



**United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
presents
the 2011 winners
of the Solomon Schechter Awards
for excellence in synagogue programming**

Award information is presented alphabetically by category; within each category, winners are listed in Gold, Silver, Bronze order, with each award level presented in size order.

Adult Education - Gold Award

Journeys

Congregation Beth Shalom; Clearwater, FL

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Rabbi Danielle Upbin;** rabbidani@verizon.net

The adult education committee of Congregation Beth Shalom decided to explore in detail, the cultures of Sephardic, Italian and & Ashkenazic Jewry in a non-traditional manner. This was to be done interactively using the mediums of poetry literature, music, dance, food and costumes appropriate to the periods. An intensive study of the relevant subjects was undertaken to give as realistic a portrayal as possible. The event served as a fun/fundraiser for the congregational adult education fund.

On Oct. 30, 2010 we had our second Adult Education Evening Out program at the home of a congregant who again spearheaded the catering of the event. It was called "Carnivale" and was based on the custom of having a party called the "Veglia Vigil", which took place on the night before a Brit Milah to protect the infant from demons. Guests were encouraged to bring gifts to the "baby" that would then be donated to a local children's organization. The house was decorated with pictures of Italian Jewish art, including amulets outside the "baby's" room. The program had representations of Italian Jewish art and culture for the guests to take home. A Kosher pareve/dairy Italian Jewish meal was served and Italian wine & spirits were available. A congregant played the role of the host, R. Leon Modena, giving explanations of the current event and other period activities. A Harpsichordist was brought in to play a set of period music and to provide an introduction to the rare instrument. An opera singer sang songs composed in the early 17th century (a time of strong cultural interaction in Venice). Both were in authentic costumes. A selection of Italian dances were then performed by several congregants to recorded music by the Italian Jewish composer, Salamone Rossi. A Hebrew poem by Immanuel of Rome (popular after a recent printing of the medieval poet's collection) was recited by one of the members. An Italian poem by Sara Copia Sullam who had an interdenominational salon in the Ghetto of Venice was recited by another guest who is fluent in Italian. A kabbalistic drash was given as was common for these occasions. Card games and a riddle contest were also enjoyed by the guests as in the authentic Veglia. 85 people attended, many in period costumes. Each individual had a name tag from an actual person who lived in Italy during the Renaissance or Baroque eras.

Adult Education - Gold Award

Community of Writers Program

Congregation Agudat Achim; Schenectady, NY

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Mery Gross;** cherubino12309@yahoo.com

Congregation Agudat Achim spearheaded an innovative program in New York's Capital District on March 14, 2010. For the first time in the history of the community, a group of Jewish writers read their prose and poetry at a free Community of Jewish Writers event. Ten well-known and emerging writers from Upstate New York shared their work in a unique opportunity to hear a blend of Jewish themes in their own voice.

The two-hour program, organized by Congregation Agudat Achim's Adult Education Committee in collaboration with local poet Leslie Neustadt, was moderated by poetry editor for the Mid-Hudson Valley magazine "Chronogram" (www.chronogram.com) and featured Congregation Agudat Achim's poet-in-residence Joanne Seltzer, well-known writer and WAMC radio commentator Paul Elisha, poets Leslie Neustadt, Ken Saltzmann, Terry Bat Sonya, Barbara Kaiser, Elaine Klein, Barbara Ungar, Joe Krausman and Edie Abrams.

This well attended program (close to 100 guests) was held on a Sunday afternoon with a book signing and dessert reception catered by Congregation Agudat Achim's As You Like It Kosher Catering. The importance of this event in the context of the Jewish community in the Capital District was recognized by The Jewish World, which featured a front-page article in March 2010, and requested that the program be videotaped for historical purposes. The Schenectady Daily Gazette also ran a story on the writers' event.

The success of last year's program allowed for its expansion into two venues this year--a 2011 kickoff featuring 11 writers at Congregation Agudat Achim in Schenectady on May 11, 2011, and a follow-up event on June 2 at Congregation Ohav Shalom, in Albany, also a Conservative, egalitarian congregation. The writers' event at Ohav Shalom featured, among other writers, the work of its own spiritual leader--Rabbi Dan Ornstein.

Adult Education - Gold Award

JBC Author Forum

B'nai Torah Congregation; Boca Raton, FL

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Cheri Kalvort**; Cheri.kalvort@bnai-torah.org

We are the people of the book, and thanks to the Jewish Book Council, we are delighted to be able to bring a selection of prominent and well-known authors to B'nai Torah. As voices for Judaism and Jewish issues, they ask important questions and convey critical truths. Through our membership in the JBC, we receive a wide variety of books reflecting the rich variety of Jewish experiences, and our library is then filled with a myriad of new titles.

B'nai Torah Congregation is one of only a handful of synagogues that belongs to the Jewish Book Council. Every year the Jewish Book Council prepared a book for the Jewish Book Network "Meet the Authors" program profiling the almost 200 authors who are participating in the program and are available for touring. The committee along with the professional staff comes up with their recommendations for a wide variety of authors that appeal to our multi-generational congregation and to the public alike.

Our Author Forum season normally runs from after the Jewish holidays through early spring. After each lecture, everyone is given the opportunity to question the author. A reception follows each event. The author proceeds to a signing table where her/his book can be purchased and autographed giving the audience member another opportunity to engage the author in a more personal dialogue. These unique events have been very successful and every year we have seen the audiences grow.

Adult Education - Gold Award

Continuing Education Committee Programming

North Suburban Synagogue Beth El; Highland Park, IL

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Richard Schlosberg**; rschlosberg144@comcast.net

Summary of Program: Serving about 1100 families, North Suburban Synagogue Beth El in Highland Park, Illinois has a long history of rich, innovative adult learning programming. We offer and support programs that include formal programming, informal programs and new initiatives, and programs designed to influence Jewish engagement of individuals. For this document we proudly underscore our new initiatives: a new partnership with Spertus Institute of Chicago to bring joint programs to the North Shore Chicago Jewish community, a

year long program from the Hartman Institute in Israel featuring video broadcasts and small learning groups at NSSBE delivery of United Synagogue's Mitzvah Initiative program, and a new recognition program for our adult learners.

The Continuing Education Committee (CEC) is the primary vehicle for the delivery of our adult learning programs. The education of the members of NSSBE has been and continues to be a high priority activity for the congregation. This is underscored by the fact that, despite the overall economic downturn, funding for The Gertrude Lederman Family Continuing Education Program (CE) has increased each of the past two years. Through our broad range of programming more than one thousand members find an opportunity to advance their Jewish learning every year. Our mission includes providing multiple entry points for those seeking to grow Jewishly ranging from those who are new to the activity with limited or no background to those who have been serious students with significant knowledge base built over many years of study. All of these programs are designed to increase the depth of engagement as well as the number of individuals involved, including scholars, Hebrew language, text studies, new initiatives, and partnering both within the synagogue through all departments and our auxiliaries and with outside organizations to further enhance Jewish learning opportunities for our members and greater community.

Adult Education - Gold Award

21st Century Job Search Seminars

The Park Synagogue; Pepper Pike, OH

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Ellen Petler**; epetler@parksyn.org>

Lay offs. Down-sizing. Unemployment. As a very large congregation, Park Synagogue has always had its share of members who are unemployed. But in the fall of 2009 and into 2010, unemployment in Cleveland hit an all time high. Many members were losing long time jobs and then finding it difficult to find new jobs. They were then forced to prioritize to whom they paid their bills, with their synagogue dues often near the bottom of the list. Ken Anthony, Park Synagogue's Executive Director, was receiving frequent calls from unemployed members who were upset about their financial situation and who were resigning from Park because they couldn't keep up with their bills. Ken offered these members reduced dues or no dues, as the case may be, and refused to accept anyone's resignation because they had lost their job.

Ken Anthony also spoke with Ellen Petler, Park's Membership and Program Director, about the crisis situation to see what she felt the synagogue could do to be helpful to these unemployed members. Several members also asked Ellen directly if there was some way that Park could try to help them find a job. Ellen took these questions to Park's Family Life Council, one of the congregation's standing committees that coordinates many of Park's groups and programs. This is the committee that also looks at problems that members may be experiencing and then comes up with a program or group to meet the needs of these members. Ultimately, the Family Life Council developed a five-part series on various topics about jobs seeking that was helpful to anyone looking for employment.

Adult Education - Gold Award

Adult Education Program

B'nai Israel Congregation; Rockville, MD

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Carol April** (capril@comcast.net) and **Ted Fredman** (hartedf@hotmail.com)

B'nai Israel Congregation is a community leader in the field of Adult Jewish Education, which we see as one of many entry portals for congregational involvement and the expansion of Jewish horizons. The varied courses and programs provide learners with a greater appreciation for the scope of Jewish history and thought and offer conceptual grounding in many key aspects of Judaism and Jewish life. As adult learners delve deeply into relevant topics and grapple with thought-provoking ideas, they are motivated to expand and deepen their commitment to a Jewish practice that incorporates the values of Jewish tradition, philosophy and theology.

