam fundraising programs. The passion and commitment to Judaism and Jewish values is initiated in the early years of involvement in hopes that it will continue to go throughout their academic years and many years following. Ultimately, it is the involvement of our youth that creates the vibrant and energetic nature of our congregation.

**SILVER**

Over 900

Submitted by Carol Schauer

**TEMPLE EMANUEL**

Newton, MA

617-558-8121

Three years ago, Temple Emanuel took bold steps to integrate our formal and informal youth education initiatives. Prior to that time, the two areas functioned as separate silos. The reorganization allowed the creation of the "Harry Kraft Director of Informal Youth Education" reporting to the Educational Director. This new model engaged the Director in religious school life ("where the kids are") through community service programming. In addition, this allowed the youth to become aware of and engaged in informal activities in the temple including youth services with Shabbat dinners, temple retreats, USY and grade level activities, community organizing for teens, and B'nai Mitzvah projects. This organizational change was brought about through careful planning by the youth director, youth committee, religious school committee, educational and professional staff, and the temple professional and lay leadership.

The integration of the formal and informal youth education has resulted in exponential growth in the department. Over 350 youth are engaged in various programs or activities within the shul. More youth are participating in not only our traditional youth groups but they also have become part of the community. A 5<sup>th</sup> grader might be enjoying the games in our Solomon Youth Lounge after religious school. Many 7th graders help operate booths at the Purim carnival and numerous teens play on our USY basketball team. Our youth are involved, they are in the building, and many feel a connection with the shul that is warm, meaningful and real. The blending of the formal and informal education silos continues to provide our youth with many opportunities to feel connected to Temple Emanuel and being Jewish. With the support of the leadership of the synagogue and its excellent youth committee, the Harry Kraft Youth Department is poised to continue its fine work towards the important goal of keeping our children connected to Judaism through informal youth education.

14. Summer programs have been attended by Anna Penchansky in 2006, as she went on Wheels. She is also going on Summer in the City in 2007. Daniel Meltzer is attending the Wheels East program in 2007. Unfortunately we have not had any participants in Hanegev's encampment over the past 2 years.
15. Scholarship is offered to those families who require financial help to send their children to a convention and summer program. There is a scholarship line written into the youth budget for each year. In 2006-2007, we are budgeted for \$1500. We have given out \$1250 for USYers to attend International Convention in Boston, as

well as Sub-regional Spring Convention, and Regional Convention. In 2005-2006, we were budgeted for \$1000 and spent all of it.

16. Our Youth Commission is led by Helene Papilsky and Debbie Zané. They serve as the chairs of the committee. There are 6 members on the committee. They range from having children in the youth groups to being a past president of the synagogue to the current auxiliary's vice president. The Youth Director also serves on the committee. The Kadima and USY Presidents also attend the meetings when asked for a report. The Youth Commission meets once every 6-8 weeks. An agenda is written up with bullet points to be discussed.

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Sarah Robinson

**SHAARE ZEDEK SYNAGOGUE**

St. Louis, MO

314-727-1747

The Kadima evening was themed "Our First Shabbaton," and all of the programming was built around it. We led a kid-friendly Kabbalat Shabbat service with stories, games, and songs and then followed it by a Shabbat dinner (complete with french fries and chicken nuggets). We sang Shabbat songs and taught each other our favorites from camp. After dinner we played a trivia game about Israel (with candy as prizes) and did a Shabbat-appropriate art project/social action project where we used foam stickers to make cards for the residents of a local retirement home. To end the evening, we ate non-dairy ice cream sundaes and had a discussion where we compared and contrasted three fictional Jews and their versions of observance and discussed the idea of what makes a good Jew.

In the morning, after kimah and breakfast, we talked about our favorite USY moments. After breakfast we led a Shabbat morning service (again kid-friendly) and acted out the Parsha instead of reading Torah. Our Vice President Religion/Education planned and led a Lunch 'n Learn after services about the idea of becoming an adult and taking responsibility. After nap time (free time) we had a snack of graham crackers and pudding and then created our own Havdalah service. We ended the program with a friendship circle.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

500-900

Submitted by Ami Monson

**ADATH JESHURUN SYNAGOGUE**

Elkins Park, PA

215-635-6611

AJ USY Chanukah Celebration With **Gam Yachad** - Organization For Mentally Handicapped Adults

On Sunday December 17, 2006, from 1:00 P.M. — 4:00P.M. the Adath Jeshurun United Synagogue Youth Group hosted a wonderful and vibrant Chanukah celebration with Mentally handicapped Adults through a local Philadelphia organization called GAM YACHAD.

20 handicapped adults came to our synagogue and celebrated the holiday with 10-15 of our USYers. The program included painting *Menorot*, singing and dancing, and a wonderful *Latka* lunch with lots of other goodies.

In observing the USYers with the Gam Yachad Adults and staff, it was beautiful to see the patience, creativity, and the amount of enthusiasm our teenagers showed with the adults who have special *needs*. In one short program, our USYers succeeded in making the Mentally Handicapped Adults the owners of their own individual accomplishments, while being part of a team. Our AJ USYers were a ubiquitous presence, working to make sure the program came together in a fun and caring manner. They mastered the difficult task of being mature adults with those who have real needs to which they are not accustomed. The best part of the program besides everyone dancing and singing together was the fact that our USYers were able to be trusted and be principled without being judgmental.

The theme and emphasis of the year for our USYers has been Social Action and *Tikkun Olam*. This program took that theme to a whole other level. For 3 short hours our USYers put away their cell phones, laptops, and I-Pods and went back to the grassroots education they have been taught in the synagogue about true *Derech Eretz Kadma Letorah*. The correct way of treating and helping others.

According to Ann Rappaport, the Gam Yachad Coordinator, "It's hard to believe that one roof and four walls could

contain all that bursting joy yesterday! I can't even tell you the last time when we've had such a successful and rewarding Gam Yachad program!"

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Rebecca Gordon

**BET TORAH**

Mt. Kisco, NY

914-666-7595

The Bet Torah USY and Kadima youth have a tremendous energy, good will, and Jewish spirit that is contagious. Their presence and involvement in so many activities at Bet Torah greatly enhances congregational life.

Year to year our USY and Kadima chapters grow and improve:

- Bet Torah boasts a 75% post-b'nai mitzvah retention rate: USY is a big part of why
- The USY membership has increased 26% versus last year
- Kadima members (who paid their own dues) increased 36% versus last year
- Event participation for 2006-2007 is impressive. There has been constant activity in and around Bet Torah since our teens left for Encampment this past August. To date, USYers have enjoyed 39 events and Kadimanicks have participated in 18 events
- The USY and Kadima spirit of Tikun Olam (TO) sours. To date, USY has donated \$1,500 to TO and they have led/helped lead many programs (often with help from the Kadimanicks). For example, they helped run two carnivals for the mentally and physically challenged, they ran our Purim Carnival, they sold Israeli products at events, participated in a panel discussion on how to save the environment and spent an afternoon cleaning the shoreline of the Hudson River
- The Jewish spirit and ruach of our teens is tremendous. Our post bar/bat mitzvah USYers and Kadimanicks have led Havdallah at High Holidays, at Youth Shabbat and at local Jewish Youth events. They chanted all of the Torah portions during the High Holiday services and have led benching and Israeli songs at luncheons and Friday night synagogue dinners. Several of our USY teens even teach a tefilah class in our Hebrew School. USYers and Kadimanicks are always present at Youth and Shabbat services and can be found at Bet Torah whenever events are taking place.

Our USY and Kadima members exemplify the best in Jewish youth and no doubt will one day, sooner rather than later, become the adults who make a difference in the Jewish community and our world. In our minds, they are winners and deserve this award.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Scott London

**TEMPLE BETH DAVID**

Palm Beach Gardens, FL

561-694-2350

17. There is 1 Kadima and 1 USY chapter at Temple Beth David. In Kadima, there are 31 members, 15 are active. In USY, there are 22 members, 14 are active. Membership for Kadima over the past 2 years is 32 in 2004-05; 27 in 2005-06; and 31 in 2006-07. Membership for USY over the past 2 years is 16 in 2004-05; 18 in 2005-06; and 22 in 2006-07.
18. The youth department does have a Youth Director, Scott London, who is the only professional leader. He serves as the advisor for USY, Kadima, and Chalutzim (3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>). He is a member of JYDA and the current Secretary for JYDA. He has attended the last 4 International Conventions, as well as all Regional Conventions over the same time period. He is in his first year at TBD, originally working in the Hagesher Region.
19. There are 2-3 Kadima events depending on the sub-regional calendar as well. Kadima meets regularly on Tuesdays, with an occasional Saturday night event. There are 3-4 USY events, also depending on the sub-regional calendar. USY meets regularly on Thursday nights.
20. On Yom Hashoah, the USY group views "Paper Clips" movie, and this year, we will be having a speaker, a Holocaust survivor, speak to the group as well. The teens also helped the Men's Club pack the Yom Hashoah candles. Around Hanukkah time, the USY group makes latkes and sings songs in honor of the holiday. We also eat gelt and spin dreidel. The USYers had an event where the cost to attend was \$6.13. Each person that

attended became a member of 613 mitzvah club. Also, during Sukkot, the USYers fulfill the mitzvah of eating in the Sukkah. We listened to music and ate. USYers will have the chance to eat Israeli food, as they will make tomato and cucumber salad, eat falafel, and bissli chips.

21. The synagogue does not sponsor a teenage congregation, but we do have a junior congregation, which is for 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. It is part of their Religious School curriculum. The pre-teens lead the majority of the service, as well as act out the current week's parsha. We meet twice a month with approximately 10-12 students attending.
22. On the monthly calendar for the youth department there is 1 Friday night and 1 Saturday morning service scheduled. These are not included as events, but as requirements for both the Kadima and USY boards. They do not lead services for the congregation, we just attend. We also participate in weekday minyan on nights where we have a Kadima or USY event, as the start time for each group coincides with the start time for minyan. In March, the USYers and Kadimaniks also had the honor of leading Friday night services for the congregation. The Youth Director gave the Dvar Tefilah.
23. The youth department does not have a newspaper, but the Youth Director does submit an article for the synagogue's newspaper each month.
24. The synagogue has a confirmation class, where many of our USYers are enrolled.
25. Both the Kadima and USY groups had a joint event where we learned about 5 cities in Israel, about the people, the culture, and then built each city out of food. We were aided by having the Schlichah from the area help with slides.
26. Tikun Olam has become very high on the priority list. Over the past 5 years the USYers make pareve pies (pumpkin, apple, and cherry) for Thanksgiving selling them to the synagogue members. All proceeds go directly to Tikun Olam. This year was our largest amount sold, as we topped 120 pies. Kadima and USY each hold their own Chinese auction, where Kadima raised \$83 and USY raised \$57. The Youth Director also introduced a new program, a Wing Bowl, where contestants eat as many chicken wings (Kosher, of course) against other contestants and the audience bets on each round as to who will eat the most in a 2 minute period. This year TBD USY and Kadima have raised nearly \$800 for Tikun Olam, also a new chapter high.

## KOACH/COLLEGE STUDENTS

**GOLD**  
Over 900

**B'NAI ISRAEL CONGREGATION**  
Rockville, MD  
240-221-2504

B'nai Israel has a long history of making our college students a priority within our congregation. Our College Outreach Committee continues to find new ways to engage our college students and connect them to the synagogue. Through monthly emails, holiday care packages and our annual college directory, we maintain contact with our college students and help to maintain a strong connection to Jewish life.

Our college outreach process has been well received by the students. It is a program that continues to evolve and expand. Not only do we focus on those students already in college, but we also recognize the need to address the issues and concerns facing our high school students when choosing a college. Through meeting with a college counselor or providing important resource material in our annual college directory, we hope to assist our high school students with making "Jewish" choices when choosing a college.

In addition, we maintain constant communication with our students on college campuses. Not only do we send our monthly synagogue newsletter, but we also help our college students observe Jewish holidays. We have sent

students Hanukkah menorahs, Yom HaShoah candles, matzah, and other materials to allow them to celebrate these occasions away from home.

Our College Outreach Committee is eager to begin two new initiatives. The first is to purchase a piece of Judaica, either a mezuzah or tzedakah box, for each of our college graduates. The second new program for next year is to match college students who are interested in different jobs or areas of study with members of the congregation.

B'nai Israel is proud of its long tradition of college outreach. It is one that we cherish and know it will have a lasting impact on the lives of our synagogue members.

**SILVER**

Over 900

Submitted by Cheri Kalvort

**B'NAI TORAH CONGREGATION**

Boca Raton, FL

561-392-8566

Our College Connection is a bridge between campus life and home and community. The synagogue helps to keep the students connected Jewishly. Many of the parents and even siblings and grandparents of the students serve on the committee and help pack the gift boxes 4 times a year. Gifts, including sweets, appropriate ritual items, and written materials are sent for the fall holidays, Chanukah, Purim, and Passover. In addition, we send a smaller mailing before Tu B' shevat.

The weekly email communications between the rabbis and the students open the opportunity for discussion and dialogue. Our rabbis visit colleges in the state and invite the students to a meal with a "taste of home". This program is an integral part of synagogue life, and is important to the young adults. Gatherings during vacations allow them to meet each other again, rekindle relationships, and enrich their lives.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

500-900

Submitted by Pennie Ascowitz

**TEMPLE BETH AM**

Margate, FL

954-968-4545

Temple Beth Am's College Outreach Program is highly committed to maintaining a connection with our college students. This year we sent packages for Purim and Passover, brimming with treats. Our Purim package included Hamantasben, baked in our Temple Beth Am kitchen by temple volunteers and USY students (thus showing our commitment to bridging the bond with our members away from home). These packages included a variety of candy, nuts, dried fruit, and of course a Groger. Our Passover package included chocolate cashew clusters, chocolate covered jellies, fruit jells, candy bars, Matzo Ball Soup Mix, a pound of matzo, assorted Passover nuts, along with a Haggadah. All of the food sent is of the highest quality and is strictly kosher. In addition, each package included a letter from the Rabbi along with a greeting from College Outreach.

Putting together these packages is no small feat. With 70 students on our mailing list, filling these boxes is no small task. We have to fill, label, and make sure each box has the proper postage. Since our students are in schools all over the United States covering 6 separate postal zones, this part of the job is of major importance. It is a labor of love — you get back what you put in. We at Temple Beth Am are very proud to be able to offer this worthwhile program to our students.

As a continued commitment to our program, our Rabbi visits students at two of the Florida colleges (where many of our students attend). During these visits he had either lunch or dinner with the students and had the opportunity to spend time with them and catch up with news. Also, he has full communication with the students via e-mail, thus enabling them to seek him out for his guidance and great debates. At times during the year, when students are back in town and attend services, the Rabbi makes sure to announce the fact that the students are back with us. This bond is part of the unity in our temple. Throughout the year, our students also receive a copy of the Scribe, our monthly temple magazine. This enables them to stay in touch with the community, friends and family. We want to encourage and enhance each student's ability to celebrate his or her Jewish identity, both at Holiday times and throughout the year. At Temple Beth Am our family remains close regardless of the distance.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Roland Roth

**CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM**

Wilmington, DE

302-654-4562

When he first started two years ago our Director of Education and Programming inherited a Hebrew School with about twenty children enrolled. One of the first connections he made in the community was with the Hillel Director at the local university. A connection was requested with potential Koach leaders with regard to potentially teaching in the Hebrew School if the goal of increased enrollment was to be achieved. Fast forward two years and attendance is now over ninety (grades Pre-K through 8th) and we have gone from three teachers, all over fifty-five years of age, to eleven teachers, seven of whom are college students (of whom three attended the Schusterman College Leadership program at the most recent CAJE conference)! College students who are connected to the Conservative Movement through Koach are great resources for Hebrew Schools: they have the passion and only need the text and pedagogical skills (which can be taught, unlike passion!).

Our VP for Membership last year was able to get a volunteer on her committee to take charge of sending gift baskets to our congregation's members who are in college all across the country. This task, which was never done before this year, was daunting in the beginning (getting names, current addresses, etc.) but has blossomed into a source of great pride in our congregational community. Four times this year, on Rosh Hashanah, Sukkot, Hanukkah, and Passover, gift baskets with goodies, letters from the Rabbi, and other items were received by over twenty member college students who grew up in our congregation. This is a tremendous number for a congregation that until a few years ago only had three hundred family units. This initiative, led by a lay leader (Francine Venit), was successful due to great brainstorming, solid delegating, and in the end the fine tenacity of our volunteer leadership who saw this program from a dream to a reality.

The response from the greater congregation to having younger staff hired to help with the burgeoning Hebrew School (complementing our established teachers), plus the wonderful new gift baskets now received by our college students on their college campuses, has been unanimously positive. Even those without children in college see how vitally important both initiatives are with regard to Jewish continuity and for the strengthening of our bonds with the future leadership of our synagogue.

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT****GOLD**

250-500

Submitted by Deborah Scheimer

**BETH EL CONGREGATION OF SOUTH HILLS**

Pittsburgh, PA

412-561-1168

Each year at Beth El we hold one or more Board leadership training sessions for our Board members.

In August 2006, we wanted to provide an interactive training session for our Board members to clarify the characteristics needed in leadership at Beth EL. We decided to create a document detailing Board responsibilities, and as a part of that process, engaged the services of Janice Bahary, a local leadership consultant. Janice worked with our leadership to create an interactive program with our Board. During this educational session, we brainstormed leadership characteristics, put them on large easel sheets around the room, broke out into evenly-divided groups based on the characteristics individuals were interested in discussing, and then each group developed a list of behaviors which would demonstrate leadership in their category. The groups then came together as a whole to discuss the leadership behaviors developed in each category and ultimately came to agreement as to which behaviors we were prepared to encourage in our Board members. At a subsequent Board meeting, these Board responsibilities were presented in a document and ratified by our Board members.

As a result of the above training, Janice spoke with Ed Frimm, the Executive Director of Pittsburgh's Agency for Jewish Learning, and mentioned that we were interested in Board Leadership training. Ed held discussions with our leadership and engaged Pittsburgh's Resident Community Scholar, Rabbi Danny Schiff to develop a program exploring moral and ethical principles of Jewish leadership. From these discussions, Rabbi Schiff developed a 4-week training program for synagogue leadership. We invited our Executive Committee and Board of Trustees to these weekly sessions. After the 4 sessions, our leadership requested a continuation of the training for an additional 2 sessions which

included additional training with Beth El's Rabbi, Alex Greenbaum. The entire training program was held from January through March 2007.

These training sessions helped us to increase our awareness of how to make decisions using Jewish morals and values. As a result of our training sessions we have asked our Rabbi, Alex Greenbaum, to give a 10- to 15-minute training session at the beginning of each Board meeting. His talk will specifically relate to the Jewish moral and ethical values that will apply to decisions that we have to make at that meeting.

As a result of our training we have also set a goal to better integrate Jewish leadership characteristics into our Board Responsibilities document. We realized that we didn't include enough Jewish leadership characteristics and responsibilities during our initial brainstorming session of leadership characteristics. In addition, we have realized a need to communicate these leadership characteristics and Board Responsibilities to our Nominating committee, and to integrate them into their selection process.

## LIBRARIES

### **GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by Toni Stechler

### **TEMPLE EMUNAH**

Lexington, MA

781-861-0300

Two years after Temple Emunah expanded and renovated the synagogue and Hebrew School, creating wonderful new spaces for worshipping, meeting, and learning, we noticed that the library had been neglected. In the spring of 2005, Lori Reubenstein was asked to form a new Library Committee. After assessing the needs of the synagogue, she recruited some volunteers and began making plans to revitalize the library. A generous donation provided some money to carry out these plans, as well as set up a Library Endowment Fund.

Lori, Toni Stechler, and many other volunteers had a long list of projects for the library. We began by upgrading the children's book collection, creating a more comfortable space for reading and studying, and deciding on the software to use for our electronic catalog. The new library has space for computers, audio-visual materials, periodical display and storage, a comfortable sitting area with chairs and coffee table, and an inviting Children's Corner. The Library Committee was also determined to improve the adult collection, add DVDs and CDs to our collection, find ways to encourage members to visit the library, and make sure that the library was open during Hebrew School hours. We now have the online edition of the new *Encyclopedia Judaica* available to any member with Internet access.