Our annual Program Guide, which outlines programs for the entire year, dedicates about 1/3 of its 100+ pages to adult education programs. Updates are placed in the monthly congregational bulletin, e-midmonth publications, on our website, and on our flyers and posters throughout the building. Often – as with the “Keep Up With Your Kids” class for nursery school parents and our special series for healthcare and legal professionals – we target specific audiences that may not be as committed to adult education and send individual letters inviting them to participate in particular classes. These outreach efforts have proved quite successful in expanding our adult education audience.

Adult Education - Silver Award

The Rabbi's Circle at CSI

Congregation Sons of Israel; Briarcliff Manor, NY

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Rabbi Steven Kane**; rabcsi@aol.com

Started in 2006, the Rabbi's Circle at CSI was created to address the desire of the CSI community for expanded programs of serious, stimulating adult learning and increased philanthropy.

Through the financial support of many of our members, the Rabbi's Circle at CSI has been able to bring some of the finest speakers, academics and teachers in the Jewish community to Northern Westchester.

Members participate at two levels: Bonim (builders) commit to \$1,800 over a three year period and N'davim (supporters) commit to \$180 per year. While CSI has a long history of member support, this is the first program in our 120 history that is funded annually by a large group of members with the explicit goal of increasing participation in the greater community by providing top notch programming throughout the year.

Speaking events are always open to the public – our supporters make this possible. There are a few events each year that are open for Rabbi's Circle members only: our opening program, and three book discussions. The purpose, of course, is to thank supporters for their generosity. An added bonus is that the opening program features award-winning Israeli movies not seen in this community, and books that provide greater Jewish literacy among our regular participants.

Adult Education - Silver Award

Speaker Series

Tiferet Bet Israel; Blue Bell, PA

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Hilary Yohlin;** programdirector@tbibluebell.org

Tiferet Bet Israel hosted three outstanding and diverse guest lecturers to the community: Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, Rabbi Steven Greenberg, and Anne Heyman. This first annual Tiferet Bet Israel Speaker Series attempted to bring speakers who would introduce a new aspect of Jewish learning and or life to our congregation, inspire each individual congregant, and motivate participation in Shabbat programming and Mitzvah Mania. The word of mouth response received after each program was outstanding and indicated that these goals were achieved.

Rabbi Telushkin spoke on topics such as: "On Being A Good Person in a Complicated World," "Biblical Literacy: Ten Biblical Teachings That Can Change The Way You Live," and "Jewish Literacy: How To Become A Knowledgeable Jew." Rabbi Telushkin also met with Tiferet Bet Israel's youth and teens on Sunday morning. Over 700 people attended Rabbi Telushkin's lectures and programs. Each component of the weekend's programming was open to the public.

Rabbi Steven Greenberg, the first openly gay Orthodox rabbi in the United States and the author of the book Wrestling with God and Men, was brought to Tiferet Bet Israel by Tiferet Bet Israel's Inclusion Committee. This weekend featured a lecture on the subject of Rabbi Greenberg's personal journey, a lecture on the subject of Hachnasat Orchim, and a screening of the film V'Ahavta, followed by a Question and Answer session and book signing. Rabbi Greenberg also hosted discussions with rabbis from throughout the greater Philadelphia Jewish community, the Tiferet Bet Israel teen community, Tiferet Bet Israel Early Childhood teachers, and the Tiferet Bet Israel Religious School and Hebrew High School teachers. This weekend was co-sponsored by the Anti Defamation League, the YES! Coalition, ACAJE/JOP, and the Kehillah of Bux-Mont.

Anne Heyman, the founder of Agahozo Shalom Youth Village in Rwanda, was Tiferet Bet Israel's Mitzvah Mania keynote speaker. Ms. Heyman's moving lecture on the subject of philanthropy and volunteerism was delivered to members of the Tiferet Bet Israel congregation, both Jewish and non-Jewish members of the greater community, students of the Tiferet Bet Israel religious school, and Tiferet Bet Israel's teen community.

Each speaker's visit was highlighted by programs intended to educate the synagogue community about the arriving guest. Programs were run by staff, with assistance from volunteer committees. Staff was responsible for the oversight and implementation of every aspect of programming. With staff guidance, volunteers chose the speakers, envisioned programming for the speakers, assisted in fundraising, and aided in program organization.

Each program was publically advertised through community calendars. The Tiferet Bet Israel Marketing Committee worked tirelessly to generate media interest in each program and successfully received coverage in local newspapers, including Philadelphia's Jewish Exponent. Personal letters were also sent to local rabbis, cantors, educators, and synagogue directors. Internal public relations included email, phone, and text message notifications, articles in the Tiferet Bet Israel monthly newsletter, and advertisement in the synagogue's weekly e-update.

This lecture series was new programming in 2010-2011. We intend to repeat this series of lectures annually. Tiferet Bet Israel was fortunate that each program was fully underwritten with the exception of

some meals for which the synagogue charged an amount proportionate to the caterer's food charge per head.

Adult Education - Silver Award

Adult Shabbaton

Congregation Beth Yeshurun; Houston, TX

Size Category:900+

Contact: **David Rosen**; drosen@bethyeshurun.org

Fifteen years ago, Congregation Beth Yeshurun initiated what would become a series of congregational retreats and enjoyed great success with them. Over the years, however, these retreats have grown increasingly skewed to the younger families of the synagogue, especially those with children. In recent years, members of the congregation in their 50's and above have expressed an interest in having an "adults only" retreat where, free of children, adults might study, relax and enjoy a different kind of Shabbat experience.

In November 2010, we therefore initiated our "Adult Shabbaton: Eat Pray Learn." We pulled together a steering committee of approximately 20 members in their late 40's to 70's. Amazingly, every person we invited said yes. It was clear from the outset that the idea was going to be well-received.

The response to the adult Shabbaton was superb. We sold out all available space. After the Shabbaton, we surveyed participants and discovered a very high satisfaction rate.

Adult Education - Bronze Award

Adult Education Program

Sunrise Jewish Center; Sunrise, FL

Size Category:101-249

Contact: **Yaakov Thompson**; yaakout@aol.com

We are a senior congregation. We have found it increasingly difficult to have classes during the evening for our congregants. We needed to come up with a solution that would inform and educate our congregants in a way that would be accessible to them and the community. The short term goal was to bring lessons in Jewish topics to our congregants and to make these lessons available to the entire congregation. To address this challenge I decided to create regular op-ed pieces that would be public for all to read. In order to achieve this I contacted the South Florida Jewish Journal and created a regular by-circulation of 150,000 copies per week. These pieces reach the entire South Florida Jewish community and often serve as the jumping off point for a Shabbat discussion in shul.

I realized that this was a very effective way to reach Jewish readers and decided to expand the program. In June I created a blog (yaakovthompson.blogspot.com) to put this material on line. Since opening the blog in last June we have had over 1500 readers.

This has proven to be a very effective way to reach people and has not cost the congregation anything. All work is electronic for the blog and the printing is done by the paper. I have found that this has proven to be a perfect informal educational opportunity for our congregation. Many people who read the pieces debate my conclusions and add to the debate. For us this has been a very good way of reaching and engaging the general community.

Adult Education - Bronze Award

Glen Rock Jewish Center; Glen Rock, NJ

Contact: **Jane Spindel;** trehugr@aol.com

The overall goal of the Adult Education Committee is to provide diverse and colorful programs that make learning fun. Each year should include a balance of scholarly, musical, historical and political programs to expose our Congregation to all aspects of Jewish thought and culture. Some programs involve celebrities, while others are simply educational and/or participatory. Consideration is given to providing content that appeals to various age groups.

The scholarly programs include weekly bible study sessions, where the entire torah is being covered in small chunks each week. One student delivers a d'var Torah on the night's text, as a jumping off point for discussion. The class is taught by our Rabbi. The counterpoint to this is the monthly inter-faith bible study session, team- taught by our Rabbi and a local Lutheran minister, Pastor Spencer. This year's theme was life of Moses, with Christian and Jewish interpretations explored.. We also had an Adult B'nei Mitzvah class which met on a weekly basis with our Rabbi and members of the Ritual Committee, culminating in a group B'nei Mitzvah service in the Spring. Rounding out the religious-oriented programs was Yodea, a basic course in Judiasm 101, aimed at young families whose children were entering Hebrew School. Our Librarian runs a monthly book club where books of a Jewish theme are read and discussed.

The informal programs are generally single-session guest speakers, performers, or films. In "Five Rabbis—Four Questions", our rabbi, along with rabbis from four other local conservative temples, participated in a pre-Passover panel program, hosted at Temple Beth Sholom. We presented an expert on Jewish Genealogy research, a panel discussion with three Jewish/Mid-East reporters on anti-Israel bias in the media, a film on the age of celebrity cantors in New York City (along with a mini-concert by the star of the film), a trivia quiz on fact and fiction in Judaism, a program on hate speech by the Regional Director of the Anti-Defamation League, a multi-media presentation on terrorist groups in Israel by a former Lieutenant in the IDF, a Klezmer concert, and a film on Holocaust survivors vacationing in the Catskills, among other programs.

Adult Education - Bronze Award

Glen Rock Jewish Center; Glen Rock, NJ

Contact: **Jane Spindel;** trehugr@aol.com

The GRJC 50+ Club was in existence for over 20 years. As the years passed the group was getting older and decided to give up. Rabbi Neil Tow envisioned a new group, with the assistance of a core group of volunteers. The new group was established approx. a year ago starting off with a program, dinner and discussion on what the 50+ Club should be in the future.. We have offered membership which is open to the community. We now have 100 members. Not all members attend every event, but we try to satisfy as many as possible.

The variety of our events continue to reflect the scope of interests and enthusiams of our members. Some of the programs that we've had so far are:

In August we offered the community the screening of the award winning film, "The Counterfeiters", a story of the largest counterfeiting operation during the Holocaust. The screening was followed by a duscussion with Rabbi Neil Tow. In November, our group travelled to the Holocaust Museum and Study

Adult Education

Size Category:101-249

The Fifty-Plus Club

Size Category:101-249

Center" in Spring Valley, New York. We had a private tour, followed by dinner. During Chanukah we had a luncheon with the Moven On Group from the GRJC with a sing a long with Rabbi Tow. Rabbi Tow has invited the 50+ Club to all the functions that go on within the GRJC. We have seen the movie "Four Seasons Lodge" which we were included with the GRJC Men's Club. In March a group of us enjoyed a wonderful trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art where we were enlightened by a docent. Before Passover we had a luncheon with the Moven On Group of the GRJC with Rabbi Tow singing songs for Passover. A group of the 50+ Club enjoyed Shabbat at West Point with the Wayne Jewish War Veterans with dinner following. That was a great experience for all. During June we went to the "Grounds for Sculpture" in Hamilton. New Jersey.

Adult Education - Bronze Award

Congregation Beth Shalom; Atlanta, GA

Contact: **Loli Gross**; loli@bshalom.net

Adult Education is an integral part of Congregation Beth Shalom, as we strive to build a congregation of lifelong learners. Our lineup of Jewish learning opportunities is open to all adults in the community and includes a wide range of topics of Jewish interest. Ultimately we want students to be able to gain an appreciation for the depth of classical Jewish sources, and to explore their questions about Jewish thought, tradition and practice.

Our program includes a broad spectrum of formal courses ranging from Mishnah Yomit to Prayer Basics and Beginning Hebrew. Informal programs complement the formal classes by offering a wide variety of opportunities to study and discuss Jewish topics of interest. These informal programs are offered on Shabbat and Sunday mornings as well as other days/times to provide a flexible schedule of learning opportunities. Our newest initiative in Adult education (designed for those new to Judaism) offers basics in prayer, holidays and more, to help these "newish Jewish" students learn more about Judaism.

Adult Education - Bronze Award

Temple Sholom; Greenwich, CT

Contact: **Lori Baden**; lori.baden@templesholom.com

Adult education programs at Temple Sholom vary in content, type and frequency. In addition to classes specific to Judaism, we also offer education of a more secular nature that we think will a) bring people to Temple Sholom and b) that will reach a variety of demographic groups. Such classes include "How to Knit", "Mahjongg for Beginners", Cupcake Decorating" and a screening of "A Race to Nowhere".

Most of the emphasis on adult education at Temple Sholom comes in the form of both informal and formal classes that help our congregants and the greater Jewish community to connect to Judaism. Our short term goal is to get people to participate. Our long term goal is the same, but on a larger scale. We want to be able to grow our programs and interest more people, including those in the greater community.

Some of our formal adult education programs include beginning and advanced beginner Hebrew, designed to teach people to read Hebrew. The classes are based on the coursework produced by "Read Across America" from the National Jewish Outreach. These classes concentrate on teaching the Hebrew

Adult Education

Size Category:250-499

Adult Education

Size Category:500-899

alphabet and reading skills. The class originally came from congregants wanting to become more familiar with some of the Shabbat prayers. Other classes include "The Art of Prayer" which focuses more on the meaning behind the prayer and "Exploring the Passover Ritual from Biblical Times to the Present" in conjunction with the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Our best example of informal adult learning at Temple Sholom is Rabbi Mitch's "Lunch and Learn" taught weekly and has been a Temple Sholom tradition since 1995. The class focuses primarily on text from the weekly Torah portion, traditional rabbinic commentary and modern commentary. Occasionally guest teachers teach including other local rabbis to give a different perspective.

Most of the adult education that takes place at Temple Sholom is with the goal of influencing Jewish engagement. We teach so that people can understand the prayers better. We teach to encourage more people to hold Seders. We teach to encourage families to participate in Shabbat.

Our full time programming staff at Temple Sholom is constantly looking for other opportunities to teach engagement and to meet needs of our congregation.

Adult Education - Bronze Award

100 Jewish Men

Congregation Beth Yeshurun; Houston, TX

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Brian Strauss**; bstrauss@bethyeshurun.org

100 Jewish Men is a group of men dedicated to improving themselves and each other as men, fathers, husbands, brothers, sons, friends and Jews. Through controversial, thought-provoking speakers and small group discussions, we will explore what usually remains unspoken in men's lives at work and at home.

Bulletins - Gold Award

Shir Notes

Congregation Shir Ami; Woodland Hills, CA

Size Category:101-249

Contact: **Stanley Schroeder**; stan101@pacbell.net

Shir Notes is the monthly newsletter of Congregation Shir Ami in Woodland Hills CA, a congregation of roughly 100 families. We also send Shir Notes to an extended community. And it is linked on our website -- www.shirami.com. It is sent by e-mail containing links to the current issue and calendar residing on our website. We print a black and white edition that is sent by mail to those members who do not use e-mail.

Shir Notes regularly contains a column by our Rabbi, David Vorspan; a message from our President, Helga Unkeless; and monthly biography of a Jewish personality by Stan Schroeder, and articles by our congregants. We regularly include birthdays and anniversaries of congregants whose birthdays and anniversaries occur in the month of publication and donations to our congregation. We also have a column by our Social Action Vice President of the current and ongoing Social Action activities.

We feature articles about recent and upcoming congregation events and other activities our congregants are engaged in or may be of interest to them. There is some advertising and promotional material for our fundraising. We also append several flyers for our upcoming events.

Shir Notes and our monthly calendar are written, edited and published by Stan Schroeder, a member of our congregation who had a career in computer programming, but is not a professional in the publishing field. They are formatted using Microsoft Home Publishing on his home computer.

Bulletins - Gold Award

Midway Bulletin

Midway Jewish Center; Syosset, NY

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Cheryl Rosen**; crosen2@optonline.net

Have a story to tell? What better way to share it than the words (and photos) of a teenager just back from USY Israel Pilgrimage; a couple that toured Jewish sites in Cuba; a bar mitzvah boy thanking his brother.

That's the philosophy behind the Midway Bulletin, where we use first-person accounts and lots of photos to promote synagogue/United Synagogue/METNY/MidIsland Y/Israel/JTS events and to engage even our most un-engaged members. No matter what your level of interest in things Jewish, we're betting you can't resist looking at news and pictures by and of your children and friends – and hopefully while you are inside the pages of the Bulletin you will learn something, decide to attend something, or be motivated to contribute something to Midway or another Jewish cause. In the course of this year, we have printed articles and pictures by our members about our Midway programs and our nursery and Hebrew schools and also about USY Kallah, Israel Pilgrimage, the Carmel fire, METNY Convention, our new Member Open House (a blatant attempt to get them involved), Global Citizen Year Abroad, USY, and every bar and bat mitzvah child.

The Bulletin goes out every month. Concern about the cost of the month mailing did lead us to poll our congregation's interest – and we found that 95% wish to receive the Bulletin in paper form. Still, in an effort to hold down costs, this year we have tried to increase paid advertising through a joint promotion with our Dinner Dance Journal and by cutting the print size and page count of each issue. Like our members, we believe the Bulletin continues to prove its value as a promotional, outreach and educational tool – not to mention a fun read!

Bulletins - Gold Award

The Message

Congregation Beth Yeshurun; Houston, TX

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Lisa Unsell**; lunsell@bethyeshurun.org

"The Message" is Congregation Beth Yeshurun's monthly newsletter edited, designed and laid out by a synagogue employee who is not a professional in graphic design. It is primarily hard-copy, but in recent years we have posted the current and past issues on our website (www.bethyeshurun.org). It is mailed to our members, associate members and friends of the synagogue (approximately 2,300 households). It is also available for pick up in the office areas, at our welcome/visitors table each Shabbat, through our membership office and online. With an eye to being good stewards of our funds, "The Message" is printed in black and white, but it is designed in full color and is available in full color on the website.

In 2009, "The Message" was reformatted to be more inviting, organized and representative of Beth Yeshurun's activities and involvement in the Jewish Community at large. We have streamlined the information, added a list of contents to the front page and updated the layout to make it more

contemporary. We include a monthly calendar, various service schedules, and announcements of synagogue and Jewish community activities. We also include a "Family Album" section to highlight various S'machot and extend condolences. Our B'nai Mitzvah are pictured with a brief article on each. Our rabbis and also our hazzan compose articles for the front page which highlight a particular project, inform our readers of current issues and educate on our Jewish traditions and beliefs. "The Message" also includes items about the events in our synagogue's various clubs, groups, committees, Religious School and Day School. While articles and ads are primarily created by staff, some are submitted by our organization leaders.