At the Library Open House, the two congregants who had set up the Library Endowment Fund were overjoyed to see so many kids having fun and learning about the library. "This is why we donated the money!" they said. Temple Emunah is widely admired and respected for its learning and its educational and social action programs for all ages. The members are delighted that we now have a flourishing library to match these high standards.

### **GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Helene Tuchman

### **TEMPLE EMANUEL OF NEWTON**

Newton Centre, MA

617-558-8100

We have established satellite library collections throughout Temple Emanuel -- wherever congregants gather for prayer, study or workshops.

- Children's books are placed together with siddurim throughout the sanctuary and Gann Chapel for use by parents when children's attention spans begin to wane.
- A varied selection of Bible commentaries has been placed in the sanctuary and the Gann Chapel for use by congregants during the Torah service to augment the commentary in Etz Hayim.
- A satellite collection of books on the bereavement process and Jewish mourning practices and law is available where the daily minyan meets.

- Judaic classics and special subjects such as a Modern Jewish Philosophy Collection are shelved where teachers and adult education classes have access to them during their presentations.

These collections are included in the library's online catalog so they may be located, accessed and borrowed by staff and congregants whenever they are needed. Our satellite collections are also publicized in Temple publications, on the Temple list serve, on the website and through snail mail keeping congregants of all interests and ages aware of the vast resources of the Rabbi Marshall R. Lifson Library.

## MEMBERSHIP

**GOLD**  
100-250

**NORTHERN HILLS SYNAGOGUE-B'NAI ABRAHAM**  
Cincinnati, OH  
513-931-6038

Northern Hills Synagogue-Congregation B'nai Avraham in Cincinnati, OH is most definitely a welcoming place. "Where you're welcome! Where you count!" is not just a slogan that we use on our web site as well as in publicity, it's our way of life. Our efforts to make all members become involved, feel connected, and take ownership (from parents, to singles, to children, to young adults), both define and reflect who we are. In the past two years, our WARM (Welcoming and Retaining Members) and Membership committees have developed a membership recruitment and retention program that enhances our welcoming, inclusive, participatory culture.

This program includes greeters at services, outreach to intermarried couples, providing transportation, painting murals in our religious school, revising our membership application, developing a protocol for contacting prospective members, delivering welcome baskets, establishing a Mentor program, planning new member orientation/socials, enhancing our new member Shabbatot, redesigning our transliteration booklets, and extending holiday invitations.

Our enhanced Membership and WARM programs have ensured that Northern Hills Synagogue-Congregation B'nai Avraham IS where you're welcome! Where you count!

**GOLD**  
Over 900

Submitted by Rabbi Wesley Gardenswartz

**TEMPLE EMANUEL**  
Newton, MA  
617-558-8100

One of the most exciting membership and community building initiatives to date at our congregation, Temple Emanuel in Newton Massachusetts is THE SEVEN GATES PROGRAM. Emerging from a multi-year conversation between the staff and lay-leadership of our congregation, this campaign unites multiple arms of our community under the banner of the gates.

For years our congregation had been struggling to articulate a vision that would embrace the diversity of our large community of over 1,150 families and yet focus us in a way that would give us a sense of shared mission. We had toyed with the ideas of a "big tent" of "Jacob's ladder" and other similar Jewish metaphors but none of these ideas were able to succinctly and clearly express our sense of ourselves as a large, welcoming place where all are invited to enter and find some aspect of Jewish life that is personally meaningful to each individual within the context of our larger vibrant community. When we came upon THE SEVEN GATES model, we knew immediately that we had found the right message. It is a message that allows us to do both more effective outreach to the larger community and, perhaps even more importantly, has allowed us to tap our own community with concrete and focused "in-reach."

This program, since its inception last year has been a tremendous success. All arms of our congregation, all our weekly newsletters and major events mailings go out with a particular color and logo of the gate the event or activity falls under, concretizing and unifying all our many community activities of learning, teaching Jewish values to our children, prayer, connection to Israel, celebration of Shabbat, Social Justice and building community. We have named each of these "gates" to increased Jewish participation and meaning both in Hebrew and in English: *Talmud Torah* (Torah), *V'Shinantam L'Vanecha* (Teaching Jewish values to our children), *Avodat HaLey* (Prayer), *Ahavat Tziyon*

(Israel), *Shmirat Shabbat* (Shabbat), *Tikkun Olam* (Redeeming the World), *Livnot Bayit B'Yisrael* (Building Community).

**SILVER**

500-900

Submitted by Polly Strauss

**THE JEWISH CENTER**

Princeton, NJ

609-921-0100

The Jewish Center of Princeton is a warm, welcoming place where its congregants are involved and look for fulfillment on many levels (religious, educational, spiritual, social, etc.). In fact, the best assets of The Jewish Center are its people and the warmth, strength and spiritual leadership of the clergy. The Jewish Center offers many avenues to become engaged and embrace Judaism. Above all, the Membership Committee wants to communicate these wonderful aspects to both its current membership and potential members. The 2006-2007 ad campaign stresses all the synagogue has to offer and leaves readers with the impression that The Jewish Center extends a warm welcome to new members.

The publicity materials are designed to enhance the image of the synagogue by demonstrating that it is receptive to the needs of those it serves. The theme of a warm, welcoming place where Judaism flourishes among a diverse yet connected congregation is consistently presented across all ads and press releases. Each ad strives to emphasize The Jewish Center as a place where people can come to celebrate, explore, learn and reinforce their Judaism while leading a rich, secular life.

Ads feature real congregants: male and female, younger and older, with young children, with grown children, which reinforce the synagogue's image as being a place for people in all stages of life and religious observation. The text uses real quotes from the featured congregants which explain why they feel such a deep attachment to The Jewish Center and how their synagogue enhances their lives. Copy provides specifics on the featured individuals such as occupation and membership tenure to further allow the reader to connect to them as real people.

The Jewish Center appeals to people of all ages, in all walks of life, and in all stages of life. This is what our publicity especially underscores. As a leader in the Conservative Jewish community, the synagogue welcomes Jews from many different backgrounds. Its diversity is what makes it so appealing and allows the synagogue to be such an inviting place. Membership consistently delivers this message to inquiries from prospects, as well as current congregants who inquire about how they can become more involved or where they can find a certain program. The success of our positioning is demonstrated by the success of our Open House event and New Member roster. Compared to previous years, there were more than double the number of prospective members who attended the Open House after our ads and articles ran in the local media. During 2006-2007, membership continued to grow at a healthy pace, and the inquiries are still coming in.

**SILVER**

500-900

Submitted by Elissa Greenberg

**TEMPLE BETH AM**

Margate, FL

954-968-4545

**Reservations 'R' Us Program**

Being the member of a Temple means different things to different people. There are some members who attend services regularly, some who attend only on the High Holidays, others who simply attend for their children's Bar or Bat Mitzvah, and others who are members only because their children attend the Hebrew School. Some members are actively involved in the Temple, attending meetings and functions while others never serve on committees or participate in Temple organized functions.

The true success of the Reservations 'R' Us program is that it brought together, through the course of three different evening dinners, active as well as non-involved members to meet, socialize and experience Kosher restaurants in the area that many had never previously been to. Now when members attend services, a Shabbat dinner, a youth program or other Temple function they have more friendly faces to greet and feel a connection with. This has helped many realize a newfound commitment to the Temple.

The restaurants were chosen to display the variety available in Kosher Restaurants. They were all upscale and well suited for our purposes. The first was an Asian Fusion Steak house at which we accommodated over 50 people.

Participants had such a good time, many of them returned for our second dinner at a Chinese restaurant. At that event, people were enjoying moving from table to table, just like one does at a Bar or Bat Mitzvah dinner. Many stayed past dessert just to talk. Our third dinner was at an Israeli nightclub with entertainment and dancing. This was a fun way to end the program.

**SILVER**  
250-500  
Submitted by Sandra Alpern

**JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF PARAMUS**  
Paramus, NJ  
201-262-7691

The Membership Committee of the JCCP has been working especially hard in the last few years to develop programs and policies aimed at making our synagogue even warmer, more comfortable, and more welcoming for new, as well as established, members.

It has long been our informal policy to remind Board members that they are all ambassadors of the Membership committee. We also encourage long time members to approach and speak with people they don't recognize when they see them on Shabbat and at synagogue events.

We have come up with a package of more formal initiatives which include:

- The publication of a JCCP magazine
- Name tags for all members of our Board of Directors
- Calling every member of our synagogue on the telephone
- New Open House format
- Honoring long-time members at Shabbat services
- Contacting new members about upcoming programs
- Annual Sukkah luncheon honoring new members
- Newest member Breakfast or brunch with Rabbi Weiner
- A full Kiddush luncheon every Shabbat

**SILVER**  
Over 900  
Submitted by Ana S. Kolansky

**HAR ZION TEMPLE**  
Penn Valley, PA  
610-667-5000

In Shul Fest we set out to create a program that would bring together all constituent groups while offering an opportunity to build community and engage both new and old members. Our aim was to create a unifying program that would celebrate our past, present, and future. There were various elements to be incorporated in an effective program, including: the 30th anniversary of our building dedication in Penn Valley, introduction of a new Educational Director of our schools, and the beginning of a new year of learning for children and adults. The result was the creation of a festive day at the synagogue, which honored our past, celebrated our present, and pointed us, enthusiastically, toward the New Year.

Shul Fest was successful because it allowed us to come together and build our own Mishkan, our own Tabernacle. As much as we are not in the desert, we still have to give our leaders and our members the opportunity to be part of something that is being built and if they choose so, to be part of the building process. Shul Fest did it for us. Everyone made his or her contribution, and at the end of the day we ended up on a higher spiritual level, more ready to usher the new Jewish year feeling better about ourselves and about our Synagogue.

Shul Fest was successful because it was conceived and executed in a very inclusive way. We made a concerted effort to include and capitalize on all the different aspects of Har Zion Temple's both professional and lay leadership's dedication, skills and talents. We learned that what we can create together is much bigger than the simple sum of our individual efforts.

Shul Fest was successful because it generated a very powerful buzz that permeated into the programming for the rest of the year. The leaders of the different constituent groups appreciated the benefit of working together. We were

able to identify new and prospective leaders. The development of Shul Fest strengthened the different constituent groups in what they have to offer and how the congregation benefits from them. It gave Har Zion members a very positive feeling about their Synagogue in general and about what large scale well executed Synagogue programs can do for them.

Shul Fest turned out to be an extremely successful program; one that we will capitalize on by learning from this experience and one that, we hope, other congregations will benefit from; eventually adapting and adjusting the inspiring concepts of Shul Fest into their own programs.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
500-900  
Submitted by Sandee Galfond

**TEMPLE BETH AM**  
Margate, FL  
954-968-4545

There's something wonderfully warm and bonding about sharing services and a Friday night dinner at synagogue with a group of friends from the congregation. It can be either friends that you come in with or friends that we hope you will have made during the course of dinner. The problem is that we are all on different schedules, different time frames, different interest groups, different tolerance levels. Not all of us want to sit in a room with screeching two year olds and nine year olds running all over the place. (Unless, of course, they are our grandchildren.)

Some of us precisely want to be in a room where our children and infants will be able to interact with other people's children and infants. There's no right or wrong answer. People want choice. And so, we have offered five different Friday night experiences to five different market segments within our congregation.

Using part of a grant that we received, we subsidized a number of lovely Shabbat dinners, featuring high-quality catered food served by waiters; and because of the subsidy, dinners were a nominal fee of \$15.00 per person and \$7.50 for children under the age of 13. Seating was to be limited to the first 100 people. The Cantor and Rabbi led a little program at each dinner, which followed immediately after our Carlebach service at 6:15. The first dinner was Friday night, February 4th and was attended by more than eighty "empty nesters" through age 65. This was a chance for us to get to see many of our members whom we do not see regularly anymore. They were able to come back to experience a lovely Friday night service and dinner, with old friends and re-connect with the congregation and with each other. For some, this may have been their first opportunity to get to know our new Cantor a little better, and he led us in some interesting singing.

Our second dinner was on Friday night, March 4<sup>th</sup>, and it was for those who have been members of our congregation for over 15 years. Sometimes, we tend to forget or take for granted our veterans, some of whom we only see from high holiday to high holiday. We hoped that this would be a mid-year re-connection, which is especially important this year, since many of us did not have an opportunity to get together on Yom Kippur due to the hurricane.

On Friday, March 11th, we conducted a Shabbat dinner for those members who were new to the congregation since the Millennium. It was for all families who had joined since the year 2000. They were invited as relatively newer members of the congregation to come and experience a dinner together.

On Friday, April 1, the Shabbat dinner was a Bar and Bat Mitzvah reunion dinner, for all families who have celebrated a Bar/Bat Mitzvah since the year 2000.

On Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, we held our last dinner, which was for our golden agers (over 65).

Invitations to each targeted group went out separately, as well as announcements in our monthly publication "The Scribe." It is very likely that some people would not fall into at least one of these categories, and if we had left them out, we wanted to know. We would be happy to have an omnibus Shabbat dinner for everyone who was left out.

This attempt is not to be, nor should it be seen as, being exclusive of anyone. Rather, this was intended to give choice to individual subgroups, who don't come to everything, to see this as a personal invitation to come in and to reconnect, at least this one evening, with their synagogue.

We hope it was enjoyed by all. A culinary treat! High Quality! Low Cost! And, best of all, somebody else was

doing the serving and the clean-up. We hope that, though we won't be seeing all of our members at any one given time, we see some of them at least once.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Over 900

Submitted by Rebecca Boggs

**B'NAI ISRAEL CONGREGATION**

Rockville, MD

301 881 6550

B'nai Israel is committed to creating and sustaining a welcoming and engaging synagogue community. Our culture of welcoming begins from your very first contact — in person at the synagogue, online on our website, or in conversation over the telephone. We have grown by over 200 families in the past two years, to a congregation of over 1400 member families. To build on this success as a large and growing congregation while continuing to connect each member to the community, we have focused on membership engagement.

Our commitment to membership engagement led us to create a full-time Membership Engagement Coordinator position — an innovative step that distinguishes us among our synagogue peers. Our Membership Engagement Coordinator assists the leadership of B'nai Israel Congregation in fulfilling its mission to create and sustain a vibrant community that fosters the spiritual growth of its individual members, in welcoming new individuals to join our community, and in fostering a community of involvement at all levels.

In conjunction with this new staff position, we have reinvigorated and restructured our Membership Committee. Although we continue to reach out to prospective members with a variety of programs and publicity that invite them to join our community, our primary focus over the past two years has been on engaging members of the congregation and encouraging them to become more active in Jewish life.

The materials that follow are divided into three sections:

- 1) membership engagement — how we define engagement and what we have accomplished with it;
- 2) welcoming new members — the steps we take to make newly-arrived members part of this community of engagement;
- 3) reaching out to prospective members — how we reach out to the larger community and invite people to become part of our congregation. This section includes our program for individualized response by staff and laity, “gateway” programs open to all, and special “open house” opportunities to welcome prospective members.

**OUTREACH TO YOUNG ADULTS AND SINGLES**

**GOLD**

Over 900

**AHAVATH ACHIM SYNAGOGUE**

Atlanta, GA

404-355-5222

“Today, the majority of individuals in their twenties and early thirties have no congregational affiliations; their affiliation rate is lower than that of any other age group.”[Synagogue 3000 Studies Institute report, *Synagogues That Get It: How Jewish Congregations Are Engaging Young Adults*, pg.2]. Atlanta is no exception, which is why, Ahavath Achim Synagogue (AA), located in Atlanta, Georgia, has made concerted efforts over the past two years to reach out to young professionals, those in their 20's to 40's, in our community. Through the creation of various programs and in participation with other community projects/programs AA has established itself within this demographic.

Our efforts began in October 2005 when AA co-sponsored a build with JDate for Habitat for Humanity. This was AA's first program specifically targeting young professionals outreach. At that time we had about 30 names of young professionals that we contacted. Approximately 50 to 60 people who were in attendance at the event. This event formed the basis for our mailing list.

Our next program in January 2006 was a Friday night service led by singing troop, Shir Harmony, which was followed by a dessert reception of around 40 young professionals. During the course of the evening, the suggestion was made to hold a “parlor—type discussion group” in the rabbi’s home. This idea developed into what is now, the *Jewish View Café*.

The *Jewish View Café* began later that month with 10 people in attendance at AA’s Assistant Rabbi’s home and became AA’s first monthly program targeting young professionals. It has continued to be every fourth Sunday of the month and has since seen significant growth, now attracting approximately 30 participants each month. Those who attend explore current issues in a friendly and informal setting, debate and discuss if and how Jewish values can be applied to these situations and socialize with other young Jewish professionals from around Atlanta.

One of the congregation’s stated objectives over the last two years has been to provide a variety of worship experiences. It was with that goal in mind that we created a monthly alternative musical Shabbat service in June of 2006 called *AAbsolut Shabbat*. The idea behind this service was to attract young people who would not normally attend a Friday night service and would rather opt for dinner or drinks, but would respond to worship of a different character. “Young adults thrive when they are met where they are. They do not want to feel judged for their level of religious practice or knowledge.” [Synagogue 3000 Studies Institute report, *Synagogues That Get It: How Jewish Congregations are Engaging Young Adults*, pg.9] By creating a fun, spiritually connected service with a social dynamic we were able to make services attractive to that population.

The evening begins at 7:30 with a reception that includes light appetizers and both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drink options. As people arrive they are welcomed by the Membership Director and others from our community. This welcoming atmosphere creates an opportunity for people to socialize and feel part of the community. At 8:00, AA’s cantor, who is accompanied by other instrumental musicians, begins the service. *AAbsolut Shabbat* encourages various levels of participation through clapping, dancing, singing (both in English and Hebrew), and a *D’var Torah* in which our rabbis pose questions and ask for feedback from those in attendance. Following the service there is a dessert and coffee oneg. This gives people another chance to socialize reflect on the evenings service. Many attendees stay for an hour or more. Creating an engaging atmosphere is the goal of *AAbsolut Shabbat*.

The first service attracted about 200 people, about half of whom were young professionals. This compares with a regular Friday night service which attracts very few young professionals and is attended by 30 to 40 people. At the service we announced that there was a fishbowl that people could drop their business cards into if they wanted to win a free year’s membership to the synagogue. We used the card information to add names to our email database. The first service was received so well by those who attended that the next service was attended by over 300 people and was reported in several newspapers. The service has maintained its numbers over the last year and now draws 200 to 300 people on a regular basis. Of that number, roughly 75 to 100 are existing members of all ages; the rest are largely unaffiliated young professional singles and couples.

Through the success of programming such as *Jewish View Café* and *AAbsolut Shabbat* we have been able to offer other opportunities for young professionals to attend synagogue events or interact with synagogue professional staff and members. In September 2006 we offered free High Holiday tickets to those who had been in attendance at one or more of our programs. That month, we also bought a block of tickets to see Matisyahu, an Orthodox reggae performer, in concert. Prior to the concert the Assistant Rabbi and the Director of Membership Services scheduled a dinner. This gave the group a chance to make connections with each other as well as with synagogue staff. This opportunity was offered first to those who had been regular attendees of our programs and then open to our entire email list. In March 2007 we had a Purim Party called *Masks and Madness*. This was a completely social party aimed at this population and received praise by all who attended.

When *AAbsolut Shabbat* was introduced our email list consisted of about 80 email addresses. Through the use of Evite, we advertised this service, and by the day of the event we were up to 300 email addresses. Our email list now contains over 600 addresses of which about 100 are regular attendees of our programs. Our list continues to grow mostly through two means: one is by friends adding other friends to our list and the other is by people adding their own names through a website we created specifically geared to young professionals [www.AAbsolutshabbat.com]. Evites and the website have both been vital means of outreach to this demographic. Young professionals use the web extensively, and often exclusively, as a source of information. “They use email, email distribution lists and websites to coordinate their face-to-face connections. Rather than replace actual community, modem technology facilitates their in-

person connections.” [Synagogue 3000 Studies Institute report, *Synagogues That Get It. How Jewish Congregations are Engaging Young Adults*, pg.9]

Our success has been demonstrated by the sheer numbers of people who we have been able to attract and who return each month. *AAbsolut Shabbat* now acts as a vehicle of promotion for our congregation. At the beginning of each service we handout a special *AAbsolut Shabbat siddur* along with a sheet which includes highlights of all the month’s relevant events. In fact both young singles and couples who are new in town and who are actively seeking a congregation to join have stated that they are interested in exploring a connection with AA -- specifically because they had heard that our synagogue is a good place to belong as a young professional person in town. We have also seen crossover from some of those attending young professionals events who are now attending other synagogue services, including Shabbat morning Torah study.