The re-design has been, and continues to be, a work in progress. We continue to add, reformat and remove sections as needed in order to present an informative, educational and uplifting publication.

Bulletins - Gold Award

Scroll

Beth El of Montgomery County; Bethesda, MD

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Marsha Rehns; wramlr@gmail.com**

The Scroll (published monthly, except for a combined July/August issue) is produced by a committee of Beth El congregants, all of whom are professional editors or writers and volunteer their time. A paid professional designer designs and lays out the issue each month. The committee writes some of the articles but assigns most of them to congregants who are not professional writers. The committee selects and edits the submissions with the goal of making the bulletin readable and compelling. Every issue of the Scroll is also reproduced on the Beth El web site beginning several days before the start of the cover month.

Each issue, except for the July/August issue, has a theme with several articles devoted to it. The committee is proud of having published the voices of so many different congregants in support of the theme, with writers ranging from some of the oldest to some of the youngest congregants. The popularity of the Scroll has meant that, more and more, congregants are volunteering articles and ideas because of the uniqueness of stories included in the themes, many of them quite moving, and the diversity of voices.

The Scroll serves Congregation Beth El in four ways. It educates about Judaism and the Jewish community, informs about shul and community events, promotes congregational spirit, and assists in development. Among the regular features are reports from the synagogue board, auxiliaries, Youth Department and Religious School; clergy-written features called From the Clergy and Ask the Clergy; publicity for and reporting on synagogue events; Library Corner, devoted to books in the Beth El Library; contributions; and mazal tovs, condolences and bulletin board. Two important features are the monthly calendar insert and the lively 4U page, designed to expand the reach of the theme and other content to families with elementary and middle-school age children. Articles in the Scroll also support the congregation's annual theme, which was tikkun olam in 2009-2010 and Israel in 2010-2011.

Bulletins - Gold Award

The Bulletin

Congregation Agudas Israel; Saskatoon, SASK

Size Category: under 100

Contact: **Steven Goluboff**; sgoluboff@shaw.ca

The Bulletin is the official publication of Congregation Agudas Israel. It has just published Volume 21, Number 5. It is delivered to members and a select group on our mailing list six times per year. It is also posted to our website for access digitally in full color rather than color only on the first two and last two pages in the print version. The Bulletin is edited and designed by myself, the Editor-in-Chief, with the final preparation and printing done by a professional printing company.

The content reflects the religious, social and cultural nature of our small Jewish community. Regular columns are provided by the Editor, the Cantor, the President, the Israeli Young Shlichim, the Sisterhood President, the Youth Editor, and the United Jewish Appeal Regional Director of Community Services. An attempt is made to include items of interest from the United Synagogue such as the recent article by Rabbi Silverstein. A variety of solicited articles are regular parts of The Bulletin. A regular column, From Our Congregational Family, reflects the human interest part of the congregation. The Calendar page is prominently displayed on the back page chronically listing the many activities in the two month period of The Bulletin.

The Bulletin is almost totally funded by advertisements and page sponsorships, thus not taxing the limited financial resources of our small congregation.

Bulletins - Silver Award

Temple Beth Abraham Omer

Temple Beth Abraham; Oakland, CA

Size Category: 250-499

Contact: **Lori Rosenthal**; omer@tbaokland.org

Temple Beth Abraham's Omer is a printed newsletter that is mailed to congregants, Jewish community agencies, and other synagogues. It arrives in members' homes like clockwork the first week of each month. The newsletter is printed in black and white and also posted online on the TBA website in a color version. Both past and present copies are posted on the website.

We have four primary goals for the Omer: creating a beautiful, informative and content-rich monthly bulletin for congregants to read and feel connected to our shul; increasing the religious, cultural and Israel-centric knowledge of our congregation; creating a forum for members to get to know each other better outside of shul, and increasing the glue that adheres us to each other and to our community; and functioning as a development tool for the congregation, providing a monthly reminder of charitable giving opportunities.

Bulletins - Silver Award

The Voice

Temple Israel of Great Neck; Great Neck, NY

Size Category: 900+

Contact: **Marc Katz**; katzpr@aol.com

Temple Israel of Great Neck (NY) 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 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 23 issues per year. A spring edition of the newsletter is mailed to every member of the congregation. In addition, a color electronic version of the newsletter is e-mailed to congregants and is posted on the Temple website.

The newsletter seeks to cover congregational activities as a regular newspaper would, complete with photos, headlines and well-written and edited news-style stories and features. In addition to timely stories, each issue contains regular features.

“The Voice”, now in its 53rd 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.

Bulletins - Bronze Award

Bulletins

Temple Beth Torah - Tamarac Jewish Center; Tamarac, FL

Size Category: 250-499

Contact: **Amir Watynski**; amir@watt-media.com

Temple Beth Torah has three ongoing bulletins which serve as the primary communication outlets for disseminating information to our congregants:

- 1. Our monthly printed Scroll Newsletter, available as printed copy as well as a PDF version on our website*
- 2. Our weekly Shabbat bulletin, which is printed and distributed at weekly Shabbat morning services*
- 3. Our bi-weekly Chai-Lites e-mail, which is e-mailed to our entire membership.*

The Scroll Newsletter is the primary communication medium for Temple Beth Torah. This newsletter is a thorough publication which includes upcoming events, editorial material including: messages from our President, Executive Director and other professional staff, updates from committee chairs, articles about upcoming or past events, temple “happenings”, upcoming bar/bat mitzvahs, monthly yearzeits, advertisements and more.

Temple Beth Torah’s weekly Shabbat Bulletin is a 2-sided, 8.5 x 11 tri-folded marketing piece which is printed in-house and distributed weekly at Shabbat morning services. The Shabbat bulletin includes the Parshah, Maftir and Hafarah for both the full and triennial readings with page numbers. In addition, it includes a listing of Torah and Haftarah readers, the Rabbi’s weekly message, and information about daily services. It also highlights our upcoming special events, weekly birthdays and anniversaries, bar and bat mitzvahs and yearzeits. It also outlines the rules of decorum for participation in Shabbat services. Lastly, it includes a listing of officers and board members as well as a way to get involved in our community. It is updated weekly by a professional office staff person and printed on color paper by our office staff.

Our Chai-Lites is a mass e-mail which is sent out approximately every two weeks and is made up of a list of several key upcoming events. The purpose of this e-mail is to remind and inform our membership of programs that are taking place – including general programs, youth groups, pre-school events and young adult activities.

Bulletins - Bronze Award

DHJCNEWS

Dix Hills Jewish Center; Dix Hills, NY

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Aaron Altman;** altman.tagroup@gmail.com

The DHJCNEWS is the official newsletter/bulletin for the Dix Hills Jewish Center on Long Island, NY is published 10x yearly and delivered (by mail) on the first of each month to all our member families. It is put together monthly by volunteers. The page run is usually between 36 – 44 pages of articles, upcoming events, pictures and advertising. Additionally, we work together with our website team, to put each month bulletin on-line. Its magazine size is designed for easy reading and to give our members a crisp summary of the Jewish richness that the DHJC has to offer them.

Each issue is intended to inform, entertain and enlighten our DHJC members on the different ways can also involve themselves in our Shul through reminders of what Conservative Judaism has to offer to their families – i.e. Kinnus. Each issue has a theme relevant to that particular month in terms of holidays, special occasions, Mazel Tovs and remembrances. Our clergy and lay people contribute monthly with articles, information pieces, upcoming events and inspirational thoughts.

DHJC members look forward each month in receiving the DHJCNEWS to read and see what is going on in their Shul and Jewish communities.

Bulletins - Bronze Award

Bulletins

Temple Sholom; Greenwich, CT

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Lori Baden;** lori.baden@templesholom.com

Temple Sholom utilizes bulletins as a communication tool to reach our congregation. We also use our bulletins so that prospective members can get a feel for Temple Sholom. We have several different kinds of bulletins, each targeted towards its own audience.

The Bulletin is our bi-monthly printed bulletin that gets mailed to our congregational mailing list. In addition to highlighting upcoming programs, the Bulletin always features an article/letter from our senior Rabbi, Rabbi Mitchell M. Hurvitz; an article/letter from our co-Presidents, Ariel Manacher and Robert Driesen; article/letter from Cantor Asa Fradkin; an article/letter from our Religious School Director, Rabbi Allison Berlinger and an article/letter from our Nursery School Director, Phyllis Lyons. These articles/letters give these leaders a public forum to talk about programs they want to highlight and/or their thoughts on a particular subject. Each issue has a calendar of programs; b'nai mitzvah teens; yartzeits; condolences and contributions.

Weekly E-Bulletin is our weekly electronic newsletter. The E-Bulletin features the upcoming week at Temple Sholom, service times, candle lighting times as well as brief descriptions of future events and programs in the greater community.

Religious School Weekly Update is an electronic bulletin sent specifically to the parents of children in our school as a way for them to get information about the school. It is sent from Rabbi Berlinger on Friday mornings. Included in a weekly update are new pickup and drop off procedures; invitations for parents to join a mishpacha program; volunteer opportunities and programs/events at the synagogue.

The nursery school regularly sends home updates with the children, so we felt a weekly update was not necessary for this audience. At the beginning of each month, we send out an electronic bulletin from the Director, Phyllis Lyons. Information in the Bulletin is usually related to the greater synagogue community, but always features a calendar of the month, with highlights of any closings or other special days.

Bulletins - Bronze Award

Beth El Bulletin

Beth El Synagogue Center; New Rochelle, NY

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Linda Newman;** LNewman@bethelnr.org

Beth El Synagogue Center's Bulletin is published monthly, eleven times per year (combined July/August). We have included four sample issues. This major undertaking is produced largely by volunteers. As of January 2011, digital printing has allowed us to use color graphics and photographs on our cover and back page. We believe that this has enhanced the Bulletin's attractiveness. The Bulletin also appears on our website, www.bethelnr.org, as an added tool for our members and others, though without photographs of children. Beginning with the April 2011 issue, we now have an eye-catching new logo and design for our cover, and congregant response to both the new logo and color cover have been quite positive.

The Bulletin has six volunteer editors, who are lay members of the congregation. One editor is proficient in Hebrew language and transliteration. Except in the case of the rabbis and 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 the photographs. The Executive Director of the synagogue and the The Bulletin production person make decisions regarding material to be included. When necessary, the synagogue president and, occasionally, the editorial board are consulted. The production person inputs all material into the computer, does the copy-editing, rewriting, and headline writing, and designs the page layouts. The material is then assembled into the camera-ready pages and sent to the printer. The production person, who is an employee of the synagogue, prepares all Bulletin advertising pages in house. ALL congregational activities and projects known as of press time are included in either an article and/or a display box.

Beth El is a large, multifaceted synagogue. We pride ourselves on being inclusive, so we have many activities "cooking" simultaneously. Like all similar institutions, however, we have financial constraints which limit the number of pages we are able to print in our Bulletin. Sometimes we are forced to make sometimes difficult choices and to set priorities for space allocation. We give precedence to news of Beth El's own events and volunteer activities. Every issue includes coverage of USCJ, METNY, JTS, Mercaz, Ramah, USY and/or other related organizations. When we can, under the heading "Community Bulletin Board," we include news of community activities we believe will be of interest and/or importance to our congregants. The synagogue sponsors a vast array of Adult Education offerings (Limud Institute of Life-long Learning) and all are publicized in either articles or calendars. We feel that The Bulletin's primary function is the dissemination of news about Beth El Synagogue Center, and that it should concentrate on fulfilling its mission. In this Metropolitan New York area, people have easy access to many sources of general Jewish material, but the Beth El Bulletin is their source for news of what is happening at Beth El.

Bulletins - Bronze Award

Jewish Center News

Congregation Brith Sholom; Erie, PA

Size Category: under 100

Contact: **Carl Cohen;** brithsholomerie@verizon.net

This year, Congregation Brith Sholom is celebrating its 114th anniversary. Our Conservative congregation is the heart and soul of the Erie, Pennsylvania community, which has, unfortunately, diminished in numbers over the last 44 years. From a synagogue of over 500 families in the 1950's we are now about 80 families.

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 114 years, the rabbis, Board of Directors and the Officers have attempted to make the Congregation Brith Sholom a very special spiritual and educational oasis. With out bulletin, we try to keep the congregation abreast of things important to them. In addition to mailing the bulletin to our members, we send the bulletin to the five area colleges inviting the Jewish students to our services and other events, for High Holy Day meals and for Pesach Seders, when the congregation reaches out to provide for home hospitality.

Celebrations and Dedications - Gold Award

Honoring Sugihara

Congregation Beth David; Saratoga, CA

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Abe Bromberg;** abebromberg@hotmail.com

On Sunday October 25, 2009, Congregation Beth David, Saratoga, California honored the memory of Chiune Sugihara by dedicating a street bearing his name. Mr. Sugihara was a Japanese diplomat who saved the lives of thousands of Jews by helping them escape from the Nazis. A Sugihara street sign was erected on a street located in front of the synagogue, containing a plaque on the post with Sugihara's picture and a brief description of his heroism. The dedication was followed by refreshments, then a showing of the documentary film about Chiune Sugihara, Sugihara: Conspiracy of Kindness.

The event gained support throughout the Jewish and Japanese communities, and was publicized in community newspapers as well as area synagogues, churches, and in San Jose Japantown. The audience of some 200 people included Beth David congregants, holocaust survivors, members of the Japanese-American community, clergy and members of local synagogues and churches, and interested citizens from Saratoga and the surrounding area.

A broad cross-section of Beth David members and members from the surrounding community was involved in the program.. Beth David Jewish Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts from Japantown led the presentation of flags and the Pledge of Allegiance, and speakers included: Reverend Jerry Sakamoto, Minister of the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin; Chuck Page, Mayor of Saratoga, California; Yasumasa Nagamine, Japanese Consul General (San Francisco); Joe Yasutake, PhD, Vice President Japanese American Museum San Jose (who, as a child, was imprisoned in a U.S. internment camp during World War II); Rabbi Daniel Pressman, Senior Rabbi, Congregation Beth David; and Andrea Burke, a member of the Jewish community whose mother and 6 other relatives were survivors saved by Mr. Sugihara. A proclamation from U.S. Congressman Mike Honda was read, and Saratoga Mayor Chuck Page presented

Beth David a special plaque to commemorate the event. A significant outcome of the event was the connection of the San Jose Jewish and Japanese-American communities.

Celebrations and Dedications - Gold Award

I Have a Dream - A Celebration of the Legacy and Teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Park Synagogue; Pepper Pike, OH

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Ellen Petler;** epetler@parksyn.org

Bring together three congregations of different faiths with one common goal – to plan a special program for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 2010 – and the end result is a meaningful and highly successful two-day program of interfaith worship, understanding and fellowship. The Park Synagogue took the lead in inviting the two African-American churches which were renting auditorium space in our Cleveland Heights building (unused by our congregation on Sundays) to work with us on this project.

After months of dialogue and planning, Park Synagogue, Abundant Grace Fellowship and Body of Christ Assembly Heights held a lively and uplifting interfaith worship service on Sunday, January 17, 2010 and an inspiring and entertaining afternoon of celebration on Monday, January 18, 2010. The two events attracted large numbers of enthusiastic people of all ages, races, and religions – Jews, Christians, and Muslims – both from the three congregations and from the Cleveland area community in general. We were truly able to have a meaningful MLK Day weekend celebration by bringing our congregation and community together to promote greater interfaith understanding and awareness of our shared history.

Celebrations and Dedications - Silver Award

90th Anniversary

Beth-El Makor Chayim; Cranford, NJ

Size Category:101-249

Contact: **Stephen Solomon;** steveandsidney@msn.com

Temple Beth-El Mekor Chayim developed a year long celebration to commemorate the synagogue's 90th anniversary. This celebration included a professionally created photo journal, a cantor's concert, a book of memories and a gala party. Although this program was initiated as a synagogue fund raiser, it was clear that of equal importance was to renew and re-invigorate the synagogue spirit by commemorating our past and celebrating our future. Key to that would be to develop programming which would include all aspects of the synagogue and its members.

The initial program was a photo journal. An outside company was hired to produce the photo journal. This journal contained portrait pictures of member families, candid pictures from various events, staff pictures, a synagogue directory and a brief history of the synagogue. An ad journal was also included as part of the photo journal. In addition to a photo journal, a book of memories was created. This book contained articles submitted by past presidents regarding their memories as president of the synagogue, letters from public officials acknowledging the synagogues 90th anniversary, a listing of sponsors and the cantor's concert program. The gala celebration included a cantor's concert and a family style party after the concert.

Celebrations and Dedications - Silver Award

Honoring Our Elders

Temple Sholom; Bridgewater, NJ

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Susan Engelstein;** smne@optonline.net

Honoring Our Elders accomplished two very important things: we honored the oldest in our congregation (many of them founding members) and we provided our teenagers with a concrete way to interact with and learn from these members. The first step for our committee of three was to create a list of members who were eighty years old or older and then see how many of these members wish to participate. The second step was to discuss the idea at our Hebrew High School and see how many students were interested. We then paired up the students with seniors, sometimes having a brother and sister interview a husband and wife. The students were instructed to call their senior and arrange a meeting. At the meeting, they were to ask them a series of ten questions and to take their picture. They were then to write up their interview and submit it, so that it could be included in a keepsake journal.

I could not get over the reaction I got from the students. Everyone ended up having a wonderful talk with their senior that went far beyond the provided questions. (One family had the senior couple over for Shabbat dinner.) The kids were given cookies, they were shown old photographs and told stories and asked about themselves and their plans for the future. They learned the history of the Temple and the community and were sent off with words of advice. The students, though apprehensive at first, came to appreciate that though these people were of a different generation, they were still smart and funny and had a lot to offer.