Few of these people have joined the synagogue and we understand that many will wait until they are married and/or have children before looking for a synagogue with which to affiliate. Our goal is to make sure that these young professionals feel connected to their heritage and community, so that when they make the decision to affiliate they will feel that AA is their spiritual home and will choose to join AA.

Ahavath Achim Synagogue is proud to nominate *Jewish View Café AAbsolut Shabbat* and our other outreach efforts for the 2007 Schechter Awards in the category of Outreach to and Integrating Young Adults/Singles.

**GOLD**  
250-500  
Submitted by Donald Kaye

**CONGREGATION B’NAI TORAH**  
Atlanta, GA  
404 287 0537

One of the weakest areas of engagement for Conservative synagogues has been the time between college graduation, where KOACH finishes, and when young Jews typically join a Conservative synagogue on their own, after getting married or having a child. B’nai Torah has created an active, vibrant young adults group (YAG) which reaches singles and couples ages 23-35 and integrates them into all aspects of congregational life.

The group, which is organized by its members with significant staff support and engagement, has an email list of over 250 contacts, of whom 100 are regular participants in group activities which include religious, social, social action and educational events, including Shabbat dinners, happy hours, classes and outdoor activities. In addition, a core group of YAG members have become regular participants in congregational activities, including Friday night services, classes and holiday activities.

Over 20 members of the group have already become dues-paying members of the synagogue, with many more planning to join in the coming year. They have also taken on volunteer roles in other parts of synagogue life. For example, two members of the group were table hosts for this year’s Women’s League donor dinner, and others have become active as youth advisors and Torah readers. The program has attracted citywide interest, as the group has been asked to be a cosponsor on community-wide Young Leadership programs, and its chair received an award for outreach cosponsored by the local Jewish newspaper.

**GOLD**  
Over 900  
Submitted by Micah Kleid

**BETH EL CONGREGATION OF BALTIMORE**  
Baltimore, MD  
410-484-0411

Since August 2006, Beth El Congregation in Baltimore has been the only congregation in Baltimore with a full-time, paid Outreach Coordinator. Since then, Jill Spielman has been dedicated to reaching out to all unaffiliated Jews in Baltimore and the surrounding communities in an effort to show them all that Beth El has to offer. As a result, in January 2007, BEYOM (Beth El Young Members) was formed.

The goal of BEYOM was to create a social outlet for all Jewish young adults, singles, couples and families, ages 21-39, with new and innovative programming that would appeal to those generations. With the help of Communications Coordinator Micah Kleid, Ms. Spielman has done just that.

In September a database of young members was created. It included both those people who had already joined the synagogue, but also the children and grandchildren of synagogue members who had not yet joined themselves. To date, that list is comprised of over 1,000 names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

The programming officially began in October with tailgating parties for the Baltimore Ravens. Although the event was heavily advertised to our new mailing list, members and non-members of every generation were invited to attend and over 150 people came to watch the Ravens play the Denver Broncos on our 25-foot projection screen. The event was repeated with equal success in November when the Ravens played the Cincinnati Bengals.

Our largest event to date was on Christmas Eve when we held Rock of Ages at Have A Nice Day Café in downtown Baltimore. With the idea that there are very few social opportunities for Jewish young adults on Christmas Eve, we rented out the entire club, hired a DJ and a live band and watched as over 250 people came out that night.

Other young adult events since then have included our monthly *Parsha & Pizza* classes; a visit from Arthur the Aardvark for those young adults with young children; a wine and beer reception after the *Megillah* reading on *Purim*; a poker night in conjunction with Beth El Brotherhood; “Got *Shabbat?*” Friday night dinners; a live satellite interview with Gene Wilder; a lecture with Rabbi Sid Schwarz, the founder of PANIM; and a *Yom Ha ‘Atzmaut* celebration at a hookah lounge in Towson. All of this was made possible by both the \$10,000 budget allotted to the outreach department and the annual salary for the outreach coordinator that was endowed by a handful of synagogue members.

In an effort to make the transition from our young adults attending social events to joining the synagogue, Ms. Spielman worked with the Budget & Finance Committee to create a new dues structure for young adults. Now, the price to join the synagogue, and the option to purchase no seats for the High Holidays if they wish to join their families at other synagogues, has made it both enticing and affordable for this generation to join.

**SILVER**

500-900

Submitted by Margie Gutnik

**BETH EL SYNAGOGUE**

Omaha, NE

402-492-8550

Over the past 18 months, we held 3 events specifically designed to attract 20-and 30-somethings (both singles and couples), the purpose being to connect congregants and unaffiliated Jewish young adults and singles in our community as well as get them more actively involved in the synagogue.

The numbers attending have varied from 40 at a Sushi & Schmoozing social to 56 at a Mexican and Margaritas Shabbat dinner (41 adults + 15 children) to 30 (+ 8 children) at a Vodka & Latke cooking night for Hanukkah. The attendance was a mix of congregants and unaffiliated, single and married. The charge for each event was \$10 per person with free babysitting included in the 2nd and 3rd events. Less than \$300 was allocated from the synagogue budget to cover all three events.

“Sushi and Schmoozing” in April 2006 was held at a restaurant as a purely social evening to see if there was interest in any programming for this age group. This event was the most expensive and was partially underwritten (\$250) by 2 families (parents of this age group) to keep the attendees’ costs down.

Both the second and third events were held at the synagogue and required and received much more volunteer involvement. The chairmen did everything from menu planning to shopping, cooking, setting tables, making decorations and name tags, serving and cleaning up after the event.

In July 2006, we held a Mexican and Margaritas Shabbat dinner only for 20-and 30-somethings only, following our congregational Kabbalat Shabbat services. After services, the parents had the option of the children eating dinner with them or going into the babysitting room where they would have dinner. The remainder of the evening was a relaxing Shabbat dinner and socializing with a non-traditional menu.

The third event, in December 2006 in conjunction with Hanukkah was “Vodka and Latkes.” Held on a Saturday night at the synagogue, the attendees were divided into “teams” that were each given a grocery sack of ingredients, a non-traditional latke recipe and space in the kitchen to work. Munchies and wine (donated) were available

while the teams cooked. The finished product was sampled along with flavored vodkas. Costs were kept in check by purchasing decorations on sale and getting door prizes and most of the alcohol donated by congregants.

By offering these informal social programs, Beth El Synagogue is establishing a welcoming environment that connects young Jews with each other and creates positive experiences within the context of synagogue life.

**SILVER**

Over 900

Submitted by Elie Greenberg

**ADAS ISRAEL CONGREGATION**

Washington, DC

202-362-4433

The young professionals program here at Adas Israel has been in existence for several years but its pace has recently picked up dramatically. In the past, the program and all of the events therein had been organized by volunteers. There were no identifiable objectives and the events were scarce. There is now a full time staff person who coordinates all of the young professionals events and works with the email distribution list on a regular basis to keep Adas Israel's young professionals updated. We have branded a new logo and have given the entire program a fresh new look and feel.

YP@AJ has grown significantly in the last year. Our e-mail distribution list has increased by over two hundred names, putting us at over 700 young professionals in the Greater Washington area to whom we can reach out. Our goal is to meet at least every other month and to provide meaningful social and holiday-related programs for 22-to 40-year-olds. We have achieved that goal this year and continue to get the highest attendance at our young professionals events out of any other synagogue in the region.

Our Purim wine and cheese reception this March brought in our best turnout yet -- over 250 young professionals crammed into one of our large ballrooms to drink an unlimited supply of wine, snack on crackers, hummus, and triangular shaped cheeses, compare costumes, and exchange words with friends. All this for a mere 55\$ cover charge. It was an incredible evening, "The best Jewish get-together ever in DC" according to an active young professional in the Jewish community. With regard to budget, the synagogue underwrites the YP activities in the amount of several thousand dollars per year and some of the activities like the one described above are self supporting.

YP@AI also hosts a series of events to encourage holiday involvement to unaffiliated young professionals. Project Reconnect" is a special program that offers free High Holiday tickets to anyone who was once active in USY. Another program called "Kol Dichfin" ensures that any young adult who wishes to participate in a' Pesach, Seder has a place to go.

With constant exposure in and outside the local Jewish community, YP@AI and its great successes has not gone unseen. We frequently receive requests to co-sponsor community events and oftentimes comply, which reflects positively on the program, showing that we are community players. When teaming up with the local Jewish Community Center, Theater J, or the Sixth & I Historic Synagogue.(Adas Israel's 2nd building), YP@AI only gets more exposure and our list continues to grow as it reaches out to wider and more varied audiences. We have been featured in various publications such as The Washington Jewish Week, The Chronicle, Geshar City newsletter, etc.

I invite you to browse through this scrapbook where you will get an idea of the progress this program has made in the last year.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Over 900

Submitted by Rabbi Bradley Greenstein

**NEVEH SHALOM**

Portland, OR

503-246-8831

***VISION***

Hinenu will grow to great numbers, be a force to be reckoned with in the synagogue and Portland Jewish community. Our events and intimate gatherings will connect the unaffiliated to the pulse of Jewish life at Neveh Shalom. We will go on retreats and camping together, we will travel to Israel together.

***TODAY***

We have committed and productive co-chairs. We have a dedicated committee and a new updated website (www.hinenu.org.) We have made a name for ourselves in the Portland Jewish community as the only flourishing group for young adults attached to a synagogue. We are a growing group of 60+ young Jewish couples and singles. We have tremendous support from the synagogue and eagerly hope for recognition from United Synagogue.

### **TOMMORROW**

The prominent sociologist of American Jewry, Steven M. Cohen just recently released a new study with recommendations for the future survival of the Jewish people. He gives three recommendations: (Cohen 2007)

- Greater linkage among Jewish educational opportunities for children such as camps, schools and Israel trips
- **Greater communal funding for cultural, social and religious initiatives that attract young adults**
- Community-funded rabbis who will focus on conversion.

The newest member of Neveh Shalom (joined with his wife 2/16/07) writes:

“I have also gone from having no Jewish friends, to now having two very good Jewish friends that need mentioning here. I met Anna and Michael at a Hinenu event during Sukkot. Having a couple our age that we can share our stories with, engage in dialogue with and celebrate the holidays with has been extremely beneficial in fostering our Jewish environment, not to mention a lot of good times. Being able to experience their Judaism and hear their experiences has only enhanced my journey. They have been extremely supportive of my conversion; Michael has become something of a mentor to me. I am most grateful for their friendship and insight. It will be exciting to continue to share with them and grow our friendship.”

We have all heard voices from Jewish community, both local and beyond, that ask: “Why don’t young adults affiliate?” “What is there for people between *b’nei mitzvah* and bris?” “Where is young adult energy in congregational life?” “Where is the next generation of Jewish leaders?” Congregation Neveh Shalom is proud to have an answer **HINENU... HERE WE ARE!**

### **HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Roland Roth

### **CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM**

Wilmington, DE

302-654-4462

One of our most successful new initiatives in the last two years has been our **3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays @ CBS** program, specifically targeting Jewish people in their twenties and thirties, regardless of Conservative backgrounds (although most are). Our congregation had no formal programs for people in this demographic before our new Director of Education and Programming arrived in August, 2005, and his being thirty years old probably was a catalyst in making this happen! The 3rd Friday of the month seemed to be a uniquely well placed Friday in each month that did not conflict with major holiday weekends and seemed like a good fit for the first few people that were approached about this program.

Publicity started with emails and phone calls and the program kicked off in November, 2005. The set-up was painfully simple: 7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat service, led by one of the people in their twenties or thirties, a *d’var Torah* by another youngish adult, and dessert that another 3rd Fridays person brought. The idea was that people could eat beforehand, come for a late service (helped those who worked late), and then stay afterwards and schmooze.

The first time we had a Fridays program (the name, of course, designed to be kept as simple as possible to keep those with crazy schedules from having to think too much about it) it drew over twenty young adults from all walks of life! It was a smash hit. People stayed and schmoozed until after 11pm. The following month, again, over twenty people in attendance. Each month since then, with the exception of one month, has had at least fifteen people in attendance, always with a few new faces. This program was not specifically designated for singles, or young couples, or married couples, or those with or without children. It is designed simply for anyone in their 20’s or 30’s who is Jewish or considering conversion. We do not discriminate in any way and in fact have received “new blood” from non-Conservative synagogues who know we have this program and they send their twenties and thirties over to our program as well.

Now with a core committee of three or four, including the Director of Education and Programming, calls are

made to over forty individuals about a week before the **3rd** Friday of each month letting them know that the program is coming up and that they are invited.

The keys are these: It's free. There's no RSVP required. All are welcome. Beyond that, it's casual, low-key, and designed for those with busy schedules. Has it resulted in people "hanging out," going to dinner, dating, and relationships forming? Absolutely. It has even resulted in a weekly "Gray's Anatomy" viewing party at one member's house.

Some have asked if we'll start a 1st Fridays for people in their 40's and 50's and that's a potential option that we're putting on the programming table for 5/7/08-2008! Having a successful 3rd Fridays CBS program 17 out of 18 months is a great start!

## PERFORMING ARTS

### **GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Carol Wolfe-Wallach

### **B'NAI TORAH CONGREGATION**

Boca Raton, FL

561-392-8566

B'nai Torah Congregation in Boca Raton, Florida, has been hosting world- renowned cantors and choirs at their annual concert series since 1993. These annual series consist of three major concerts each year attended by congregants as well as non-members of the synagogue. These concerts have been attended by more than 1,000 concert goers at each event.

In 2005 B'nai Torah Congregation added an additional format "Recitals in the Round" which placed the performers in a more intimate setting and created connections between the performers and the audience. For the 2006 Cultural Arts Season concert goers enjoyed meeting and listening to some of the most renowned cantors in this congenial atmosphere. This year we had the privilege of having the Makhelat Hashachar Choir from Japan perform in a fourth concert.

New this season "The Author Series" was added to the Cultural Series. The Inaugural Season of Authors was well received with meeting and greeting with the authors and book signings.

### **GOLD**

Under 100

Submitted by Mark Lambeck

### **TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM**

Stratford, CT

203-378-6175

### Performing Arts

As a synagogue of just under 100 families, we are a very small minority in the little town of Stratford, Connecticut where we actively participate in a variety of community activities. Beyond the traditional community events, such as interfaith services, blood drives, tag sales, and membership on the Stratford Clergy Association (a group of 15 churches and one temple -- us), we have a very active community theater program called The Temple Players which helps boost our profile locally and reminds the citizens of our quaint hamlet that there is a Jewish community in their midst.

And while The Temple Players is geared to attract a general audience outside of Temple Beth Sholom, we also have a program within the Temple that uses theater to attract the Jewish Community from the Greater Bridgeport area (Fairfield, Trumbull, Milford, Easton) to celebrate the holidays of Purim and Chanukkah. Therefore, the two-fold program we will outline in this proposal are:

The Temple Players -- Connecticut's ONLY group dedicated to theater with Jewish content

Performing Arts through the Temple's Education Committee — dedicated to bringing music and theater to the Jewish community using our own members and their children as the performers

### The Temple Players

When Temple Beth Sholom in Stratford shut down its Bingo operation in the spring of 1998, the synagogue lost its most consistent means of fund-raising. In the wake of that loss of ongoing revenue, The Temple Players emerged

as a means to not only help raise funds, but to introduce issues of American Jewish life to a diverse audience of theatergoers through high-quality staged readings.

With an array of theatres nationwide dedicated to special interest groups from Irish and Hispanic to black and other minorities, founder Mark Lambeck realized that Connecticut did not have a troupe dedicated to Jewish theater. And in fact, the closest “Jewish theater” to the greater Bridgeport region was in New York City. Though there were many synagogues and Jewish Community Centers throughout the state that produced plays, they often did popular shows (“Hello Dolly,” “Annie” or the occasional “Fiddler on the Roof”) and ignored the wealth of lesser known and original works that focused on different aspects of Jewish life.

Seizing the opportunity to bring shows with “identifiable Jewish characters or themes” to Connecticut audiences, Lambeck launched The Temple Players in August 1998. The group began ambitiously by producing 4 shows a year in February, June, August & October and evolved in 2004 into a summer-only theater that has widened its focus to include original plays with Jewish relevance.

We enter the 2007 season as our 10th year of bringing theater with Jewish content to the greater Bridgeport area, and pride ourselves on drawing general, secular and interfaith audiences to our shows from surrounding towns reaching from Stamford to New Haven. So far, in our nine previous seasons, we have produced 27 shows (25 script-in-hand staged readings and 2 fully produced original productions with music).

Our presentations have dealt with such issues as:

Anti-Semitism: “Park Your Car in Harvard Yard” — 1998; “Another Antigone” — 2001

Inter-marriage/conversion: “Shadowlands” -- 2002; “Two and a Half Jews” — 2002; “Love & Baklava” — 2006; “Rosalie & Julian” (upcoming in June 2007)

Jewish families and traditions: “Cityscapes” — 1999; “Social Security” — 1999; “Crossing Delancey”-- 2000; “Tribal Humor” — 2004

Religion and spirituality: “Twist of Faith” — 1999; “Second Chances” — 2000; “The Rabbi Comedies” – 2006

A love of Israel: “Chaim’s Love Song” — 2004; “Love & Baklava” —2006

A Jewish approach to dealing with death: “Cultural Safari” —2001; “What’s Wrong with This Picture?” – 2002; “The Cemetery Club” —2003

and much more.

Most presentations have dealt with the universal themes of friendship, trust, family values, and ethics — usually with a sense of humor. Ultimately, we discovered that by introducing a general audience to Jewish culture and traditions, we could educate the public about the Jewish world in an entertaining or provocative way. We’ve drawn church groups, senior groups, and mixed audiences of all ages and backgrounds in the 10 years we’ve been running this successful program.

Visit our Web site: <http://www.bethsholomstratford.org/templeplayers/> for more details about the group including a full production history and awards.

### Congregational Support for the Group

The Temple Players falls within the umbrella of Temple Beth Sholom’s “Ways & Means” committee, meaning fund raising. The Group returns an average of \$2k - \$5k to the Temple’s general coffers each season. Members serve as the artistic director, house manager, box office manager and staff, publicity, café staff (shows are performed in a cabaret/coffeehouse setting), stage crew, graphic designer (for flyers, programs, and signs), and sound technicians.

All performers in The Temple Players’ shows have semi-professional or community theater acting experience, so there have been few synagogue members who have been east in shows — another opportunity to bring ‘outsiders’ into the Temple for exposure to the culture and audience-building.

### Performing Arts through the Temple’s Education Committee

Through Temple Beth Sholom’s Education committee, the children of the Hebrew School (and often, their parents) have performed original plays, skits, and “talent shows” in celebration of the holidays of Chanukkah and Purim. The children have participated in Temple Beth Sholom’s children’s chorus, performing at the holidays, in plays, and in community events. In the past, the group has performed original Chanukkah and Purim plays including:

1997 — “Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins,” an adaptation by Joy Bannow of the book “Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins” by Eric Kimmel.

1998 (adult cast) and 2002 (all children’s version) -- “The Gift of the Rabbi” by Mark Lambeck, a Chanukkah adaptation of the classic O. Henry Christmas story, “The Gift of the Magi.”

1999 -- “Purim Time,” an original play by Dr. Karel Kummerman (written in the Czech Republic in the late 1950’s and translated into English by Dr. Kummerman), first performed at Temple Beth Sholom in 1985.

1999 and 2004 -- “Jacob and the Magic Dreidels,” an adaptation by Mark Lambeck of the Eric Kimmel children’s book; music and original lyrics by Laurie Raccuia

2005 -- “The Thirteenth Dreidel,” an original play with music by Mark Lambeck, original lyrics by Laurie Raccuia.

2006 -- “Bubbe Goose’s Chanukkah,” an original play with music by Mark Lambeck, original lyrics by Laurie Raccuia, inspired by characters from classic Mother Goose tales.

The Education Committee has also invited other musical groups to perform at their Chanukah parties and other events including The Family Pasternak (Klezmer Band), the Klez Kids Trio, and The Yale Klezmer Band.