We then had a luncheon to which the entire synagogue was invited. One by one, the students stood up, introduced their elder and told an interesting thing about them. Then the senior came up and spoke, many with tears in their eyes. The interviews were typed up and put into a keepsake journal with a picture of the senior and the teenager next to each one. Everyone felt that this was one of the most meaningful events that our temple has ever had.

Celebrations and Dedications - Silver Award

Rabbi Joshua Skoff's 20th Anniversary Year

The Park Synagogue; Pepper Pike, OH

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Barbara Goldfarb;** barbara@parksyn.org

A year-long celebration in honor of Rabbi Joshua Skoff's 20th anniversary of service to the Park Synagogue, Anshe Emeth Beth Tefilo Congregations, began with planning in June of 2009. On June 27, 2010, over 800 people attended a gala/dinner/program in his honor. Leading up to the gala, there were two additional events: a Shabbat Service on March 20, 2010; and a Fun/Run Walk, lovingly nicknamed, "Take Off With Skoff", on May 23, 2010.

In addition to these events, a 96-page Tribute Book was compiled and published in his honor. It was distributed at the gala dinner and then inserted into the Cleveland Jewish News newspaper that was delivered to their subscribers the following Friday.

Proceeds from this Anniversary Year were earmarked to help Park's operating budget. A Rabbi Joshua Skoff Programming Fund was established for on-going donations. Our original goal was to raise \$50,000 for two years. We far surpassed this goal by raising over \$500,000.

In conclusion, the many volunteers and enthusiastic participants in all these events throughout the year was a way to bring our Park family closer together. We also achieved our monetary goals and confirmed the strength of our congregation. Of course, the most gratifying result was to see the outpouring of affection this community has for its Senior Rabbi.

We look forward to the next milestone anniversary!

Celebrations and Dedications - Bronze Award

Northern Hills Synagogue Celebrates Its Golden Anniversary

Northern Hills Synagogue Congregation B'nai Avraham; Cincinnati, OH Size Category:101-249

Contact: **Joseph Lazear**; jlazear_3471@fuse.net

In honor of its 50th anniversary, as Northern Hills Synagogue - Congregation B'nai Avraham celebrated a series of spectacular social and educational events. The anniversary year began with a Golden Jubilee Gala on Saturday evening, January 23rd. In addition to the wine reception and dinner, the Amazing Portable Circus Game Show will provide entertainment. Members were challenged to answer questions concerning the congregation and member's past activities. In addition, the congregation recognized members who had been part of the congregation for 50 years, married for 50 years, and celebrating the 50th anniversary of their Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The contributions of the congregation's youth were also be recognized. A special service was held on Friday evening, June 25th, commemorated the first service held by Northern Hills. Many long term members will be honored for their service to the congregation. The year of celebration concluded with the scholar-in-residence weekend in November. The featured scholar was Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, Dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles.

There have been many milestones for the congregation over the years. These include joining the Conservative Movement in 1963, building its original building at 715 Fleming Road in Finneytown in 1964, merging with Congregation B'nai Avraham of Norwood in 1968, the hiring of Rabbi Gershom Barnard (the congregation's spiritual leader since 1975), embracing egalitarianism in the 1980's, and moving to its current location, at 5714 Fields-Ertel Road in Deerfield Township, in 2004.

The Golden Anniversary was successful in two ways. First, it gave older members the opportunity to gather and reminisce on the founding of the synagogue. Second, newer member learned of the past accomplishments, traditions, and values that formed Northern Hills Synagogue into the strong and vibrant organization it is today.

Celebrations and Dedications - Bronze Award

Come Rejoice, Come Celebrate, Come Worship, Come Give Thanks

Highland Park Conservative Temple - Congregation Anshe Emeth; Highland Park, NJ

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Linda Tondow**; ltondow@gmail.com

On May 2, 2010/18 Iyar 5770, the Highland Park Conservative Temple - Congregation Anshe Emeth community celebrated the dedication of their new synagogue following a devastating fire three years

earlier. "Come Rejoice, Come Celebrate, Come Worship, Come Give Thanks" was the theme for the dedication weekend, which began with a Shabbat dinner and concluded with a Sunday morning community program and reception. The Dedication weekend celebrated and dedicated the new beautiful space and gave thanks to those who make the new space possible. It also provided the opportunity to recognize and honor the history of the two congregations, Highland Park Conservative Temple and Congregation Anshe Emeth that had merged three years earlier; through this weekend the two congregations emotionally became one.

Celebrations and Dedications - Bronze Award

Divas on the Bima

Temple Beth Sholom; Cherry Hill, NJ

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Jennifer Stofman;** jennifers@tbsonline.org

Divas Rock the Bima was a hugely successful program designed to officially install Jen Cohen as Cantor of Temple Beth Sholom. In addition to being an installation, the concert brought together four area female cantors to showcase their amazing musical talents. The evening was billed as a celebration of our favorite female voices on the bima. The concert provided female cantors the opportunity to perform classical, popular and Jewish music for their community. Over 500 people from throughout the community were in attendance. We held a second Divas Rock the Bima this year with an even larger attendance, and other congregations have replicated the program (using our title and materials).

Celebrations and Dedications - Bronze Award

An Evening of Remembrance

Ahavath Achim Synagogue; Atlanta, GA

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Barry Herman;** bherman@aasynagogue.org

This program was to honor the memory and Cantor Isaac and Betty Goodfriend z"l. Cantor Goodfriend was the Cantor Emeritus of Ahavath Achim Synagogue for more than 30 years. Participating in the concert were Cantor David Propis (current President of the Cantorial Assembly), Cantor Alberto Mizrahi (current Vice-President -- administration of the Cantorial Assembly), the Atlanta Jewish Male Choir, conducted by the world renowned Fletcher Wolf (who also conducted the Ahavath Achim Synagogue Choir before Cantor Goodfriend retired) and accompanist Kim Goodfriend, the daughter of Cantor and Betty Goodfriend. A tribute was also made by Elie Wiesel in honor of the contributions of Cantor and Betty Goodfriend.

Celebrations and Dedications - Bronze Award

A Congregational Tribute to Rabbi Mark G. Loeb

Beth El Congregation; Baltimore, MD

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Gilbert Kleiner;** gil@bethelbalto.com

After the sudden death of Rabbi Emeritus Mark G. Loeb z"l, the leadership of the congregation along with Rabbi Steven Schwartz, Senior Rabbi, decided to hold a tribute to Rabbi Loeb on his first Yahrzeit anniversary. A committee was formed of board members, congregants, officers and senior staff to undertake the task of involving as many of the congregants whose lives were touched by the over 30 years of Rabbi Loeb's service. The committee met in May, 2010. Several Subcommittees were formed, Program, Reception, Invitations, and Communications, with Richard Hollander a past president and close

friend of Rabbi Loeb chairing the tribute. The date selected was Sunday evening, September 26, 2010 one day before the first Yahrzeit.

During the next three months the committees began organizing the evening. Electronic communications were sent to the membership requesting photos, videos and letters regarding life cycle events where Rabbi Loeb officiated. Hundreds were received and incorporated into a video presentation. In late July the program committee developed the evening's timetable. See attachment of the program.

After meeting in early August, the Communications committee recommended that this be a "family tribute" and simple black ink on white card invitations (see attachment) were sent to the entire congregation and to those with a personal relationship with Rabbi Loeb. The goal was to have this evening be one of tribute and remembrance for the Beth El family. Over 1,000 reservations were received for the evening by the September 13th deadline.

The cost for the one hour and ten minute program was underwritten by a family with a close relationship with Rabbi Loeb. Save for the lavish dessert reception coordinated by the Reception committee and catered by Rabbi Loeb's favorite caterer in Baltimore at a cost of a \$9,500, the expenses were nominal and included mailing and production of the video at \$1,600 and the full color program at \$1,100. Copies of the video tribute were made available and over 400 DVDs were requested and sent out by mail. The evening was also posted on our website.

Early Childhood Education - Bronze Award

Congregation B'nai Torah; Atlanta, GA

Contact: **Binnie Spiegel**; preschool@bnaitorah.org

Jewish Discovery Museum

Size Category: 500-899

Congregation B'nai Torah Preschool was established in 1992. We provide a high quality, safe and nurturing environment with a developmentally appropriate curriculum while fostering a positive Jewish identity and appreciation of our Jewish heritage. Our curriculum is designed to teach Jewish values and holidays using a hands-on, sensory based approach. To that end a Jewish Discovery Museum was created.

The Preschool has dedicated a classroom that is used as a Jewish Discovery Museum. Each week the museum is set up with different centers for the children to visit. The theme for the week is based on a Jewish value that the children are exploring or a Jewish holiday. A schedule is set up so that each class will have adequate time to visit the museum. When they arrive the teacher offers an overview of the activities and then the children can explore the different areas in small groups.

While the children are visiting the museum the teachers take photos of the children to send home and to use as documentation of their exploration. We also follow up with the families by sending home information with an explanation of the Jewish value or holiday. We include what we do, how it is achieved and ways to bring it home further Jewish learning for the entire family to enjoy.

This year the weekly themes of our Jewish Discovery Museum included: All of the Jewish holidays; Havdalah; Mitzvot; Tzedakah; Hachnisat Orchim – Hospitality; Ahavat Torah – Love of Torah; Bikur Cholim – Visiting the Sick; Tikkun Olam – Repair the World; Gemilut Hasadim – Acts of Loving Kindness; Tza'ar Ba'alay Hayim – Kindness to Animals.