In addition, the Purim talent shows have featured children reciting poetry, dancing (modern dance, hip-hop, and jazz), singing, playing instruments (saxophone, keyboards, trumpet, drums, tuba, French horn, guitar, and flute), doing magic tricks, stand-up comedy, and performing dramatic readings and skits.

#### USY/Kadima

Several of the Temple’s youth group members have appeared in the Education Committee shows including the talent shows and plays focused on Purim and Chanukkah. In addition, to build appreciation for the performing arts, our USY leader takes a group on a yearly field trip into New York City to see a Broadway show. Shows they’ve seen the past few years include: *Wicked*, *Mama Mia*, *Rent*, and *Hairspray*.

#### Other Performing Arts Areas

A third, ancillary “performing arts” program has been the Temple’s involvement in the annual Interfaith Holocaust Memorial Service for Yom HaShoah. This event, cosponsored by the Stratford Clergy Association, includes an interfaith choir made up of singers from various churches around town as well as Temple members. (NOTE: Church singers learned “Ani Ma’Amin” phonetically and sing it in Hebrew every year.) Members participate in readings including testimonies, poetry, and responsive selections as well as the Kaddish and candle lighting.

#### Video History of Performing Arts

Many of The Temple Players’ shows, the Education Committee Talent shows and holiday plays, plus some of the Yom HaShoah services have been videotaped and are part of Temple Beth Sholom’s archives.

#### Attachments:

Programs  
Flyers  
Newspaper  
Clippings  
Photos from Events

**GOLD**  
Over 900

**BETH EL TEMPLE**  
West Hartford, CT  
860-233-9696

The Beth El Musical Arts Committee (BEMA) is responsible for bringing arts programs to the congregation and the greater Hartford community at large. Under the extraordinary leadership of Cantor Joseph Ness a full range of exciting offerings are made possible throughout the year. These programs include major orchestral, chamber, choral and

cantorial concerts involving amateur and professional musicians, as well as a number of Beth El congregants.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

500-900

Submitted by Hazzan David F. Tilman

**BETH SHOLOM CONGREGATION**

Elkins Park, PA

215-887-1342

Beth Sholom Congregation maintains a very active schedule of performing arts activities involving 100 singing congregants in 4 choirs, 80 congregants in musical theater, and 125 religious school students and adults in Israeli dance. The performing arts program is committed to teaching Jewish values both to the participants and to our members, congregants, and community members who attend our musical services, programs, concerts, and musical-theater presentations.

Beth Sholom Congregation offers four volunteer choirs: 30 member Youth Chorale for children from third through seventh grade; 16 member teenage Hakolot Teenage Ensemble for high school students from seventh through twelfth grades; 50 member Elkins Park Jewish Community Chorus; and 16 member Men's Choir. All choirs meet weekly throughout the year. They participate in a regular schedule of Shabbat, festival, and High Holiday services. They sing at concerts within the congregation, together with choirs from neighboring congregations, and throughout the Delaware Valley and beyond. Our choirs participate in an annual Zimriyah Winter or Spring Music Festival, singing together with noted artists of national prominence.

Our congregation presents an annual musical/theatrical show featuring a company of 40-50 congregants from fourth graders through senior citizens, large volunteer support staff of set designers, costume fabricators, lighting and sound technicians, make-up crew, and business and production staff. The productions include a pit orchestra of 15 musicians combining congregants with professional players. Our performers become friends, go to Shul together, and develop deep loyalties to Beth Sholom Congregation.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Marsha Birenbaum

**SHAARE ZEDEK SYNAGOGUE**

University City, MO

314-727-1747

Our Purim Spiel

Our Purim festivities were enhanced this year by the presentation of an original musical "spiel." Hazzan Johanna Dulkan adapted songs of the Disco Era, and the Jews of Shushan were "Stayin' Alive." A multigenerational cast presented the play before the traditional Megillah reading. The packed sanctuary of members and guests enjoyed the clever lyrics, humorous dialogue, and truly awful 1970's costumes. The play brought together our congregation with humor and music, setting the tone for a joyous Purim evening

**PUBLICATIONS**

**GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Dan Rubin

**CONGREGATION NEVEH SHALOM**

Portland, OR

503-246-8831

A dramatic building rose up in Southwest Portland in 1964 to serve the congregants, programs and activities of two merging conservative synagogues. The all-new Congregation Neveh Shalom's synagogue building and campus was immense at the time, planned and built with forethought to accommodate a membership of 500 families, nearly twice the size of both merged congregations. Over the 40-plus years since, Neveh Shalom's west-facing 10 Commandments have become an icon to Jews all over Portland and have turned the heads of many passersby.

In 2006-07, it is this dramatic impact the current lay leaders of Neveh Shalom wanted for symbolism as they embarked on a capital campaign to enhance and expand the now-aging building for a congregational membership that has reached 1,000 families. With a concise case statement as narrative, tightly-focused photography of the iconic east

and west faces of the original building on each cover, and significant and emotionally-charged imagery within, this campaign book has helped the campaign and its committee reach nearly half of its \$9 million goal during the quiet phase.

Developed in a coffee table form factor at 14 inches wide and 8.5 inches tall, this substantial yet easy-to-use book utilizes four-color printing and spot gloss varnish, with all pages laminated to book-binders board. Pewter Wire-o binding and a utility pocket (with the congregation's logo subtly blind-embossed) provide an elegant and functional finish.

**GOLD**

250-500

Submitted by Gary T. Zelman

**SHELTER ROCK JEWISH CENTER**

Roslyn, NY

516-741-4305

Siddur Tzur Yisrael, published by the Shelter Rock Jewish Center, combines our traditional Hebrew prayers with new translations which are both literate and literary. It also presents a wide variety of complementary material from our historic sources such as the Mishnah, the Shulchan Arukh, Maimonides, Ibn Gvirol, and Judah Halevi. Challenging essays by Rabbi Martin S. Cohen who compiled, edited and translated the Siddur, are also included. The two volumes of this Siddur, the Shabbat and Festival volume and the Weekday volume, become an anthology of our heritage.

The design and format of the Siddur are carefully considered. Different type sizes have been used for various prayers, giving the reader the sense that each prayer has a unique and special meaning within itself and within the prayer service.

Dedications by large donors, whose dedications appear in the front of the Siddur, and by other donors whose dedications appear in the back of the Siddur, raised significant funds for the Shelter Rock Jewish Center. From the financial perspective, not only did the Synagogue not pay for Siddurim, but significant money for other Synagogue projects was raised by these Siddurim.

**GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by Jeanette Kuvin Oren

**CONGREGATION B'NAI JACOB**

Woodbridge, CT

203-389-2111

We have produced this colorful brochure: "New Year at Congregation B'nai Jacob" for the past two years. It is mailed immediately before Rosh Hashanah to the entire membership. The electronic version is sent via email as well.

The design of the brochure is inspired by B'nai Jacob's beautiful stained glass windows.

The brochure serves several purposes:

- Highlights regular and special events for the many constituencies in the Congregation
- Creates excitement among our membership for upcoming events
- Gives members an overview of the many constituencies, committees and interests in the Congregation
- Presents a reference of the staff, officers and committee chairs and their contact information
- Serves as a ready mailer for prospective members

The brochure is inexpensive to print. It has more than served its purpose. The most common reaction to the brochures has been "I didn't know we did so much at B'nai Jacob!" We plan on producing the brochure each year.

This brochure is designed and produced by Jeanette Kuvin Oren.

**GOLD WITH DISTINCTION**

Over 900

Submitted by Marsha Rehns

**CONGREGATION BETH EL OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

Bethesda, MD

301-652-2606

Before she died in 1995, the mother of Marsha Rehns, editor of *Grandparent's Memory Book for Jewish Families*, completed a memory book in which she recorded her personal history. It is a *family* treasure, but the book was generic, asking, for example, what religion the grandparent was or what holidays she celebrated. Marsha always wished that the book her mother had filled out had been "more Jewish." But no such book existed. In 2004, Marsha was invited to join the Board of the Sisterhood of Congregation Beth El and to make creating the memory book her Sisterhood project. She assembled a committee of seven more Sisterhood members, who included Jews by birth and Jews by choice, married women and divorced women, women who were grandmothers and women who were not.

For two years the committee wrote, debated, and tested every aspect of the book. Its title was chosen with the recognition that there are Jewish grandparents whose grandchildren are not Jewish and Jewish children whose grandparents are not Jewish. The prompts for information are written in the first person, which is friendlier than questions written in the second person. Every question was chosen with care so that the book elicits wide-ranging information about a grandparent's life, values, and Jewish heritage, without becoming discouragingly long to fill out. In addition to questions about family and personal history, from birth to the present and including Hebrew names and favorite Jewish holidays, the book includes both the whimsical (my first kiss) and the essential (medical history). A chapter called "On Being Jewish" gives a grandparent the opportunity to discuss his or her beliefs and relationship with Judaism. Renowned artist Tamar Fishman contributed a paper cut of a family tree that is in the center of the book and on its cover. Grandparents are encouraged to fill out the book with, and not just for, their grandchildren.

The completed manuscript was submitted to Kar-Ben Publishing, which designed and produced the book. *Grandparent's Memory Book for Jewish Families* debuted in time for Hanukkah 2006. There is still no other book like it. It is sold nationwide for \$16.95 through the Beth El website ([www.bethelmc.org](http://www.bethelmc.org)), which offers discounts to synagogues, and the Kar-Ben catalog. All proceeds go to the Sisterhood of Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County.

**GOLD WITH DISTINCTION**

250-500

Submitted by Judith H. Lax

**SUMMIT JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER**

Summit, NJ

908-273-8130

Several years ago, a group of four congregants decided to create the "Light" — a journal of Jewish affairs that would have articles, book reviews and poetry. The Light was to be different in that all of the material was to be written by members of the Summit Jewish Community Center. The editors have never wavered. The Light neither publishes articles published elsewhere nor articles written by non SJCC members. When necessary, though, the editors request permission to reproduce graphics or photos. On a rotating basis, one editor assumes the responsibility of an issue but the discussion as to theme and content as well as proofreading are shared by the entire editorial board. The Light, originally sponsored by several synagogue members, became, after a couple of years, a shared synagogue activity of which the congregation was proud. There is a line in the budget for the Light which is produced four times a year completely in house. Mailing is done by a group of members who volunteered for the task.

Over the years, the editors have chosen a variety of themes — with articles appropriate to the themes. Articles are sometimes of historical nature, sometimes contemporary, sometimes scholarly, sometimes subjective and personal. The editors ask congregants to write on a specific topic or some facet of a more general topic. So far, the editors are delighted to say that more than sixty members of the congregation have contributed articles, book reviews or poetry. Two categories that the editors created have brought material that has been scholarly and thought provoking or cleverly funny and often thought provoking as well -- "As I See It" and "Where Are They Now?". The latter concerns itself with children of members who grew up in the synagogue and are now elsewhere — like one who had just visited India and spent time with the Cochin Jewish community. Another was now a librarian and scholar in the field of linguistics who wrote about his research concerning Ghettaiole, the languages of Italian Jewry. Still another wrote about having lived in Israel for eight years with her family and contemplating a return to the American diaspora.

Since its inception, the Light has been a journal or magazine, never a bulletin and calendar of synagogue events. The Light is of high caliber in quality of content and continues to educate, inspire and entertain in every issue.

**SILVER**

Over 900

**AHAVATH ACHIM SYNAGOGUE**

Atlanta, GA

Ahavath Achim Synagogue (AA), located in Atlanta, Georgia, produced a comprehensive membership packet in August of 2006. The purpose of this packet is to provide prospective members with information on the many programs, activities and services provided by the synagogue in a way that is esthetically pleasing and well organized.

Using a layered design, all sections are prominently displayed so the reader can quickly locate points of interest. The banners at the top of each page are colorful and bright. Reverse printing provides a clean, modern look and ties in the white folder and main color of the paper.

Upon opening the membership folder, prospective members immediately see the brightly colored fact sheet, the first of which is "Welcome." Clearly visible are the mission statement and an introduction paragraph that begins, "there is a place for you in the AA congregational family." The other sheets contain information on the privileges of membership, religious observances, adult opportunities for involvement, youth education and programs, and professional staff.

All permanent information is located on one side. All time sensitive information, such as flyers, notices, bulletins, as well as the membership application, dues structure, and self-addressed envelope are located on the opposite side.

The packet uses our logo in front, on the two inside panels and the back to provide an overall continuity of design. This enables the packet to be clearly and readily identified as AA Synagogue literature. A business card placed on one inside panel is consistent with the overall design.

Ahavath Achim Synagogue is proud to nominate our membership packet for the 2007 Solomon Schechter Award in the category of Publications.

**SILVER**  
250-500  
Submitted by Carole Klein

**MORRISTOWN JEWISH CENTER BEIT YISRAEL**  
Morristown, NJ  
973-538-9292

Each spring, Morristown Jewish Center Beit Yisrael chooses an overall theme which will guide programming and educational decisions for the coming High Holy Day and calendar year. For the 2006-2007 year, the congregation chose, "To Everything There is a Season." To kick off the programmatic theme to the congregation, a High Holy Day mailing was created to allow the congregation to see the wide range of programs which would be offered from Selichot through the reading of parashat Noach.

The flyers associated with the many programs were created in color. They were wrapped in a clear mailing tube. The outer flyer was a fall inspired paper which read, "To everything there is a season...". Inside, the tube was filled with silk fall colored leaves. When the tube was opened and the flyers pulled out, the leaves fell from the tube announcing the new season ahead.

The synagogue has had tremendous success packaging the fall programs in a unique and exciting way. It allows the staff to set a tone for the coming year, while continuing to ensure our members that they are in store for a set of creative, well-thought out, and exciting programs.

**SILVER**  
500-900  
Submitted by Jonathan Wolf

**OCEANSIDE JEWISH CENTER**  
Oceanside, NY  
516-536-6112

Synagogue communications involves more than just announcements and articles from officers and affiliates. A synagogue is not only the center of Jewish social life, but also a *Belt Midrash*, a center for lifelong Jewish learning.

For the past few years, Rabbi Mark Greenspan has been writing, and sending out via email to the congregation, a weekly Torah Table Talk. It is designed to give congregants a taste of Torah which can be read and discussed around

the Shabbat table Friday night. In the past, the weekly teaching focused on the *parshah hashavua* (the portion of the week). Last year, it focused on a commentary of the weekly *Haftorah* reading.

This year, the rabbi is focusing on a mitzvah for the week based on the *parshah*. I am submitting to the committee, a copy of the Torah Table Talk for Shabbat Hagadol 5767, a Torah Table Talk from last year (5766) on Parshat Vayikra, and one from 5765. As you can see, it is being sent out not only to the OJC congregation, but the rabbi has an email subscription list which he sends out to dozens of people outside of the Oceanside community. The TTT begins with an overview of the *parshah*, some classic and contemporary commentaries, and then a series of questions for discussion. It has been well received by the congregation and a weekly highlight of Shabbat at OJC. Finally, it serves as a great tool for teaching Torah and doing outreach. This is expanding our boundaries to bring the essence of Conservative Judaism. We are proud of the rabbi's attempts to bring Torah to the people and this in turn, brings the people to the Torah.

**SILVER**  
250-500

**CONGREGATION OR SHALOM**  
Orange, CT  
203-799-2341

2006-2007 marked a double celebration--the 25th anniversary of Congregation Or Shalom and the 25th anniversary of the tenure of Rabbi Alvin Wainhaus as spiritual leader.

An anniversary yearbook was created by a committee of lay members. The book incorporated virtually every area of synagogue life.

**SILVER**  
500-900  
Submitted by Philip Wolgel

**CONGREGATION OHEV SHALOM**  
Orlando, FL  
407-298-4650

**Background:** Each spring, our synagogue conducts a fundraising event. We budget the activity and the net is a significant line item in our budget. In Spring 2007, we embarked on an ambitious opportunity with the following goals:

- Honor our Rabbi Aaron D. Rubinger in celebration of his 25 years in the rabbinate.
- Involve the congregation and extended community in the celebration.
- Achieve budgeted net income of \$100,000.

The vehicle to support this was the publication of an anthology of our rabbi's sermons over the past 25 years. The book, *Some Insights Along the Way*, was released Thursday evening April 26, 2007 as part of the tribute celebration. We have enclosed a copy of the book.

Our program results exceeded our goals:

- Over 450 people attended the event. Letters of tribute were received from political leaders, community leaders, spiritual leaders, congregants, friends, and family.
- Our fund-raising goals grossed over \$250,000 and netted over \$190,000. Costs included the book development and publishing as well as the tribute evening.

Details of the book development process are described in the attached report. This summary addresses three elements: Content, Purpose, and Layout.

**Content:** Rabbi selected a collection of over 60 sermons he wrote and delivered over the past 25 years. These were organized into six sections to heighten interest and support fundraising strategies. The 300-page anthology was published as a limited edition coffee table book. Other features are discussed in the layout.

**Purpose:** Rabbi Rubinger rarely publishes his sermons. By sharing these messages, our congregants and community members are able to enhance their knowledge, and motivation to keep learning. Literally one day after the book release, there is significant community "buzz" about the sermons and memories and new insights as our congregants have reading these messages.

Layout: The eye catching book is case-bound with a soft brown leather front overlaying the black textured leather on the spine and back. The book title is burnished into the cover in an elegant script, created by blending two versions of Sloop fonts to add elegance to the presentation on the cover and throughout the publication. The spine features the title and author hot stamped with copper foil. The author's biography includes a picture produced as a duotone image. The book was typeset in an 11-point Berkeley font, with brown ink, and the paper chosen was a 70-pound natural exact opaque, with wide margins to enhance the readability. This hard cover 9" by 12" book includes section dividers containing a section name and a scripture quote in English and Hebrew appropriate for the section. Each section divider also includes a recognition page acknowledging our book and section sponsors. The front matter includes a book dedication by Rabbi Rubinger to his parents and four lead sponsors dedications and words of appreciation to our rabbi.

**SILVER**

Over 900

Submitted by Rabbi Daniel Isaak

**CONGREGATION NEVEH SHALOM**

Portland, OR

503-246-8831

The slaughter of Daniel Pearl became a defining moment for Jews across the globe. His beheading following upon his proclamation, "I am Jewish" could not help but bring to mind millennia of Jewish martyrs. Surely, this was not what he had planned. He was given no choice, but he was valiant in his adversity, while the rest of us watched... stunned.

But what do Jews mean when they self-identify as Jews? Is it a proclamation of faith or ethnic identity, a connection with history or ideals? Do we take the time to think about what it means to say, "I am Jewish"? It is to explore this issue that the book edited by Judea and Ruth Pearl, Daniel's parents, "I Am Jewish: Personal Reflections Inspired by the Last Words of Daniel Pearl" (Jewish Lights, 2004) became the text book for a Sunday morning adult education class that I led, a book containing some 150 personal statements by illustrious Jews from all walks of life.

The class inspired a project and the enclosed publication. I issued an invitation encouraging congregants to write about what being Jewish means to them. How does it impact their lives? Who are they as Jews? What does it mean to affirm that "I am Jewish"? I promised that the essays would be published and distributed to the entire congregation on Yom Kippur. I was excited by the 40 responses I received from young and old, male and female, born Jew and Jew by choice. Some statements were but a few lines, others had to be trimmed to fit the format of the booklet, but all were completely different, approaching the subject from different perspectives.

The booklet was printed in house amidst the scurry of High Holy Day chaos. I then used the opportunity on Kol Nidre when we distributed these booklets to all in attendance to speak about Jewish identity in its many shades and hues. I am proud of the respondents who were each willing to expose themselves and their personal insights into what being Jewish means to them.

**SILVER**

Over 900

Submitted by Marni Melow

**B'NAI ISRAEL CONGREGATION**

Rockville, MD

301-881-6550

Since its debut in 2002, the Program Guide has grown to its present size of over 80 pages. The annual Program Guide describes the full-range of programming available in our congregation. It includes information about services, adult education, our schools, social action, and social activities, and more that take place from September through May. The publication continues to change and to grow with our extensive programming.

In addition to providing information about annual programs, The Program Guide profiles the congregation so that new and prospective members can understand what we are about. It also helps to better integrate programming from a variety of groups and committees -- adult education, family education, schools, Hazak, Men's Club, Sisterhood, etc. - - into a single, unified structure Each program Guide contains a theme for the year, which is articulated in the opening letter.