Early Childhood Education - Gold Award

Tu B'Shevat Experience

Temple Beth Ahm; Aberdeen, NJ

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Amy Naphtali**; amynaphtali@optonline.net

The Tu B'Shevat program was designed to enable the children to experience many aspects of trees and the larger concept of the environment all at once. We combined several concepts from Tu B'Shevat with those of Earth Day to make the day extra special.

Activities were created for the children to take part in and throughout the course of the day each group visits every activity. Activities are as follows: Tasting; Recycling; Creating a blossoming almond tree picture; Creating a bird feeder; Planting seeds in a pot the children create from newspaper, then coloring in a tree picture that the children plant (tape) to a large map of Israel; Musical game based on musical chairs that we call Musical Trees; Music activity – singing Tu B'Shevat songs .

Last activity is us all coming together to hear the story "A Tree Is Nice". Then the children create their own leaves and dictate onto them why trees are nice. Attach them to a tree form in the hallway for all to enjoy.

This day was created to instill in the children the importance of trees and the environment through an interactive, fun and creative experience. These concepts are reinforced in our school throughout the year as we are always sensitive to the environment, from the bathroom where we try not to waste water or towels, to the lunchroom where reusable containers and recycling are always found.

Early Childhood Education - Gold Award

Clay Studio

Beth El Synagogue Center; New Rochelle, NY

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Ronnie Becher**; rbecher@bethelnr.org

Our educational philosophy is based upon the guidelines set forth by N.A.E.Y.C. (National Association for the Education of Young Children). Their developmental theories state that children learn by doing rather than by formal, rote learning. We advocate a playful, relaxed, non-pressured environment rich in experiences that foster imagination, curiosity, creativity and independence.

Learning activities at all age levels are designed to promote the development of the whole child: physically, emotionally, socially, creatively and cognitively. Each area of development is of equal importance and value even though the rate of progress among the areas may be uneven. It is clearly understood that each child is a unique individual with his/her own pace of development that must be considered and respected at all times.

Our mission is threefold: socialization of the child, internalization of Jewish heritage and providing hands-on experiential learning.

Early Childhood Education - Gold Award

Intergenerational Activities Program

B'nai Israel Congregation; Rockville, MD

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Karen Gerton**; kareng@bnaiisraelcong.org

Many families are spread out all over the country and only see each other a few times each year. Only in rare instances do grandparents live near their children and grandchildren (and great-grandchildren). Nothing lights up an older person's face like a child.

B'nai Israel Schilit Nursery School is fortunate to be neighbors to the Landow House – an assisted living facility in the Charles E. Smith Life Communities in Rockville, Maryland. Landow House residents are senior citizens who want to be part of an active and engaging community, yet need some personalized assistance with their daily activities. The residents desire to live as independently and self-reliantly as possible with just the right amount of support. B'nai Israel Schilit Nursery School strives to continually teach our children mitzvot, i.e. Lev. 19:32, to respect and care for the elderly. We then imagined a place where the young and the old would come together while building an on-going, meaningful relationship. Interaction between the generations is priceless. And so, our relationship with the Landow House began.

A shining start in our nursery school is our Intergenerational Activities Program. Our four-and five-year old students meet at least twice a month with the residents of Landow House. The residents love seeing the children and the children enjoy their interactions with the residents. (There usually is an apprehension on the part of the children at the beginning of the school year but it quickly disappears). An additional component of the program is parent participation. The parents accompany the children and the classroom teachers on their walk from B'nai Israel Schilit Nursery School to Landow House and participate in the program.

Early Childhood Education - Silver Award

Early Childhood Education

Temple Beth Torah - Tamarac Jewish Center; Tamarac, FL

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Sydney Berlin**; execdir@tbtonline.org

Temple Beth Torah's Early Childhood Center has received a much needed face lift this year with the move into our brand new temple. The preschool now has its very own state of the art education wing, including a brand new playground, library, computer lab and multipurpose room. Our classrooms are larger and brighter, boasting bathrooms and drinking fountains in each classroom.

Our school offers a series of hands-on activities centered on the understanding of Jewish holidays. Through art, song, cooking and stories we are able to give our children the foundation needed for later Judaica education they will receive in Sunday and Hebrew school.

This year our Pre-K students took an imaginary field trip to Israel. The goals of this trip were to give students the hands-on ability to explore and relate to another culture, learn about different foods and be able to better visualize the geography of another country. In addition to our trip to Israel, students also learn about the act of Tzedakah by giving money each Shabbat to Sadie Tzedakah. Each class takes a turn "feeding" Sadie, knowing that the school collects the money each year to donate to a Jewish organization.

We also incorporated a series of curriculum developed around the Jewish holidays to offer our children an age appropriate understanding of the holidays and how we celebrate and observe them.

In addition to this, we also added a new element to our school this year and it is a monthly Rock n Tot Shabbat service lead by our Cantor. This service is casual and short and offers a fun Shabbat activity for both parents and their children.

Early Childhood Education - Silver Award

The Alefbet Preschool

Congregation Beth Shalom; Atlanta, GA

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Loli Gross**; loli@bshalom.net

Established in 1998, the Alefbet Preschool and Camp Alefbet provide a stimulating environment specifically designed for early childhood development judaically, and emotionally. Like young children's minds, our school continues to evolve, change and grow. Our school and community programming has increased. Our director and our faculty have a true love of learning and teaching.

Since becoming a Bright from the Start- Department of Early Care and Learning Licensed facility, our school is able to offer much more to our parents. This had enabled us to move from a program of four hours a day to a full day program making us available to the Jewish parents who need to work. This licensure signifies that we meet and exemplify the educational and safety standards set forth for Early Childhood Programs.

We are a preschool program that is committed to Jewish education right from the beginning of a child's voyage into education.

Early Childhood Education - Silver Award

Noah's Ark

Congregation Har Tzeon-Agudath Achim; Silver Spring, MD

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Sharon Wolfson**; sbwolfson@comcast.net

Congregation HarTzeon-Agudath Achim Early Childhood Center is a full day, multi-age, one room school. We are a year-round program with two, three and four year old children. We are completing our tenth year with a current roster of thirteen children. We are licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care and health and Human Services. Our school is part of the Early Childhood Initiative of the Partnership For Jewish Life and Learning.

Our submission included the story of Noah and photos of the Ark as told by the children. The children created an ark, Noah, his family and the animals, a dove with an olive branch and a rainbow.. The children discussed, "after the flood". They took discussions to our present-day world. The class learned about Tikun Olam. Our children are eager to partner with god and help repair the world around us. The class made a plan for ongoing projects in our own backyard as well as Israel. Our children are excited that they can help make a difference in our world.

Early Childhood Education - Silver Award

Daber Ivrit

The Jewish Center; Princeton, NJ

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Randy Hubert;** randykhubert@hotmail.com

Our Hebrew Immersion class, Daber Ivrit, was designed to provide young children, ages 3-5 years old, the opportunity to learn to speak Hebrew. The class meets for three one hour session per week as an additional program. Taught by 2 Israeli teachers, the children are immersed completely in Hebrew. The curriculum includes circle time, stories, songs, games and art projects. Chalav U D'vash, a program developed by Margalit Karenstock for The Jewish Agency for Israel to be used in the Diaspora, is the program chosen as our guided course of the Hebrew language.

The class is filled with fun, innovative projects to teach, entertain and keep a young child's interest while immersed in Hebrew language. The progress made is remarkable and the children understand and actually begin speaking Hebrew in a very natural and comfortable way. Both the parents and the students are extremely proud of their accomplishments.

Early Childhood Education - Silver Award

Noah's Ark Indoor Play Center

Temple Beth Sholom; Cherry Hill, NJ

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Jennifer Stofman;** jennifers@tbsonline.org

The Noah's Ark playroom was constructed in conjunction with Temple Beth Sholom Preschool's quest for a thematic space that is fun and engaging for children to have recreational time in an indoor space. The intent was to construct a space that reinforced Judaic values and themes while also providing an imaginative outlet for imaginative play. In addition, the playroom is to provide a play space that promotes fine and gross motor activities that are developmentally appropriate for children two through 6 years of age.

Children can climb and run fish off the side of the ark, slide down the alligator sliding boards, crawl through tunnels encapsulating electric fish tanks or scale a climbing wall as another way to enter the Ark. They can pretend they are sailing in the ark for 40 days and forty nights while communicating to each other through sound tubes. A kitchen in the ark teaches children the mitzvah of Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayim, (kindness to animals), as they can prepare food and to take care of magnetic animal murals hinged to the walls. A periscope on the top deck of the multi-leveled ark allows children to look for the dove that has just found land. All the features of the story of Noah are assimilated into this play area. They also learn the wonders of what God has created as they are surrounded by eight foot murals of animals in their natural habitats including a rainforest, tundra, grasslands and jungle.