Layout is directed by our Media Specialist. All materials are examined by a professional editor before it is sent to the printer. Our publications are distributed to our 1,450+ member families and to community organizations and other

parties who have an interest in our synagogue. Our goal is to provide clear and relevant material in a professional manner.

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Laurie M. Gore

**TIFERETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE**

San Diego, CA

619-697-6001

In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of our congregation, we produced a book that is more than a history. To build our resources, we approached members who had not previously participated in fund raising projects. These members had the professional skills to produce a volume of original essays that recorded not just the history of our institution but the character of our synagogue. Materials that had never before been shared with the congregation were featured to give the book depth and resonance on many levels. We featured many photos from private collections as well as keepsakes that had been family treasures for years.

The book was successful as a fund raiser in that it was produced observing cost-effective and affordable choices without compromising design integrity. It was successful as a congregation activity because it directly involved such a large percentage of our membership through oral histories, shared mementos, and personalized family pages (pages in the book which featured individual family photos and stories).

**SILVER**

314-727-1747

Submitted by Marsha Birenbaum

**SHAARE ZEDEK SYNAGOGUE**

University City, MO

(314) 727-1747

Our program guide is an indispensable reference to a year at Shaare Zedek Synagogue. Distributed at shul during High Holy Days services, the guide contains holiday dates and candle lighting times, as well as contact information for staff and committees.

The highlight of the guide is the extensive and detailed list of the year's holiday programs and activities. Affiliate organizations within the synagogue are described and key contact information is listed. Descriptions of our youth group and educational programs are included, as scheduled activities of USY, Kadima, Noar, religious school and Hebrew school.

The guide is a concise list of the many ongoing activities and programs at our synagogue. It is distributed at a time when members are attending Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services, thinking about the upcoming year, and planning additional ways to become involved in synagogue programming.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by John A. Fogelman, M.D.

**NANUET HEBREW CENTER**

New City, NY

845-708-9181

The publication, "Welcome to Sabbath Services at Nanuet Hebrew Center: A Guide with Commentary," was written for several different audiences attending our *Shabbat* service. At *simchas* such as a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* celebration, a baby-naming or an *Aufruf*, there may be many non-Jewish guests. We have observed puzzlement and uneasiness about what is happening, what book to use, the flow of the prayer service and the details of the sanctuary. The themes that weave throughout this guide are intended to make our guests feel welcome and comfortable with the experience of learning about our beliefs and our prayers. The guide invites them to learn and pray with us by explaining why their prayers are meaningful. They are encouraged to join our congregants in the *Mi'She-Berakh*, the blessing for perfect healing

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Over 900

Submitted by Michael L. Simmons

**CONGREGATION HAR SHALOM**

Potomac, MD

301-299-7087

Approximately two years ago, the Congregation Har Shalom leadership recognized the need for a new publication to be used during Shabbat services. It was hoped that this new publication would remove barriers to congregant participation

in Shabbat services and increase attendance at these services, especially among congregants who would otherwise attend services infrequently. Additionally it was recognized that many congregants at Har Shalom were not fluent in Hebrew, and therefore an English-language service guide was necessary. The Congregation Har Shalom Shabbat pamphlet represents the realization of these needs.

The Shabbat pamphlet represents more than one-and-a-half year's effort by lay members of the congregation. It contains Hebrew-to-English transliterations of prayers and hymns as well as color photographs of services at Har Shalom. Full-color, high gloss original prints of the pamphlet are found in the pews in the Burke sanctuary and are used by congregants at every Shabbat service.

The Shabbat pamphlet is almost entirely the product of the efforts of lay congregants. A lay committee conducted extensive research to produce the content of the pamphlet. Congregant Rami Loya provided the initial impetus for the pamphlet, helped obtain donor funding, and also contributed many of the photographs found in the pamphlet. Another congregant's generous donation made the publishing of the pamphlet a reality.

. They are shown that the prayer service is not a random selection of writings but is structured to establish certain principles, some of which may be familiar to them.

We often have Jewish guests who appear similarly uninformed and uncomfortable; the guide is intended to reintroduce them to a Jewish prayer service. In the upper grades of our Hebrew School and in our Adult Education Program, it has been used to explain the fundamentals of the service and to introduce basic principles of the Conservative movement. It is a part of the membership package so that prospective and new members can be introduced to information about our congregation, our service and the Conservative movement. To facilitate these ends the guide is posted online at the Nanuet Hebrew Center home page: [www.nanuethc.org](http://www.nanuethc.org)

In this guide we are forthright in affirming that we strive for holiness through commitment to the commandments. We believe that observance brings us closer to our Creator, and that there is value in prayer and praise of God within the context of a community at worship.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Marsha Birenbaum

**SHAARE ZEDEK SYNAGOGUE**

University City, MO

(314) 727-1747

Our membership brochure is attractively designed to welcome individuals to our synagogue, and to provide a concise snapshot of our mission, community and culture.

Illustrated by the stained glass windows of our sanctuary designed by Rodney Winfield, the brochure opens with our self-definition of inclusion, diversity and welcoming culture. A letter from Rabbi Fasman details his "journey" to becoming part of Shaare Zedek Synagogue.

Six inserts labeled "Gateway to..." provide brief essential contact information, and detail the many ways potential members can experience Shaare Zedek Synagogue through personal growth, spirituality, fulfillment and future membership.

The membership brochure's design and message summarizes our welcoming culture, and our commitment to personal growth, spirituality and fulfillment.

**SMALL CONGREGATIONS**

**SILVER**

Under 100

Submitted by Joel Levitt

**CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL**

Danbury, CT

203-792-6161

Congregation B'nai Israel in Danbury, Connecticut is 110 years old. We nearly closed our doors at age 109.

We had been hit with potentially devastating news a couple of years ago when it was discovered by our then president that the synagogue had not paid payroll taxes to the IRS for our small staff for a number of years. It was a total shock to the president and the Board of Trustees.

It took a year for various IRS hearing officers to conclude what we owed. It ultimately amounted to almost half of our annual budget.

There were no heroes in how we managed to overcome such a crushing financial and emotional blow. There were just a bunch of selfless hard workers.

We had to borrow the money to pay our back taxes and interest (penalties were waived). We found an “angel,” an anonymous benefactor who has donated sums of money every six months with the potential goal of retiring our debt. We revamped our Kol Nidre appeal by finding someone in each of the last two years to offer a challenge grant so that for every dollar spent over the last year’s pledge, the donor would match dollar for dollar. That resulted in a tripling of the Kol Nidre pledges from the previous year (phone calls and thank you notes have kept our rate of collection at over 90 per cent).

We took a new look at collecting past dues (whether from full paying or reduced dues members). Firm but compassionate phone calls and letters resulted in some checks immediately being received, while others agreed to payment plans. Several others frankly, never responded even to certified letters, thereby removing themselves from our membership rolls.

Our beloved rabbi at the time had informed us in the year prior to this situation coming to light that she wanted to seek opportunities outside congregational life (it was an amicable and mutually heartfelt parting), so in the winter of 2006 we registered with United Synagogue to find a replacement. There was honest disagreement in the congregation about how we could afford a full-time rabbi, so a donor was found to cover a portion of the salary in each of the two years of the new rabbi’s contract. We successfully went through that process and hired a newly ordained dynamic young scholar, Rabbi Nelly Altenburger.

Since the future rabbi’s house next to the synagogue needed repairs, as well as the synagogue and parking lot themselves, we found another anonymous donor to kick-off an SOS (Save our Synagogue) drive which paid for a new roof on the house, the synagogue being repainted a noticeable blue (it was remarked that, “Now we’re not only Jewish, but bluish!”) and a resurfaced parking lot. Nearly two dozen synagogue volunteers repaired and completely repainted the interior of the rabbi’s new home and did yard work.

Though we have fewer than 80 families, we are a full service synagogue with the religious, educational, social service programs of a much larger institution. We are most proud that even with our diminutive size, we consistently average between 25-35 adults at our Shabbat morning services, even reaching close to those numbers on the first two days of Passover this year, which fell on weekdays.

We are not out of danger yet, but neither are we in danger. So far our books are balanced and our bills are being paid. We have innovative plans to market membership and to grow our religious school. We are committing funding to send our rabbi to a national outreach conference in Washington this October. We are participating in Shabbat Across America. We are sponsoring eight youngsters at the Emunah Home for Children, a residence for abused children in our “sister city” of Afula and continue pen pal correspondence with them. This summer we are again sponsoring a free “Jewish SummerFest” which in our initial year last year brought nearly 300 people to our synagogue for a day of Jewish music, children’s activities and what else, food!

We consider ourselves “The Little Synagogue That Could.” And we are proud that we have made it to 110 and God-willing, still counting. To see some of what our congregation does, please refer to the attached bulletins: October 2006, March 2007, and April 2007.

*SOCIAL ACTION PUBLIC POLICY*

**GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by Lisa Olens &amp; Marty Austin

**CONGREGATION ETZ CHAIM**

Marietta, GA

770-973-0137

Etz Chaim Social Action Committee is a core group of approximately 6 volunteers who meet approximately every 6 weeks to plan, assess and update the social action activities planned for Etz Chaim. The group is comprised of co-chairs, appointed by the President of the synagogue, as well as any and all interested volunteers. The meetings are open and advertised to the general membership of the congregation. Other volunteers have assisted or chaired individual projects or drives.

Ideas for projects either come from members of the committee, from members of the congregation or from the outside community. Planning occurs in late summer early fall to develop the calendar of activities for the coming year. Minor revisions, additions or deletions do occasionally occur in the course of the year. (For example, assisting the couple from Louisiana was added when we were approached by a synagogue member who had heard of the family in need. Some social action programs are actually run by other constituent groups within the synagogue, as they have the manpower and expertise to best handle them. Examples of these programs would be: The Empty Bowl Project, Jewish Home Bingo, Shelter Month of Meals. (All coordinated by Sisterhood.) The upcoming Blood Drive is intentionally being held on the same day as a Men's Club function. Likewise, Adopt-a-Mile Cleanups usually occur after a regularly scheduled Men's Club Breakfast. We also try to include the education department in many of our projects and programs. For instance, this year for the Hunger Walk, we held a competition among the religious school classes for most participation. When we collected stuffed animals last year, we contacted two B'nai Mitzvah students to see if they wanted to assist, since they had done a similar project for their B'nai Mitzvah.

The majority of our programs address the social issues of hunger, homelessness, poverty, the working poor, those that can't help themselves (children) and loneliness. We also support Israel, Israeli agencies and Israeli commerce. Many of our programs are unique in that they give individuals, families and groups an opportunity to give back to our local Jewish community, our local community, and globally. There are many ways to get involved — with your time, with your discarded items, your money, with your actual physical labor. There really is something for everyone. We have found that when given an opportunity to assist in a cause, project or program, congregants willingly, gladly and enthusiastically get involved and give financially and of themselves. They just need to be informed of these opportunities and we need to make it easy for them to participate. This is what makes our social action committee unique and successful. It is the commitment of a few that makes commitment by many possible.

**GOLD**

250-500

Submitted by Shelby S. Simmons

**ADATH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE**

Merion, PA

610-934-1919

Adath Israel Mitzvah Makers is a committee that promotes and engages in service and mitzvah projects within our community. In cooperation with Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, Adath Israel Mitzvah Makers is the sponsor of Jewish Mama Soup-a-Rama<sup>SM</sup>. Jewish Mama Soup-a-Rama<sup>SM</sup> is a soup-making contest that united the Philadelphia community, synagogues, youth groups, day schools and other organizations in a mitzvah program that produced 10,000 pints of soup to benefit JCC's Cook for a Friend program and \$10,000 for the Mitzvah Food Pantry.

Designed as a contest to encourage participation and add an element of fun, Jewish Mama Soup-a-Rama<sup>SM</sup> produced soup for JCC's Cook for a Friend program. Cook for a Friend is a community-based program through which volunteer groups purchase, prepare and package nutritious kosher meals for financially-needy adults 60 years of age or older who are unable to prepare meals for themselves.

With an aggressive marketing campaign, Adath Israel Mitzvah Makers enrolled over 30 participating organizations. These organizations fielded over 120 teams comprised of 1,000 volunteers to produce the 10,000 pints of soup. Well-known Philadelphia chefs served as our celebrity judges at the City-wide Taste-Off where we awarded the Golden Ladle Award for the best soup. In additions sponsorship opportunities, team entry fees, and cookbook ad sales generated \$10,000 for the Mitzvah Food Pantry.

**GOLD**  
100-250  
Submitted by Bea Katz

**CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM**  
Pompton Lakes, NJ  
973-835-3500

**Community Outreach - Interfaith Seder**

The most successful aspect of this project so far has been the Interfaith Seder, hosted at Beth Shalom for the second consecutive year. The Interfaith Seder attracted, in its first year, 100 participants and, in its second year, 120 participants. Approximately 1/3 of the participants were from our congregation. The balance was from the general community. The program was jointly sponsored by Christ Episcopal Church of Pompton Lakes and the Islamic Center of Passaic County. More information on the Interfaith Seder can be obtained by reviewing the documentation enclosed.

The response to our Interfaith Seder, from within our congregation and the other participating faith communities, has been quite positive. A group of seventeen lay people and clergy from the three groups have banded together to create an interfaith think tank. We are looking to perpetuate not only the Interfaith Seder; we are looking to find other areas where our communities can work together.

**SILVER**  
250-500  
Submitted by Suzanne Bring

**BETH JACOB CONGREGATION**  
Mendota Heights, MN  
651-452-2226

**Background**

In early 2006, Rabbi Morris Allen (Beth Jacob Congregation, Mendota Heights, Minn.) joined another rabbi from a local Orthodox synagogue on several visits to AgriProcessors, Inc. in Postville, Iowa.

Their mission? To ensure that the Twin Cities consumer of non-glatt meat would have access to fresh kosher meat at reasonable prices. This would be a remarkable social action program by itself— but it grew into something much larger.

In May 2006, *The Forward* printed a story alleging mistreatment of meatpackers at the same AgriProcessors plant. Rabbi Allen, other Beth Jacob congregants, and many others in the local Jewish community and in communities throughout the country, were deeply concerned by *The Forward* story, which, among other things, said that the almost entirely Latino immigrant staff at AgriProcessors were subject to short pay, verbal abuse, and needlessly dangerous working conditions. This was the beginning of a new social justice program, one concerned with the social conditions under which kosher meat was produced.

During the summer of 2006, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and the Rabbinical Assembly convened a joint commission of inquiry, and appointed Rabbi Allen its chair. This commission, assisted by local group Jewish Community Action and the Jewish Labor Committee, visited AgriProcessors twice during the summer and fall of 2006. Members of the commission held extensive meetings with AgriProcessors' owners; they also met with many others in the Postville community, including clergy, plant employees, small business owners, and Iowa's Commissioner of Labor.

In December 2006, Hechscher Tzedek was launched. This is a new effort to encourage *kosher* food companies to ensure worker dignity and justice, in keeping with Jewish ethical law. At the leading edge of this emerging effort is Rabbi Allen and Beth Jacob's Social Justice Committee.

**Beth Jacob's Social Justice Committee**

Beth Jacob Congregation's Social Justice Committee is a relatively new entity--about seven years old. Beth Jacob has several other ongoing initiatives that engage congregants in gemilut chassadim, for instance, a committee that brings meals to the sick, one that volunteers at a day center for homeless people, and one that runs an annual blood drive.

But Beth Jacob's Social Justice Committee coalesced around a specific issue area -- immigrant rights -- and has remained involved in that issue since its inception. The committee's goal has been to involve the congregation as an entity in social change that is local, addresses root causes, is long-term, and sustainable.

Beth Jacob's Social Justice Committee has an ally in its work. Jewish Community Action, a 501c3 based in St. Paul, Minnesota, is one of only a handful of American organizations that engages the Jewish community using a congregational organizing approach to social change. Through many one-to-one conversations with Beth Jacob congregants, Jewish Community Action's community organizing staff have learned that immigrant rights remain a core Beth Jacob interest.

Seven years ago, Beth Jacob's then emerging Social Justice Committee joined with Jewish Community Action and a local Catholic church, Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose parishioners are mostly immigrants from Mexico and Central America. Together, the two congregations and Jewish Community Action were able to lead passage of ordinances protecting the rights of immigrants in St. Paul and Minneapolis. Now, immigrants in both cities can access basic services (housing inspections, garbage collection) and emergency services (911, police, fire) without fear of discrimination or deportation. Beth Jacob's partnership with the local Latino community was fueled both by painful memories of the Shoah and by our desire to heed the Torah's injunction to care for the stranger. In the past few years, the Social Justice Committee and Beth Jacob Congregation have worked closely with Jewish Community Action to support other matters of concern to local immigrants. Now, Rabbi Allen is widely acknowledged as a local leader for immigrant rights. Most recently, Rabbi Allen delivered testimony to the Minnesota State Legislature in favor of a "meatpacking workers' bill of rights." He and Beth Jacob members have joined Jewish Community Action in supporting this legislation, the Dream Act (in-state tuition for immigrants), living wage ordinances, permanent residence for Liberian refugees, restoration of food stamp benefits to immigrants, and other immigrant rights and worker rights policy at the local and state levels.

#### Hechscher Tzedek Campaign

"You shall not abuse a needy and destitute laborer, whether a fellow countryman or stranger in one of the communities of your land. You must pay him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets, for he is needy and urgently depends on it; else he will cry to the Lord against you and you will incur guilt." (Deuteronomy 24: 14-15) and "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 22:20).

Heeding Torah, Beth Jacob and its Social Justice Committee have committed to leading Hechscher Tzedek. We have worked closely during the first part of 2007 to plan the Hechscher Tzedek Campaign, an initiative to pilot Hechscher Tzedek in the Twin Cities area. While much is yet to come, the core issue of Hechscher Tzedek is already clear: Hechscher Tzedek stands at the nexus of social justice and halachah. This is a program that is already proving key to Conservative Jews seeking a fit between Jewish ritual and Jewish ethics. It is a program deserving of commendation for the audacity with which it has addressed an issue that is central ( to our lives as Conservative Jews but largely invisible to us. Its goal — improved working conditions (working conditions consistent with Jewish law), improved treatment of employees and ensuring ethical business practices in the production of *kosher* food — is one which has already begun to unite and compel the Beth Jacob community, as well as a much larger national community interested in this issue. It has already been a regular theme for discussion within Beth Jacob's Engaging Shabbat Program. We believe it is a program that will continue to grow in importance as it resonates with Jews across the country.

#### **SILVER**

500-900

Submitted by Linda Sotnick

#### **CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL**

Millburn, NJ

973-379-3811

In addition to the social action programs such as food, blood and coat drives, working with Habitat for Humanity and organizations that work to clean up the environment, the social action committee at Congregation B'Nai Israel responded to a cry for help from the New Orleans Jewish Family Service and took responsibility for the "Maot Chittin" Passover program, to provide a holiday's worth of food for those in need in the New Orleans Community.

Utilizing our nursery school, religious school and youth programs to make seder plates, kiddush cups, candlesticks and other ritual items, the congregation took responsibility for raising the \$10,000 Jewish Family Service in New Orleans estimated the program would cost. Almost 20 volunteers from B'Nai Israel paid their own way to spend a weekend in New Orleans, renting vans, putting together and delivering the food packages in the New Orleans area.

After the program, B'Nai Israel coordinated a scholar in residence program for Shir Chadash, the Conservative Congregation in New Orleans; where Conservative Rabbis volunteered to become monthly scholars in residence for the congregation.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Janet Kaplan

**TEMPLE BETH AHM**

Aberdeen, NJ

732-583-1700

At Temple Beth Ahm, a congregation of approximately 300 families, Social Action is neither a one-time event nor a program in which a small number of members participate. It is not something championed only by adults, but also by our youth. Except where prohibited by law (e.g., blood and bone marrow drives), our Religious School operates in tandem with adult congregants by getting involved with our social injustice and human crises programs to augment and humanize the work done by all. Throughout the year our Religious School principal incorporates tzedakah projects into the curriculum so that a “two-pronged attack” can be launched to defeat homelessness, hunger, disease, loneliness and environmental concerns.

In the area of social injustice, Temple Beth Ahm spearheaded a two-year effort in cooperation with other local churches and synagogues using sweat equity to build two houses for homeless families as part of “Habitat for Humanity.” In addition to adult crews, religious school children helped pitch in by painting some of the final walls while our nursery school children saved money to buy an appropriate item for a child’s bedroom. In addition to the “Corners of Our Fields,” Temple Beth Ahm congregants and religious school children participate all year by contributing items to our local food bank, while Mazon is a recipient of our support as well. Efforts to combat the loneliness of senior citizens and soldiers fighting on foreign soil are addressed by adults baking goods, crocheting lap robes and delivering Passover items to Regency Park (our adopted nursing home) and by our religious school children visiting and singing songs to these residents, not to mention their sending get well cards and Purim baskets to soldiers in Iraq and Israel.

Last, but certainly not least, everyone from our youngest to our eldest members holds a great concern about our environment. Sending money, supplies and writing letters to a number of congregations as a result of Hurricanes Wilma & Katrina has been an ongoing effort, while we are also seeing continued interest in promoting and purchasing energy efficient light bulbs in conjunction with the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) which was brought to our attention by our pulpit rabbi.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Diane Richman and  
Rochelle L. Stern**BETH EL SYNAGOGUE**

East Windsor, NJ

609-443-4454

The Social Action committee presently comprises over 35 people strong with many new committee members joining out of a desire to lead new programs. Our new initiative this past year was to add a more global focus to our continued local endeavors. We kicked off the Jewish New Year in October with a showing of the documentary “An Inconvenient Truth,” which discusses global warming and the condition of our earth’s ecology. We followed it up with a guest speaker Tina Weishaus, who was one of a thousand handpicked Climate Project presenters created by Al Gore. Many participants were inspired by Ms. Weishaus’ talk with regard to things we could all do to help diminish our carbon footprints.

One of our committee members organized and held a riveting presentation by Dr. Jerry Ehrlich, a pediatric physician, who is part of “Doctors Without Borders.” He serviced Chad, Africa, to where refugees from Darfur fled. He used his personal slides followed by a screening of Witnessing Darfur—Genocide Emergency. His graphic pictures of undernourished, emaciated refugees inspired many to support relief efforts such as writing letters to the editors of local newspapers and contacting US government representatives to help cease the genocide of Darfurians.

In addition, one of our congregants called to duty in Iraq, struck a chord with our committee. We collected and sent requested toiletries and snacks to Lt. Steve Rosenberg and his troop in Iraq, helping to give them a sense of home.

We have continued our Social Action efforts in the local area by holding a twice yearly successful Blood

Drive; a twice yearly cooking operation for Homefront, a homeless transitional community in Trenton; the continual support of the Jewish Children and Family Service's Food Pantry; and our annual Mitzvah Day. A bright spot for our committee was our efforts in raising funds for the annual Crop Walk, an endeavor to fight against local and global hunger. Our Social Action Committee worked diligently to raise over \$2500 in funds, which was recognized as the highest raised funds among the supporting area churches and congregations.

Last year during Mitzvah Day, we participated in visiting an Alzheimer's residential house, cleaning up a neglected Trenton Jewish cemetery, and cooked dinner for Homefront.

Social Action awareness has become ubiquitous within Beth El. The Mitzvah Corp was formed in 2005, and comprises 10- to 12-year-old children. The Mitzvah Corp meets monthly and has participated in many local social action endeavors. In addition, the Religious School children are required to fulfill at least eight to ten hours of their time contributing to social action activities.

Social Action has been ingrained in the Beth El consciousness with approximately 85% of our congregants (out of 450 families) having participated in at least one social action effort during the past three years.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Over 900

Submitted by Sam Silverman & Abby Flam 617-558-8150

**TEMPLE EMANUEL**

Newton, MA

Three years ago, a number of members of Temple Emanuel's Social Action committee joined together, dissatisfied with the reach of their social action projects and dreaming of efforts that could engage the entire Temple Emanuel community rather than a small group and have a major impact on the root causes of injustice. Three years later, Temple Emanuel's traditional social action projects have been complemented by a giant community organizing initiative, Hillel's Call to Action. Hillel's Call to Action has built a deep base at Temple Emanuel that involves hundreds of congregants coming together to identify their common values and interests, take action on them, both as a united Temple community and as part of a broader coalition alongside other congregations.

How far Temple Emanuel has come was never clearer than on December 3, 2006, when 420 congregants gathered together in a Temple assembly to commit to work for justice, to bring about significant improvements in Newton's recycling policy, and to begin the work of bringing about systemic change which will improve systems of long-term care for seniors in Massachusetts. Earlier in the year, the Temple hosted 42 house meetings involving almost 450 congregants — in each house meeting, congregants told stories that illustrated their concerns for their families, friends, and other members of the community and how they wanted to act on their Jewish values both within the synagogue and in the wider world. Out of that massive communal conversation, leaders were able to discern common themes that could legitimately be said to represent the values and interests of a significant portion of the Temple community. Issues that were raised included: health care; youth and education; elder care; the environment; and engaging Jewish teens and young Jewish adults. As the house meetings progressed, a group of teenagers in the Temple began to meet and speak with their peers to identify their common values and interests both as members of the Temple and of broader society, and to begin to organize to impact on the world and to change their role in the synagogue itself.

Leaders of this effort, with the encouragement of Senior Rabbi Wes Gardenswartz, decided to name this initiative Hillel's Call to Action after Hillel's famous three questions in Pirkei Avot. They would not be satisfied only focusing on their own needs and their life within the Temple itself. They would also not be satisfied doing for others — they would work alongside lower-income people and show them respect by working as partners on common concerns rather than treating them as needy people to be saved. And, they would not delay.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Sandra Alpern

**JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF PARAMUS**

Paramus, NJ

201-262-7691

Although our one-day Mitzvah Day program has been successful for the past 10 years, only a small percentage of our

members participate. This year we decided that to increase member participation we would promote different projects throughout the year and thus was born the idea for *“Every Day is Mitzvah Day.”*

The intent of this project, begun in the fall of 2006, was to document the community service mitzvot our members perform throughout the year, hoping to reach and surpass our goal of 613 reported mitzvot before May 2007. Two of our members collaborated to make a beautiful indicator “Tree of Mitzvot” to enable us to publicly track our progress towards our goal.

We put together a brochure of Mitzvah opportunities including projects our JCCP committee sponsored as well as other community service projects in Bergen County. We highlighted UJA Federation projects such as Kosher Meals on Wheels, Bergen Reads (a literacy volunteer program) and Shalom Baby. We publicized our activities in our monthly Bulletin and via congregational emails, and designed a mitzvah reporting form. We enabled people to report via mail, as well as via email. A “Volunteer Appreciation” Celebratory Brunch will be held in May, featuring entertainment and special foods, will provide an opportunity to recognize all those who participated.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Laurie Woog

**CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL**

Scotch Plains, NJ

908-889-5523

This application focuses on the signature project of the Beth Israel’s Social Action committee: the “Homeless Project.” Last summer, we initiated an annual effort to provide temporary shelter at the synagogue to area families, women and children who had nowhere else to stay.

First, the application describes the evolution of our congregation’s Social Action Committee and our introduction to the Homeless Project. Next, the application describes the organization and structure of our synagogue’s Social Action committee.

Next, we highlight the support that Beth Israel’s congregants give to the social action committee. The synagogue sponsors many different groups whose activities complement those of the committee; also, congregation members directly support the goals of the Social Action committee by donating funds and goods for various causes; providing volunteers to lead Shabbat services for nursing home residents; participating in talent shows at an assisted living facility; and delivering food to a local food pantry. Most notably, congregation members enthusiastically volunteered their time during the year and over the summer to help with the Homeless Project.

Another component of the application describes how our committee has worked with other community groups in order to become a host congregation for the Homeless Project; we worked most closely with the Interfaith Hospitality Network (the “Network”) to help address the needs of the temporarily homeless population of Union County, New Jersey. This component of the application also addresses how our committee worked with other religious groups and with area businesses.

The next section of the application addresses the way in which the Social Action Committee’s Homeless project involved the rest of the congregation. Over 100 people helped with this project in some manner, whether it was greeting guests, playing with their kids, making food, serving meals, driving to showers or activities, sleeping over, or donating the cost of a meal. The following section describes the involvement and utilization of the skills of our synagogue professionals, particularly the rabbi and executive director.

Our synagogue approached the problem of homelessness in our community by adhering to a program developed by a particular organization, but it was unique because we had to maintain kashrut and other ritual standards. Our congregation hopes that other congregations can use our methods as a model for hosting in the future.

The last part of the application describes the impact of the Homeless on the synagogue in particular, and the response from the community in general. Our committee believes that this project had a large and positive effect on our synagogue, detailed in the application. It also made the community aware of the efforts of our synagogue, and of the Interfaith Hospitality Network’s ongoing need for support.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Over 900

Submitted by Joel Fischman

**ADAS ISRAEL CONGREGATION**

Washington, DC

202-362-4433

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Social Action Council at Adas Israel Congregation, we are pleased to submit the Congregation's Social Action Council and its extensive social action and community service program for a 2007 Solomon Schechter Award.

Social Action, as one of the three pillars of the Adas Israel mission: to help assure the Jewish future by actively reaching out to families and individuals in our own community and by connecting the generations of our congregation in an atmosphere of living Jewish values through the practice of tzedakkah and tikkun olam.

The Adas Israel Social Action Council was reorganized in 2003, with a new alignment of the several individual social action programs and projects (listed and described below), all operating under the general authority and supervision of the Council. This reorganization has brought greater coherence and depth of focus to the Congregation's social action, with the Council facilitating the efforts of the respective project committees. The Social Action Council structure is similar to what many private foundations have in place. It is sophisticated and professional.

The overarching emphasis of Adas Israel social action initiatives is a focus on the needs of the poor and the homeless in the metropolitan Washington area. That does not preclude active involvement in Community Outreach and issues of Social and Economic Justice. Nor did that focus interfere with widespread Congregational support for relief and rehabilitation toward those who suffered from the devastation of the 2005 hurricanes in the Gulf region.

We have been working toward building a corps of dedicated Adas Israel members to engage in social action and community service volunteer opportunities, but also to achieve wider impact in the greater community, that is, deeper and more meaningful tikkun olam. The Council and entire Congregation take great pride in the many achievements in social action over the last two years. We believe we have made a significant impact in each of the several social action program areas and projects to which we are bringing renewed commitment and enthusiasm. Through the wide variety of programs discussed below, the Council is working to build relationships and alliances not only within the Congregation itself, but also between the Congregation and many diverse community organizations in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, Jewish, interfaith and secular, with which we work throughout the year.

We are proud of these achievements, but believe we can do more. We are developing a new social action strategy that would:

- > Integrate the concepts of social justice and social action into the fabric of synagogue life by incorporating them into our religious services, educational programs, and social activities.
- > Strengthen social action leadership and involvement by reaching out to and engaging all demographics and groups in the congregation;
- > Create an expectation that each member/family unit in our very large congregation will contribute to social action activities in the course of a year;
- > Reinforce our current reputation in the Washington community with emphasis on current partnerships with Luther Place/N Street Village, Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place (CCHIFP), Anne Frank House, Darfur Interfaith Network, Martha's Table, Peoples United Congregational Church of Christ (PCUCC) and others.
- >Continue to build on a proposed environmental initiative that has a growing support within the Social Action Council
- >Gradually expand the number of major social action initiatives and the involvement of congregants in social action.

The past, present and planned social action activities of the Congregation as coordinated by the Social Action

Council are described below. We hope you will agree that these considerable community efforts at Adas Israel merit a 2007 Solomon Schechter Award.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Allison Narins

**THE CONSERVATIVE SYNAGOGUE**

Westport, CT

203-454-4673

In the years 2005 through 2007, four women— Wendy Cohen, Julie Haroun, Allison Narins, and Sheri Warshaw— alternately have taken the reigns of the Social Action or Tikkun Olam Committee at The Conservative Synagogue. Each woman brought her own personal flair for community service and each added her special details to this important committee and its programming. Some of the programs took place on a monthly basis and others were an annual tradition, but all had a link for providing the common good, not only to our local communities but also those needy neighbors abroad.

“Partnership” was the Tikkun Olam Committee buzzword for 2005 and became a tradition for 2006 through 2007 and we hope for many years to come. The Tikkun Olam Committee aimed to develop special bonds with all of the Tikkun Olam recipients (most important being those chosen for TCS’s Mitzvah Day focus) by creating special “partnerships” to help them not only immediately but also to encourage these groups to call on us at any time in the future should their needs arise. TCS was very successful in developing our partnership with each Mitzvah Day recipient and have maintained incredibly special relationships with all of them, The George Washington Carver Center (2005), The Interfaith Housing Association of Westport (2006) and Habitat for Humanity (2007). Mitzvah Day each year provides TCS with the perfect platform for the general building ‘fix ups’ needed and as a home base for package assembly of delivery projects (for example, school backpacks, non-perishable meals, fresh start kits). The TCS giving goes way beyond Mitzvah Day through different programming such as preparing and serving meals to those in our local shelter and launching a gently used cell phone drive to aid victims of domestic violence; our giving continues with donations of monies raised from our annual Share the Pie fundraiser.

The Tikkun Olam Committee members were always happy to welcome our synagogue professionals and administrators aboard when they were available and thrilled to touch so many TCS members, young and old, on so many levels. Not only did our committee partner with our Tikkun Olam recipients but with many other synagogue committees as well. The TCS Sisterhood and Brotherhood, Religious School and Preschool were all instrumental to the success of all of our programs, not to mention the many congregants who participated in our success. Judging by the degree of press coverage and further written thanks, our Tikkun Olam Committee can be proud of all that our synagogue has accomplished in this community service arena.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING**

**GOLD**

250-500

Submitted by Rance Block

**TEMPLE BETH EL**

Allentown, PA

610-435-3521

Temple Beth El (Allentown, PA) relocated to its new facility in January 2006. Although the actual building of the facility is recent, the planning for the relocation of Temple Beth El was a plan that spanned the course of eighteen years. The submission to follow includes information from a historical perspective of development through the completion of the project. This submission includes the formation of a long range planning committee, a feasibility study, congregational survey, the report of the long range planning committee, needs assessment, minutes from congregational meetings, the formation of a building steering committee, and other communications, all of which that brought us to our ultimate goal... a new home for Temple Beth El.

In 1988, the administration of Temple Beth El developed a long-range plan for the viability of the congregation. The existing facility was approaching 50 years of age and was in need of major refurbishment. The synagogue was not located near where the congregants resided and the facility no longer met the programmatic needs of the congregation. A Long Range Planning Committee was appointed and charged with examining the cost of refurbishment and expansion of the existing facility to meet the programmatic needs of the congregation. After obtaining estimates that exceeded \$3M for additional space and refurbishment, the committee decided to examine the costs of relocating the facility to a location that was central to where the congregants resided. Additionally, the

committee was fortunate to acquire a piece of land in the right locale at a reasonable price and recommended its acquisition to the Board of Directors to provide a hedge for the future.

Over the following eleven years, various studies were undertaken by the Long Range Planning Committee to examine the feasibility of building a new facility on the acquired land. In 2002, a buyer was found for our existing building. The congregation approved the sale of the existing building and the construction of our new facility, with the provision that enough pledges were obtained so that the new facility could be built. Also in 2002, a Steering Committee comprised of a chair, president of the congregation, chairs of the Capital Campaign Committee, Building Committee, Finance Committee and Legal Committee was appointed to oversee the entire project. Shabbat Services were held for the first time in our new facility in January 2006. The project has been a dream come true, eighteen years in the making, proving the value of long term strategic planning.

## WEBSITE ON LINE

### **GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Michael L. Simmons

### **CONGREGATION HAR SHALOM**

Potomac, MD

301-299-7987

Congregation Har Shalom of Potomac, Maryland maintains one of the largest collections of Judaic books and materials in all of Montgomery County, Maryland. In addition to providing Jewish library services to the congregation, the Library is utilized by many non-congregants and area Jewish professionals.

The Surpass Web-Safari online catalog system was selected and acquired. The librarian then proceeded to reclassify and barcode the entire collection, after which the catalog, along with online instructions, was made available to any computer, from any location, via the internet.

Although the library system physically resides on the server at Congregation Har Shalom, the system can easily be accessed through the congregation's website, [www.harshalom.org](http://www.harshalom.org). Once users click to access the library catalog system, they are redirected (through an updated firewall) to the congregation's server. The online library system provides the user with the ability to search our 10,000-volume library by Author, Title, or Subject, as well as by using the innovative "Visual Navigator." This latter facility offers a graphic hierarchy of subjects, each represented by an icon, that greatly facilitate browsing by subject.

The congregation's library webpage and visual navigator page as well as examples of searches by Author, Title, and Subject will follow.

### **GOLD**

250-500

### **CONGREGATION OR SHALOM**

Orange, CT

203-799-2341

The Or Shalom website is updated weekly by a lay member of the congregation. Congregants use it to keep up with the latest information and to find out about future events. Prospective members have used it to find out about Or Shalom and several have told us after joining that it was our website that served as their introduction to the congregation. Outside individuals use our site to find out about "us."

The latest feature to be unveiled in late spring 2007 will be a payment platform that will allow individuals to pay dues and other fees as well as make donations by credit card online.

Both students and parents have "sung along with the Rabbi" on our website as they practice the Torah blessings and learn to chant a number of key prayers in the liturgy.

The synagogue bulletin is posted on the website at the time of publication. For some members, that is the primary way they read the bulletin.

**GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Michael L. Simmons

**CONGREGATION HAR SHALOM**

Potomac, MD

301-299-7087

[www.harshalom.org](http://www.harshalom.org)

The current Har Shalom website is the third version of our website since its inception in the mid-1990's. The immediate past president, Debbie Schapiro, reorganized all synagogue communications, including the website, under one communications chairperson. This lay reorganization paved the way for the communications chair to edit and improve content of text submitted by lay committees. Although the website had grown and provided online access for a plethora of congregational activities and information, more needed to be done. In the spring of 2006, Jodi Susser assumed the presidency of the congregation. One of her initial priorities was to update the website, keep it current and enhance the website as needed.

The congregation Har Shalom website is now updated on an ongoing basis, usually about three times per week. The website has become a resource for congregants to look up upcoming activities of the congregation, check candle lighting times, sign up for activities, sell their *hametz*, and link to many worthwhile local and national organizations. Additionally, Congregation Har Shalom is proud to offer our congregants and the general community: the ability to access a donation form on line, the ability to access an up to the second synagogue calendar, the ability to access our library's online catalog, and the ability to view synagogue events through the online photo gallery. Moreover, the synagogue website provides everything from prospective member information and application forms to important Jewish communal announcements.

Reflecting Congregation Har Shalom's strong connection with the Conservative movement, there is a link at the bottom of the homepage for access to the United Synagogue website as well as a link to the United Synagogue listing of conservative organizations. Additionally, in an effort to provide easy access for congregants to donate funds for Israel, a link is also provided for local Federation donations.

**GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by Francene Weingast

**THE EMANUEL SYNAGOGUE**

West Hartford, CT

860-236-1275

The Emanuel Synagogue website redesign is part of a broad ongoing effort to use the Internet and information technology to enhance our membership experience and to introduce the Emanuel community to site visitors. Designed to reflect the vision and priorities of The Emanuel, the website is organized in terms of our four communities: *Chesed* (Caring), *Tikun Olam* (Social Justice), *Talmud Torah* (Lifelong Learning), and *Tefilah* (Participatory Prayer). The new look and feel of the site, and especially the incorporation of photos of real congregants having real experiences at The Emanuel, reflects a sense of the atmosphere of the synagogue being a place of serenity and warmth apart from the pressures of suburban life.

We use The Emanuel website to facilitate connections between the synagogue and our congregants in the following ways:

- Providing current information about events and happenings on a timely basis
- Providing pages for groups and committees that have a specific community, for example members of USY (United Synagogue Youth) and *Ozreinu* (a group for parents of children with special needs)
- Improving knowledge about and access to synagogue resources
- Streamlining the cumbersome aspects of interacting with the synagogue

Tangible ways that the website is presently being used include the following:

- Schedule for daily *minyan* and *Shabbat* services
- Membership inquiries
- Finding up to the minute information of lifecycle events
- Posting information on *Bar/Bat Mitzvah tikun olam* projects.
- Weather related closings

- Assistant rabbi candidates let us know that they found our website warm and inviting, impressive in the way it expresses our mission and values, and that it enticed them to want to interview with us
- Up to date information on upcoming events
- Print out donation forms
- Volunteers for committees

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Susan Berger

**CONGREGATION BETH EMETH**

Herndon, VA

703-860-4515

The first sentence of our President's brief statement on the home page sets the tone for our entire Website:

“What's different about Congregation Beth Emeth? YOU. Members are active participants and leaders in worship, learning, celebration, social action, mutual support and fun.”

The CBEweb, found at [www.hethemeth.or](http://www.hethemeth.or), has as its mission to make it easy for congregants to be informed and engaged in the many and varied activities and services provided by the congregation, and to be extremely inviting to non-members considering joining our community. The site was re-launched with a new design just before Rosh Hashana 5767 (September 2006), and was designed and implemented — and is updated at least weekly — by congregation members who are not Web professionals.

As with most synagogue Websites, providing information about upcoming religious, learning and social events — and opportunities to participate and contribute — in an attractive and appealing manner is the backbone of the site. Feedback from congregants, new members and visitors indicates that our site provides these elements quite well.

In addition, several more interactive and/or dynamic innovations have received wide use in the community:

- **Torah portions online** — *“You can practice your Torah readings directly from an image of the Torah you'll be using!”* We encourage members to learn to chant and thus have some who are less than comfortable when they go up to the bema. Busy schedules and long commutes in the DC suburbs can make it difficult to review portions in the Torah at shul. Therefore, we provide digital photographs of the readings in our own Torahs on the Website so that readers do not have to worry about differences from the Tikkun when they arrive at the bema. This is also very useful for preparation when out-of-town relatives are invited to chant at bar/bat mitzvah services
- **Babysitting List** — Our Sisterhood and BEECC (Early Childhood Center) Parents Association have joined to sponsor a list of babysitters who are affiliated with the congregation and available for babysitting in the area. An online signup/information form is provided for babysitters to join. The list itself is accessible online via a secure page, with the password provided to parents upon request and verification of membership.
- **Networking Resources** — When our area experienced a major downturn in the early 2000s, several job-seeking congregants founded the Beth Emeth Networking CHavurah (BENCH). A BENCH section of the Website was created, including meeting schedule, contacts, useful job-search links, a form for congregants to send job postings to the group and a section featuring online resumés (the resumé list is now inactive due to members having become re-employed!)
- **Religious School Working Group** — We recently conducted a task-force-led process to re-examine our religious school model. This has been a contentious issue, and it was important to invite congregation feedback through a series of forums, and also to share the results and plans with the congregation at each step. This communication was carried out almost entirely on the Website.
- **Online Activity Registration** — While we do not at this time have e-commerce available due to cost, for many activities we provide online registration, with online form entries going both to the activity coordinator(s) and to the office where the cost is added to members' statements. Non-members are asked to call with a credit card number or to download a form to send with a check.

**Our Website** is complemented by approximately 25 different e-mail lists, which are provided via Yahoo Groups. These include lists for weekly (and emergency) announcements, for each of the schools and groups such as Sisterhood and Men's Club, for each youth group, each committee, and others as requested. We have both announcement lists (limited access to post) and discussion lists where any member can post a message. These lists, too, are maintained by volunteers. The draft of the weekly announcement message (prepared in the office) is used as the

main input for the weekly Website update as well, providing consistent and timely information for congregants through several channels while minimizing duplicative information-collecting.

**SILVER**

500-900

Submitted by Olivier Vogel

**BETH EL SYNAGOGUE**

New Rochelle, NY

914-235-2700

Beth El's website is designed to communicate with the synagogue's congregants and to present the shul with its many programs and activities to the community at large and introduce it to potential new members and other Jews interested in the numerous events held at the center each and every week.

The website's Home page or Welcome page displays a front picture of the synagogue with its location and information on how to reach it and a short summary about the shul. It also gives the viewer the option to click on *Religious Services*, upcoming *Holidays/News/Events* or *Online Donation Requests*. The main menu of web pages appears on the left. This menu appears on any selected web page to facilitate the navigation from page to page. The main menu of options on the Welcome page lists the programs and activities offered at Beth El. In order of appearance from top to bottom, you can select:

- > Religious Services
- > Calendar of Events
- > Nursery School
- > Religious School
- > Youth Community
- > Summer Camp
- > Limud (Adult Education)
- > College-Age Committee
- > Chesed Community
- > Israel Action
- > Library
- > Judaica Gift Shop
- > Retirees' Club
- > Seniors Program
- > Men's Club
- > Sisterhood
- > Museum
- > Catering
- > Online Donations
- > Comments/Feedback
- > Links
- > Site Map and Search

On the upper right side of many pages, such as the Welcome page or the pages listed above, a submenu lists several other options from which to pick.

**SILVER**

100-250

Submitted by Adam Sowalsky

**TEMPLE REYIM**

Newton, MA

617-527-2410

Through the Temple Reyim Website, we aim to inform our members, potential members and the general community about our identity, vision, people and programs, and to increase the connection of our members to their Jewish lives. The website is designed and administered so as to be kept current, to be accessible and easily navigated, and to reinforce other means of communication with our members. Graphics enhance the presentation, and the site is unified by a site-wide style sheet.

The site is designed in layers, comprising: a public domain; a layer for members only; and a layer for administrators of the site. In the public domain, all viewers have access to regularly updated features: upcoming event

calendar, monthly bulletin, photo gallery, schedule of services and a weekly newsletter, which includes a link to the weekly MachshevotHa'Rav, a blog through which our Rabbi initiates discussion on current issues. Emergency information can be posted in a highlighted banner on the home page. Many other pages in the public domain bring information about the people and programs of our congregation and links to sites of connected organizations, including the USCJ. With username and password, members can reach additional information in the members' domain, which includes the membership directory, bulletin archives, a means to submit items for the weekly newsletter, and a member information update form. Access to the third layer, the administrative domain, is provided to the persons responsible for updates of the weekly newsletter, the event calendar, the photo gallery or emergency notices; this distribution of access greatly facilitates keeping the information current. A Webmaster provides overall maintenance, design modification and control of access to the various levels.

Our Webmaster monitors site usage, the number of users who have logged in and updated information, and the total number of visits. Interviews with new members and prospective members who call our office for information indicate that our message is being received.

**SILVER**

Over 900

Submitted by Russell Smith

**ADAS ISRAEL CONGREGATION**

Washington, DC

202-362-4433

Adas Israel's website is a dynamic and informative source for members, prospective members, and the community. It includes a breadth and depth of information that is intended to assist, inform, and welcome. From the history of Adas Israel and its clergy and lay leadership, to educational (adult and youth) programming, membership information, religious services, social action, and our auxiliaries, the website offers a window into many aspects of the synagogue and congregation. The website is updated several times a week by a single staff person, who receives information from various members of the staff, auxiliary groups, and lay members.

With easy to navigate menus and sub-menus, the website offers a user-friendly interface for both the first-time visitor and the repeat reader. In addition to general synagogue information about services, holidays, adult education, etc., the website provides various constituencies within the congregation an opportunity to share information, news and events. As such, there are pages dedicated to the Religious School; Nursery School; Sisterhood & Men's Club; Youth Department; Traditional Egalitarian Minyan; Ruach Minyan; Social Action Council; Young Professionals & Singles; and Gift Shop. Individuals (both staff and lay) are encouraged to submit materials for posting.

The ever-changing nature of the internet and the Adas Israel website enables us to vigorously pursue the ongoing project of improving and updating. Our website receives a daily average of 150 visitors and more than 2500 hits. The enclosed pages document the website in its current iteration (as of April 18, 2007).

**HONORABLE MENTION**

500-900

Submitted by Lauren Schur

**CONGREGATION OHAV SHALOM**

Albany, NY

518-489 4706

Congregation Ohav Shalom takes great pride in our website that not only represents Ohav but it also represents our Jewish community as a whole. As we do not pay a professional to do our website, we think it has a special simplicity and makes our congregants feel more at ease and comfortable with our warmth. We have an easy to navigate tool bar on the left side with a number of links that I will discuss in brevity. Our congregation website consists of a home page with upcoming events as well as our construction link for pictures and day by day information of our construction website link. Once you click on the construction link, it takes you to a week by week description of the construction as well as a day by day construction guide. This is a very progressive site that allows congregants and donors to look at the daily progress by numbers and pictures of our construction so they can justify just where their money is going. There is also a question and answer sheet on this page that consists of any and all of the questions congregants could possibly have on how the construction will affect them. The next link is called, about us, which contains our mission statement, as well as a congregational update. The next link is news, and this is a quick look into what we are really doing here at Ohav -- this page contains recent event pictures of Ohav staff and congregation. The following page consists of events and scheduling along with Minyan and all services times. Each event is current and has specifics such as: where, when, contact info and a brief explanation of the event. Our next link is location and has directions from all of the areas you

could possibly be coming from to Congregation Ohav Shalom. Our Hebrew School page contains all grades, teacher info as well as upcoming Talmud Torah events. This page also discusses USY and all of Ohav's youth information.

Our nursery school page consists of teachers, times and classes as well as class and school theologies. Our next page is very innovative and it changes every few months with the rabbi's sermon as well as some words from both of our rabbis. We have a links page that connects our congregant to Jewish websites in the area. Our last page is a contact us page that has our full staff with links of our emails on each name as well as comprehensive list of our board, executive and committee lay leaders.

Our website is updated by a lay leader and past president of the shul, Alan Dom. It has great readability, design and we always have great use of graphics. We are introducing a rabbi's blog that will be interactive and quite exciting for our shul. We use this website as a method of publicity for our events as it highlights our upcoming events and gives contact information to receive more information. Our staff and lay leaders are constantly sending information to our website lay leader to update their page of interest. We also use our construction page as a fundraising page for our capital campaign. This page shows how much everything costs and how much money we still need to raise. We hope that once our congregants see that the work is actually being done, it will propel them to make new or larger contributions.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

100-250

Submitted by Lynn Kaplan

**BETH HILLEL SYNAGOGUE**

Bloomfield, CT

860-242-5561

Most synagogues today have websites to help publicize both their congregations and their activities; however, they differ greatly in both design and content. Smaller congregations are not able to afford a "professionally" developed site and are dependent upon talented volunteers.

This is the case with Beth Hillel Synagogue in Bloomfield. We have a dedicated volunteer who develops, maintains, and often upgrades this website. It enables us to attractively present our synagogue and its activities to our membership, our local community and any who may be considering visiting/moving to the area.

People can send e-mail to any of the synagogue officers or ask questions. They can read news updates and see photographs of recent events. They can download forms and access the synagogue bulletin in an attractive and well-ordered manner. They remain current even when not attending services.

The use of the congregation website is one important way that Beth Hillel Synagogue maintains and improves contact with its membership.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

100-250

Submitted by Ronald Minor

**TEMPLE BETH-EL OF BELLMORE**

North Bellmore, NY

516-781-2650

The Temple Beth-El website greets visitors to the page with a picture of the front of the temple at the top of each page. Each page has information relating to that page on the upper left corner. A menu of available pages is located beneath the header of the home page. Of note on the home page is the calendar of upcoming events on the left hand side of the screen. Each event is listed and a link is available to retrieve more information on these events from the Events page. The home page also displays some basic information about Temple Beth-El, the officers on the board, and more. Our pages are edited as events are added to our calendar and our schedule of services is amended on a weekly basis by our webmaster, Avi Buchweitz, the son of one of our members. Avi is a computer wiz but is not a professional webmaster.

With the unfortunate passing of our Rabbi, a memorial page has been set up where members and others can submit writings, pictures and remembrances of the Rabbi. Temple Beth-El website also features an events page where members and others can find the most up to date information for all upcoming events, as well as contact information to participate. Other pages of note include the schedule page, where information for each Shabbat can be found, Youth page where information about our youth groups is displayed as well as upcoming activities and events.

Temple Beth-El's website is used by congregants to find all the latest up to date information on events, and schedules. The site also includes hyper-links to other organizations such as United Synagogue, UJA/Federation and sites that relate to special events highlighted in our schedule. Prospective members and outside individuals can see the vibrant community that is Temple Beth-El. [www.templebethel111710.org](http://www.templebethel111710.org)

**HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Judy Callahan

**PASADENA JEWISH TEMPLE AND CENTER**

Pasadena, CA

626-798-1161

Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center is very proud of its web site, which is completely edited by a lay member of our congregation (not in the web business) with input from our many committees. As you can see on the attached copy of our Home Page, we want the site to be representative of the many people, activities and involvement opportunities we offer. The site is updated weekly. Along with information about our own synagogue, we offer links to our Federation, our Bikkur Cholim Committee offers links to health information, and our Israel Action page offers links to news updates and organizations representing a broad political spectrum of ways to support Israel. We also offer the ability to read current sermons, contact key synagogue personnel (both professional and lay leaders), keep up with our USY activities and see what is happening at our religious school. Our latest technology is to offer pod casts of classes offered by our clergy.

Our site is a major tool in publicity and communication. As our members know it is kept up to date and provides instant access to information. It is supplemented by our monthly written bulletin, *The Flame*, which offers an alternative to our congregants who would not normally use the web. We have found, however, that more and more congregants are using the web as their first choice for information and even our congregants who prefer *The Flame* are beginning to check the web for updates.

We have not used the site for advertising as we find that keeping it informational draws people to it with the knowledge that they will not be sifting through ads. Its use as a fundraising tool is limited to the publicity for upcoming events and information about our Guardian and other giving opportunities. Again, we want this to be an informational and welcoming introduction to our synagogue. The attractiveness and ease of navigation of our site has already brought members to our synagogue and has brought existing congregants to become more actively involved in synagogue life.

A few of our site pages are attached, but to truly appreciate our site, we encourage you to go to [www.pjtc.net](http://www.pjtc.net) to see what we are all about.

**WORSHIP AND RITUAL**

**GOLD**

500-900

Submitted by Jonathan Lubliner

**JACKSONVILLE JEWISH CENTER**

Jacksonville, FL

904-292-1000

*Tiyul To Shul* is an inter-generational program designed to encourage *Shabbat* observance by fostering a palpable sense of community and vice versa. In the spirit of the Compact of Conservative Jewish Commitment, *Tiyul To Shul* matches the contemporary hunger for meaningful community with *Shabbat's* inherent spiritual potential to create collective belonging. Specifically, this program invites worshippers to leave their cars – whether at home or at designated “Park-and-Walk” areas – and walk leisurely to *Shabbat* services together with others. The synagogue serves as matchmaker, putting together groups of mixed individuals walking from the various locales and leaving at different times. In addition, a number of religious and day school classes and our USYers walk within their own respective groups. Our local synagogue-affiliated Boy Scout troop assists physically challenged participants.

*Tiyul To Shul* is a high impact, low cost program easy to implement in congregations of any size. At the Jacksonville Jewish Center, participation in our annual *Tiyul To Shul* attracts more than 80 worshippers on average, with a peak year of 120 participants. Most important, each year a handful of families find the experience of walking to services on *Shabbat* sufficiently compelling to integrate it into their own regular observance.

The success of *Tiyul To Shul* is attributable in part to its enjoyable character and the spirited manner in which the program is advertised in the weeks leading up to the event. Yet *Tiyul To Shul* also works because it bypasses the question of whether or not it is religiously permissible to drive to services – indeed, the very existence of designated “Park-and-Walk” areas acknowledges the ubiquitous reality of auto travel in suburban life. Instead, in the spirit of New Urbanism, which seeks to design neighborhoods in which cars are peripheral and walking is primary, *Tiyul To Shul* reflects the latest trend in urban planning – even as it harkens back to an ancient truth about the symbiosis between *Shabbat* and community.

**GOLD**

Over 900

Submitted by Michael L. Simmons

**CONGREGATION HAR SHALOM**

Potomac, MD

301-299-7087

The end of Kaddish ceremony at Congregation Har Shalom, as developed by Paula Jacobs, is recited immediately following the mourner’s last Kaddish at the Minha service (in the chapel). Following the service, the mourner provides dinner, a *se’udat mitzvah*, for those attending services. Following the *se’udat mitzvah*, the Ma’ariv service is held in the synagogue’s chapel.

The enhancement of the end of Kaddish ceremony as developed by Paula Jacobs, with a *se’udat mitzvah*, has enriched the observance this ceremony. It has become standard practice for all mourners observing 11 months of Kaddish at Congregation Har Shalom to participate in the end of Kaddish ceremony and sponsor the *se’udat mitzvah*.

It is hoped that the use of Paula Jacobs’ end of Kaddish ceremony at the Minha service, followed by a *se’udat mitzvah*, will be adopted by other USCJ member congregations and that the sincere meaningfulness of the ceremony and *se’udat mitzvah* will be shared in other congregations.

**SILVER**

Over 900

Submitted by Ali Schlamowitz

**NORTH SUBURBAN SYNAGOGUE BETH EL**

Highland Park, IL

847-432-8900

Here at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El we have instituted a new monthly Shabbat *minyan*, the Teen Minyan. A Teen Minyan Committee, led by the USY Religion/Education Vice President, was formed to organize the *minyan* and assess its goals and target groups. This committee developed a mission statement shown below:

In order to encourage increased religious participation, we, the Teen Minyan Committee, will establish a consistent and separate *minyan* at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El devoted solely to teenagers. This alternative *minyan* will seek to create a meaningful Shabbat experience in new and innovative ways.

A ritual subcommittee was also formed to discuss various *halachic* issues, including whether or not to make this *minyan* fully egalitarian, to read the triennial cycle or full *kriyah*, etc. After discussion with our clergy, it was agreed that this *minyan* would be fully egalitarian and would read triennial cycle. The regular Teen Minyan Committee currently boasts 13 members who meet on a monthly basis to review their system of assigning parts of the service as well as the goals and visions of the Teen Minyan and whether or not they are being met.

We had our first Teen Minyan on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2004 with 42 attendees... a complete success. Since then the Teen Minyan has been running for three years, with 10 Shabbat *minyanim* a year. These services will vary to provide our Youth exposure to all facets of Shabbat Services. We have Shabbat Shacharit *minyans* with lunches afterwards, or Mincha/Ma’ariv/Havdalah. These late services will often lead into the Saturday night USY program. Additionally, Teen Minyan has begun to branch out, and has had special programming including leading the congregation’s Tashlich service, having their own Sukkah walk, and running a full Shabbaton.

**SILVER**

500-900

**TEMPLE EMUNAH**

Lexington, MA

Submitted by Joshua Furman

781-861-0303

In an effort to increase Shabbat participation among our youth at Temple Emunah, we introduced two Shabbat-focused programming initiatives in the fall of 2005. Aimed at our 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade population, these two programs synthesize both formal and information educational approaches. They have dramatically revitalized the Shabbat experience for our *pre-bar* and *bat mitzvah* students, one of our most important constituencies in the effort to assure Jewish continuity.

We added Torah trope to our *kitah daled* (4<sup>th</sup> grade) religious school curriculum, training our 4<sup>th</sup> graders to read Torah at a Junior Congregation service at the end of the year. We have found that our students are empowered by learning to read Torah on Shabbat, and many of them have continued to do so as 5<sup>th</sup> graders this year. We also created a new Shabbat afternoon informal program, called K.N.I.S.H. (Kadima Noar Interactive Shabbat Hang-out), which features a special “kids-only” Kiddush lunch, Shabbat songs and games. Thanks to these two programs, our Shabbat attendance numbers have increased significantly, and there is a great deal of energy and excitement among our students and their parents at the prospect of spending Shabbat at Temple Emunah.

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Mark Bloom

**TEMPLE BETH ABRAHAM**

Oakland, CA

510-832-0936

It is our belief at Temple Beth Abraham that when it comes to worship, even in the context of the Conservative movement, one size doesn't fit all. As a result, we have created a variety of different approaches to *Shabbat* prayer to touch that variety of people in our congregation and community. These include traditional *Shabbat* services, Rock and Roll *Shabbat*, *Shabbat* Unplugged, *Raza d'Shabbat* (a *Kabbalah*-based service), the Pardon the Interruption Learner's Service, Share-a-*Shabbat*, *Tot Shabbat* and *Shabbat Mishpacha*. Each of these services touches a different segment of our community, and we are extremely proud of how our variety has spiritually touched so many lives.

We are proud to be a part of S.T.A.R.'s “Synaplex” program, where this variety is emphasized, but we were doing this before we were affiliated with the program in any way. Perhaps what is most impressive about this is that all this happens at a synagogue of less than 400 families.

Our basis is, of course, the traditional Saturday morning service and our *heimish Kabbalat Shabbat* service. These are well attended and feature a great deal of congregational singing, with musical accompaniment on Friday nights. All services are egalitarian and intergenerational. What follows is a plethora of different kinds of creative services that touch the traditional and the innovative, the young, young-at-heart and everything in between.

**SILVER**

Over 900

Submitted by Joshua Perlmutter

**HAR ZION TEMPLE**

Penn Valley, PA

610-667-5000

“Dear God, this is a special place. It is special because I'm here, because other Jews are here, because You are here. I'm here to pray to You with this congregation. So please help me to say and sing the words as if they were mine.”

Har Zion Temple is a special synagogue and the Thursday Morning Minyan is the pride of HZT, the member congregants, the clergy and the community in general.

Har Zion Temple has transformed a routine Monday/Thursday week-of-the-B/BM *aliyah* to the Torah into an extraordinary experience.

Beginning as much as a year prior to the *bar/bar mitzvah*, and for some teens extending for years after the *bar/bat mitzvah*, our teens are taught the value of finding community through prayer by participation in the Thursday Morning Minyan.

Cajoled, encouraged and prodded by the clergy, dozens of *B'nai Mitzvah* show up each Thursday morning to both lead and join in worship with the adult members of the *Kahal*. Each week, the *vatikim* (post *B'nai Mitzvah*)

welcome their peers into the “fold” as they hold a *tallit* over their heads singing “*Siman Tov.*” It’s the one morning of the week when donuts are sure to follow davening.

**SILVER**

250-500

Submitted by Rhonda Fatt

**TEMPLE BETH TORAH**

Tamarac, FL

954-721-7660

Our goal as a synagogue is to bring Jews into the building on *Shabbat*, both for services and other programs. As a synagogue we are traditional egalitarian, running very traditional worship services on Friday evening, Saturday morning, and Saturday afternoon. We are well aware that not every Jew is attracted to these services. That is why we have introduced a variety of activities allowing participation not only during services, but also before and after worship.

On Friday nights we have introduced a number of activities before, during and after the service. These include special programs such as *Pet Shabbat*, *Klezmer Shabbat*, *Tot-Shabbat* before services, more singing and guitar accompaniment during a more informal service, class services, weekly family style *Shabbat* dinners, and a monthly service conducted in Spanish.

On Saturday mornings we have also introduced various activities to increase participation. This includes a Torah reading corps to encourage lay people to read Torah (difficult since we read an entire portion), a monthly learner’s service, a monthly Torah discussion, *Yoga Shabbat*, and various formats for lunch and learning after services. We also have a weekly *mincha*, *shalasheudas*, *maariv*, *havdalah*, with special *havdalah* happenings several times a year. All of these programs have succeeded in bringing more Jews into the synagogue on *Shabbat*.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Over 900

Submitted by Rabbi Sidney Solomon

**TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM**

Roslyn Heights, NY

516 621 2288

For the last twelve years we have developed a very extensive program to train lay Torah Readers for participation in all *Shabbat* and festival services. The program involves people of all ages and all levels of ability.

The program fosters active involvement in the service by encouraging people to read Torah in conjunction with life cycle events, i.e., in celebration of special birthdays or anniversaries, for an *ufruf*, and other significant occasions. In addition to the *Bar* and *Bat Mitzvah* students who frequently read two and three *aliyot*, siblings, parents, grandparents, cousins, other relatives and close family friends frequently read. *Balebatim* are also invited to read Torah in observance of Sisterhood *Shabbat*, Men’s Club *Shabbat*, Solomon Schechter *Shabbat* and Ramah *Shabbat*. Our Ritual Director initiated, developed and administers the program. He recruits and trains the readers and provides them with tapes and Xerox copies of the portions and more recently, with CD’s, for people who prefer this format.

The program has had many beneficial results. One result is that for over a decade, throughout the year, virtually all of the Torah reading on *Shabbat*, the High Holy Days and the pilgrimage festivals, as well as the Purim Megillah reading have been done by teen-agers and adults of all ages. Ongoing follow-up outreach to participants has generated strengthened ties to *Shabbat* and festival observance and to increased synagogue attendance, not only by the individuals who read, but also by other family members. The program has added even more vitality to, and further enhanced, our already-inspiring services. There has been a marked intensification of Torah study, a renewed sense of religious enthusiasm and increased awareness of Torah as the heritage of the people of Israel.

**HONORABLE MENTION**

100-250

Submitted by David I. Zucker

**NORTHERN HILLS SYNAGOGUE B’NAI AVRAHAM**

Cincinnati, OH

513-934-6038

Increasing attendance at Friday night services, involving newer members, looking for ways to demonstrate to the larger community who we are, participating in the Synaplex project, energizing *Shabbat* morning services – these were some of the reasons members at Northern Hills Synagogue – Congregation B’nai Avraham came together to generate a new approach to *Shabbat* services.

Focusing on our core values of being a warm, inviting and accessible congregation we wanted to find ways to involve many of the concepts described above. Meeting initially as a subgroup from the WARM WELCOME/ACCESS Committee, a focused group charged with finding ways to recruit and retain members, the “Warm Committee” members soon focused on *Shabbat* services, both Friday night and *Shabbat* morning.

Several strands of thought soon surfaced. We had originally been having Friday night dinners several times a year. Attendance at Friday night services held in conjunction with Friday night dinners was significantly greater than at services held without Friday night dinners. Friday night dinners were seen as a good vehicle to attract and involve members. A small but key group of congregants attended the Great Lakes and Rivers Fall United Synagogue *Shabbaton* in Cleveland (October 27-28, 2006) where the focus was on Friday night liturgy. A small but strategic group of members attended the conference. The *niggunim* (tunes) learned at the conference were incorporated into our Friday night services. We decided to enhance the Friday night service by writing a complete transliteration of the Friday night services. We also make the availability of wine purchase part of our dinner. A small cadre, an expanding group of service leaders soon learned the tunes. The special tunes that made our *Chavurat Shabbat* Friday night services full of song were quickly incorporated into our weekly *Shabbat* services. In addition we learned that we could create a similar Friday night experience by providing appetizers, wine, and snacks in our lobby before services. This allowed our members to meet, greet and slow down to better enjoy *Shabbat*.

At the same time we had been looking at ways to energize *Shabbat* morning services. We quickly recognized that providing *Shabbat* lunches to everyone would likely attract more people. A donor who wanted to sponsor at least one *Shabbat* lunch a month came forward. Our *Shabbat* morning service could have an hour window to provide time for specialized programming if we started services at 9:00 AM and arranged services so that we would have a large block of time after the Torah reading and before *Musaf*. We would use this teaching for creative programs. We developed a structure of three choices for congregants and one specific program for younger children. We have had two *Shabbat* morning programs. The first focused on prayer. We had sessions on the choreography of the service, different models of prayer, a Talmud lesson, and the game “Jewopoly” for younger children. The second *Shabbat* focused on *Tu Bishvat* and Israel. Our special sessions included a *Tu Bishvat* sing-along, a program for children using a floor-sized map called “A Tree Grows in Israel,” text study of “The Torah of Trees” and a special program making “Fruit Faces” led by *Chaverot* from Israel” (two Israeli young adults who were in our community for the year).

#### **HONORABLE MENTION**

250-500

Submitted by Linda Eisenger

#### **CONGREGATION BETH EMETH**

Herndon, VA

703-860-4515

#### **Introduction**

Congregation Beth Emeth, a 450-member congregation in the northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C., relies on a cadre of lay leaders to lead services, chant Torah and *haftorah*, and serve as *bimah gabbai'im* during the Torah service.

Several years ago, we realized that our *bimah gabbai'im* (most of who did not grow up in traditional congregations) understood most of the basics of “running” the Torah service, but did not understand all the nuances of serving as *bimah gabbai* – for example, calling a woman Kohen, or a Levi when a Kohen wasn’t present, or a couple when the woman was a Levi (not her husband), when to chant the *Hatzi Kaddish* during a “triple header” (when we chant from three Torah scrolls), or how much help to give the *hagbah* when he or she is lifting the scroll.

To train our *bimah gabbai'im* to understand the fine points of officiating at the Torah service, a lay leader, David Cerny, consulting with our rabbi and using other Conservative sources, created an ambitious Gabbai Playbook (attached) and crafted hands-on gabbai training sessions for skilled Torah readers and service regulars to ensure that our Torah service runs smoothly and according to *halacha*.

We are a young congregation (we were founded in 1979) and we have many young families. In calendar year 2007, we will celebrate about 50 *b'nai mitzvah*. We regularly have many visitors for family celebrations who have *bimah* honors during the Torah service. Many are not familiar with our synagogue practices and require significant on-the-spot training before they ascend the *bimah* for a Torah honor.

We also have a cadre of dedicated super *gabbai'im*, our floor leaders, who patiently greet honorees and guide them through the Torah service. This same group also selects honorees during regular *Shabbat* or festival services.

We realized that they need the same understanding of the choreography of the Torah service as the *bimah gabbai'im*; David created a special training document for them, the *Super Gabbai Playbook* (also attached), which includes detailed instructions about managing and distributing honors on both “regular” and “special” days.

### **Gabbai Playbook**

*The Gabbai Playbook* is designed to help individuals serve as *gabbai'im* during a Torah service at Congregation Beth Emeth. The handbook addresses Torah services held on *Shabbat* (morning and *minha*), festivals, *Rosh Hashannah*, *Yom Kippur* (morning and afternoon), *Chanukah*, and weekdays.

The handbook includes a basic primer about the Torah service itself (number of *aliyot* on various days, who may and may not have which *aliyah*, the order of preference of *aliyot*, and when we need to ask the rabbi!). Some of the information (logistical preparations and how we open our ark, for example) are somewhat specific to our congregation. However, the detailed description of calling people to the Torah (and the default if a Kohen or Levi is not present), the variations on special occasions (when we read from more than one scroll, for example), special responsibilities on certain *Yom Tovim* (such as *Simchat Torah*), apply to all services in all congregations.

The level of detail is extraordinary and gives inexperienced *gabbai'im* the tools to become more confident on the *bimah*. This detailed handbook provides comprehensive training for lay involvement as important leaders during the Torah service.

### **Training**

David has refined the Playbook in the few years we have used it and continues to identify and train new *gabbai'im* to add to our pool of “experts.” We’re delighted that not only adults, but also our USYers have taken *gabbai* training classes and regularly serve as *bimah gabbai'im*.

The Playbook serves as reference material to help *bimah gabbai'im* become more confident about their role during the Torah service. In addition, David runs comprehensive training sessions for new *gabbai'im* and refresher courses for our *gabbai'im* core. Every person who wants to serve as a *gabbai* at Congregation Beth Emeth is required to attend *gabbai* training, which uses the Playbook as its class text. The minimum two-hour training sessions require the trainees to take roles as *gabbai'im* on the *bimah* and test their skills. Over the past few years, David has trained 22 *bimah gabbai'im*, who now participate regularly in running Beth Emeth Torah services. One of David’s many roles as a volunteer in the congregation is to assign *gabbai'im* for all Torah services. This allows him to pair an experienced *gabbai* with a trainee until the trainee becomes more confident. It works! Former “trainees” now have the experience to work with newer *gabbai'im*.

### **Regular Follow-Up**

David also communicates regularly with *gabbai'im* in person and by e-mail to encourage them, compliment them, and help them continue to hone their *bimah* skills. Sometimes, he sends a gentle reminder if he observes a consistent problem on the *bimah* during the Torah service. He also sends humorous quizzes that pose potential *bimah* issues and require *gabbai'im* to resolve them. In April 2007, David started a monthly e-mail – *Gabbai Tip* – that brings topics of interest to the *gabbai'im* and provides a forum for sharing ideas.

### **Super Gabbai Playbook**

At Congregation Beth Emeth, the primary responsibility of the super *gabbai* is to be the service floor leader or stage manager for each Torah service. This can be a daunting task, considering the number of *b'nai mitzvah* services we have annually and the number of non-member visitors who attend these services and receive Torah honors. To be an effective stage manager, the super *gabbai* must be thoroughly familiar with the ritual and choreography of the Torah service as well as understand who may or may not receive a Torah service honor.

*The Super Gabbai Playbook* includes some of the material from the *Gabbai Playbook*, but describes in greater details how honors should be assigned according to *halacha* and the exceptions we have carved out for special situations in our congregation. This handbook also includes basic information about the holidays and special *Tiyul To Shul* for special occasions.

The Playbook provides detailed information and enables additional lay involvement in running the Torah services.

These two documents, The Gabbai Playbook and The Super Gabbai Playbook, are formidable tools in encouraging and developing proficient lay participation in all Torah services at Congregation Beth Emeth.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
250-500  
Submitted by Sandee Galfond

**TEMPLE BETH AM**  
Margate, FL  
954 968 4545

One of the jewels of Temple Beth Am is our Happy Minyan Service on Friday nights. This service is totally participatory, informal, and lots of fun.

With the publication of the new CD, we hoped to equip every member of the congregation, regardless of musical talent, and/or Hebrew skills, to be able to feel comfortable at the service. We encouraged them to listen to the CD at home or in the car, allow the music to enter their ears, mind, body, and eventually their soul. Then we invited them to attend services, where they would be able to sing loudly, clearly and passionately with many of their fellow congregants. We watched them experience the joy of participatory worship, where with the Hebrew prayer book or the transliteration that we provide, they were able to be totally comfortable and join in our service.

The following message was enclosed with the CD:

The Rabbis teach us, "Worship the Lord in Joy." This is your key! Enjoy the CD, and join us every Friday night at the Youth Center at 6:10 P.M.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
100-250  
Submitted by Dr. Marilyn Wind

**KOL SHALOM**  
North Bethesda, MD  
301-493-8198

At Kol Shalom, ritual is a primary method to build a learning community of faith. The *Divrei Torah* and *Divrei Tefillah* given by both the Rabbi and congregants highlight the meaning of the prayers while encouraging congregants to relate the *tefillah* to their personal "story"; this personalizes the prayer for the speaker and builds a learning community by enabling congregants to know each other on a deeper, spiritual level. There is a true commitment on the part of congregants to ascend steadily the ladder of ritual observance and knowledge. Kol Shalom fosters ascending through classes, both formal and informal, and by actively encouraging congregants to learn new skills for the purpose of participating more fully, including serving as *shlichei tzibbur*, chanting Torah and Haftarah, and giving *Divrei Torah* and *Divrei Tefillah*. Study opportunities have grown in the past year to include a cybertorah class.

The inclusion of our young children and teens as an integral part of the service indicates to them that they are important members of our community and encourages them to attend services. Children are encouraged to learn and lead *Ashrei* and *Shir HaKavod*. When they have led *Ashrei* five times, they get a trophy. When they have led *Shir HaKavod* three times, they receive a *kippah* indicating their accomplishment. The pre-*B'nai Mitzvah* children are also asked to lead the *Kiddush* and *Motzi*. Both Pre- and Post- *B'nai Mitzvah* regularly lead the prayer for Israel in Hebrew. The very young children come up as a group to "lead" the congregation in *Eyn Kelohenu* and *Aleinu*. Many of them have already mastered these prayers. Our teens from our inception have served as *shlichei tzibbur*, read Torah, chanted Haftarah, served as *gabbaim*, given *Divrei Torah*, and blown *shofar* for us.

The uniqueness of Kol Shalom lies in the unusual blending of professional and lay talent. The Rabbi serves as an important resource, coach and teacher but his goal as well as the goal of the congregation is to empower the average layperson to be able to organize, plan, and conduct him or herself in all elements of a synagogue's prayer service. At the same time, the freshness of insight and perspective offers an unexpected element each week to help offset the sameness of the liturgy.

The results speak for themselves. Attendance at weekly Kol Shalom services is typically over 50 percent of the congregation with no *bar/bat mitzvah*. Torah readers and speakers for *Divrei Torah/Tefillah* have included over 20

congregants who had never previously participated in a worship leadership position, and have since gone on to participate regularly. Children look forward to attendance and their comfort level is evident to all.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
250-500  
Submitted Rob and Carie Cole

**CONGREGATION BETH EL**  
Norwalk, CT  
203-838-2719

From candle lighting on Friday night to *Havdalah*, throughout the year, Congregation Beth El observes *Shabbat* as a community. Not simply the do's and don'ts, not simply the prayers and Torah readings, but *Shabbat* in its entirety. For everyone of all ages every time of day and all year-round, *Shabbat* is the centerpiece of synagogue life at Congregation Beth El.

Rabbi Fish of Congregation Beth El, Norwalk, Connecticut, encourages people to observe *Shabbat* in all of its facets. He does this not only by facilitating a relaxed, warm friendly environment in the synagogue, but also by building a dynamic series of *Shabbat* dinners, by creatively using the synagogue's proximity to the beach and by extending an open invitation for people to join him and his family in their home *Shabbat* afternoons in the summer. People are not invited to the Rabbi's home in order to participate in *Minchah*, *Ma'ariv* or the Mourner's *Kaddish* (although these are part of the afternoon and evening), but rather for "*Shabbat* Basketball." The relaxed and informal atmosphere encourages those who would not normally keep *Shabbat* to come and spend *Shabbat* afternoon with their community, to experience the rest of the Sabbath.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
250-500  
Submitted by Alan Jay

**JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF PARAMUS**  
Paramus, NJ  
201-262-7691

#### Transliterated Siddur

Our congregation has long used the Silverman *Siddur* and is satisfied with its traditional Hebrew text, though much less so with its dated English translation. We have also sought to make our services as inclusive and participatory as possible for those with insufficient reading skills to actively participate in the Hebrew prayers. Unable to find a suitable *Siddur* to replace the Silverman, we have produced a companion Jewish Community Center of Paramus *Siddur LeShabbat* which is based on the Friday Night and Saturday Morning prayer books of the Jewish Publication Society.

#### Persian Shabbat

Our annual "Persian Shabbat" was instituted in 2005. We have a small but active group of Persian congregants who worship with us regularly, and a smaller group of families of Iraqi and Moroccan heritage. We schedule one special Shabbat morning around the holiday of Purim, dedicated to the religious and culinary culture of that community. We draw upon as many of their younger and older members as possible to conduct the entire prayer services and Torah reading in the Persian/Mizrahi style, including the use of a Sephardic *Sefer Torah* borrowed from another congregation, and the ritual of the Blessing of the *Kohanim (duchenen)*, which is performed only on this annual occasion.

#### Conservatively Speaking – E-mail Advisories

Recognizing that much of our congregation is undereducated with regards of Laws and Customs associated with The Conservative Movement, the co-chair of our Religious Affairs Committee launches a column in our monthly JCCP bulletin: its express purpose is to teach basic elements consistent with Conservative Observance. Consistent with the premise behind *Conservatively Speaking*, our congregants seemed unaware of many minor holidays, and therefore could not observe them. To this end, we began sending e-mail notifications of all minor holidays, minus fast days and Rosh Chodesh, thereby enabling our congregants to choose to fulfill the *mitzvot* associated with greater observance.

**HONORABLE MENTION**  
250-500  
Submitted by Stephen Paul

**B'NAI SHALOM**  
West Orange, NJ  
979-731-0160

#### Summary of the Program

Once a month, our congregation has a congregant led *minyan* in the chapel in addition to the regular led *minyan*. The entire service is led by the congregants including Torah reading and a *d'var Torah*. The program is organized by a congregant who finds members of the lay congregation to do each part of the service.

What makes this program unique

This program was started at the request of some of the congregants who are able to lead a service and wanted to have a low key service. Our congregation is fortunate to have a lot of members who are able to lead a service and this program was designed for them to take an active part in a service.

Over the years we have offered courses in davening and leading services. We have a Torah Reading Academy, which is open to everyone. Trope is taught and we train both adults and teenagers to read Torah.

How many people involved in the program

This *minyan* gets between 70-80 participants a month.

How does the program affect membership

This program has kept many of our members involved in the synagogue and has increased participation in the synagogue. Allowing this group to have a place to lead the service has kept them active members in our congregation. This program has also allowed their children a place where they can lead services.