As we begin a new year what better way for preschoolers to learn the Parsha of Noach than to make their favorite animal mask and follow Noah onto the Ark. The playroom lends itself as a center for young families to gather and socialize with other families of the congregation. It is ideal for birthday parties, as well as any type of celebration for young children in a rich and innovative Jewish environment.

Early Childhood Education - Silver Award

From Egg to Chick: A Creation Story

B'nai Torah Congregation; Boca Raton, FL

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Nancy Goldstein;** nancy.goldstein@bnai-torah.org

During our unit on Creation, we were given the opportunity to take care of 18 chicken eggs. The eggs were generously donated by a family in our classroom who has a farm with several animals, including chickens. The eggs were brought to our class room on two occasions, one week apart. The incubator was placed in our "Science Center" for us to observe throughout the day. In order for us to keep track of the days, we posted a chart showing the growth and development of the baby chicks. We were told that it takes 21 days from the time the chicken lays the egg to the time it hatches, so every day we would mark an "X" on our picture growth chart.

Exactly 21 days after receiving the chicken eggs, we heard chirping. We peeked in and saw one of the eggs hatching. That day we were very excited as we witnessed the birth of our first chick. It was so tiny with black feathers all over. The children decided to name the chick "Chirpy" since we heard it chirping all day long. A few hours passed and another chick hatched. This time it was yellow. We voted and named that one "Sunshine". For the next several days, we watch each chick hatch; one more thrilling than the other.

We sat together as a class and talked about how God created the world in 7 days. We discussed that first day God created light. Then we went through the other days of creation until we reached the day that God created animals. We asked the children if they could think of all the different kinds of animals that are on the earth today which God created. Some children said dogs and cats, others said fish. Then someone remembered that we were learning about chicks and chickens. They were all so intrigued that we were watching one of God's creations happen right before our eyes.

As more and more chicks began to hatch, we discussed how it takes longer for a human baby to be born than a chick to hatch. The children compared chicks to humans by saying that chicks are created in an egg and a human baby is created in mommy's belly. When all the chicks were hatched, we were able to watch them for a few days, but then we told the children that just as they need their mommies, the chicks did too. The chicks went back to the farm so they could be with their mommies and grow up. After 2 weeks, the chicks were brought back to our classroom so we could see how much they had grown. The children were so amazed that they were the same chicks as the ones that we last saw. They seem to have more than tripled in size. Another 2 weeks went by and they were brought back again, even bigger! We were told that they weren't even close to being fully grown. We were surprised to find out that out of all the chicks, only one was a rooster.

Elementary Education - Gold Award

Chai Five Program

Har Zion Temple; Penn Valley, PA

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Nogah Marshall;** rnmarshall@harziontemple.org

The "Chai Five Program" of The Jane Fishman Grinberg Religious School of Har Zion Temple is a program for students in grades 3-7 to take their Jewish Education one step further. We are the only program of its kind in the greater Philadelphia area. This program, designed for the serious students who is dedicated to integrating the values of Judaism into their daily lives, meets during regular religious school hours. This program also targets students who are no longer attending a Day School.

Students participate part of the day with their grade level, and part of the day in “Chai Five” elective classes. Students who join this program also commit to completing work outside of the classroom as well attending monthly Shabbat services. At the conclusion of 7th grade, students are recognized in front of the congregation on a Shabbat morning, in the monthly bulletin, and their names are engraved on a plaque for participating and completing the program. Currently after our first year of the program, 21 students are enrolled in the Chai Five Program.

Elementary Education - Bronze Award

Primary Hebrew

B'nai Shalom; West Orange, NJ

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Rena Casser**; bnaiprinc@aol.com

Our primary Hebrew program is a three year, dove-tailed program leading into our leveled Hebrew religious school curriculum. It consists of three different but interlocking parts.

The first part of our Primary Hebrew program is Tefillah. Beginning on the first day in kindergarten, the children create their own siddurim. We begin with the simplest tefilot, like the Shema, and progress throughout the three years to the more difficult tefilot, ending with V'ahavtah and the Aleynu. As they learn each prayer, the children add a prayer page to their own Siddur. We begin each class with davening from our Siddurim. Upon graduation from second grade, these siddurim go home. Because I am also involved with the Hebrew school davening, many of the prayers the children learn in primary are repeated in our Hebrew school junior congregation.

The second part of our Primary Hebrew program is letter recognition and decoding. Beginning in kindergarten, the children learn to recognize the Hebrew letters. When the alphabet is complete, we go back and repeat the letters, emphasizing the sounds, and forming short words. It is during this phase that the color by letter sheets included in this packet are sent home as homework. (I have colored in the Master. Obviously, the children take home a blank and bring it back the following week.) When the letters have been completed a second time, we go to decoding sounds and words. Depending on the yearly schedule, the second grade may begin reading as early as January or as late as March. I have included the reading sheets we have done. The beginning sheets in any section start with letter and vowel decoding, and then progress to reading words and short sentences.

The third part of our Primary Hebrew curriculum is vocabulary. Also on their first day in kindergarten, the children begin a dictionary that they will add a page a week to until they are graduated in second grade. I teach the following units in the following order: colors, parts of the body, family, numbers, seasons, animals, weather, question words, school, food, opposites and clothing. We learn between 2 and 4 words a week, with weekly reviews. When a unit has been completed, the words used are brought into classroom conversation. For example, our second grade is responsible for the weather chart on the wall, done all in Hebrew.

Elementary Education: Creative Program - Gold Award

B'Yachad Backpacks

Forest Hills Jewish Center; Forest Hills, NY

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Lynn Lancaster;** llancaster@fhjc.org

The B'Yachad program builds capacity among our families to become their children's primary Jewish teachers, to help families model Jewish learning and living within the home and to facilitate a partnership between home and school that ultimately creates a bridge between family and community. B'yachad backpacks in the younger grades and B'yachad experiences in the older grade are a series of guided learning experiences that build on, or provide the foundation for, learning that takes place within the Religious School classroom. B'Yachad units take place over at least a month long period and take place several times a year.

Backpacks in younger grades are built around learning that is taking place in the classroom. They contain Jewish children's literature, art projects, easy recipes and other scaffolded learning opportunities. Often the materials are used both at home and in school. They come with background material for adults and support for guided learning opportunities. Home units culminate in an in school family activity.

Older students' B'yachad units are usually built around a combination of current media and Jewish text. They also are built around classroom curriculum and experiences and always have a component that returns to the classroom either in the form of parent participation in the classroom or a family event.

Elementary Education: Creative Program - Gold Award

ZIP Havurot

Ahavath Achim Synagogue; Atlanta, GA

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Marcia Lindner;** mlindner@aasynagogue.org

Ahavath Achim Synagogue has developed small sub-groups, ZIP code based Havurot, (ZIPs) within our Religious School to help students and their families participate in authentic Jewish experiences. This program creates multi-aged groups (preK-7th grade) who meet together as a part of a class, with Madrichim (teen aides) and a teacher to learn about Jewish holidays, Shabbat, life cycle events, gemilut chesed & tzedakah, and other Jewish topics and then plan for an experience to take place in a member's home or other appropriate setting. Each group, consisting of 4-6 families, must have a minimum of five (5) two hour programs over the course of the school year. Each group must learn about, plan and participate in:

1. *Friday Shabbat Evening Dinner*
2. *Havdalah*
3. *Gemilut Chesed or Tikun Olam*

The other two programs are at the discretion of the group members and their teacher. Over the past two years, some of the ZIPs have learned about and participated in the following:

1. *Laws of Kashrut, followed by a trip to the local supermarket to hunt for items with a Hechsher*
2. *Laws of Kashrut, followed by a trip to the Zoo to identify Kosher animals*

3. *Lag B'Omer, followed by an afternoon at a local park, including a hike, dramatization of the Bar Kochva revolt by the students and a bonfire.*
4. *Sukkot, followed by helping a group member build a kosher Sukkah and decorate it, including the ushpizin. Late in the week a sukkah party was held in the sukkah.*
5. *Bar Mitzvah, followed by the entire ZIP being invited to participate in all aspects of the Bar Mitzvah celebration.*
6. *Conversion, followed by the entire ZIP group visiting a mikva and celebrating the conversion of two students in the Havurah*
7. *Yom Ha'Atzmaut, followed by an afternoon of making Israeli food, learning traditional Israeli dancing and students preparing an Israel quiz for their parents.*
8. *Jewish Immigrant Experience, followed by an afternoon at the Atlanta Jewish Movie Festival watching an American Tale and follow-up discussion with students and parents.*

This program allows our students and their families to:

1. *Creates community*
2. *Combine Judaic knowledge and prayer literacy in realistic settings*
3. *Help families and students recognize that Judaism lives outside the walls of the synagogue*

Approximately 80% of families participate in their children's ZIP Havurah programs. The feedback has been extremely positive and families now look forward to their group activities and express feeling more connected to one another and to synagogue life.

The materials for the program vary based on the group's activities. Each group is given a small budget at the beginning of the year for arts and crafts supplies (i.e. money to make or purchase washing cups for handwashing – one (1) per family). Each family contributes for meals, transportation, entrance fees, etc.

Elementary Education: Creative Program - Silver Award

M'Dor L'Dor

Congregation B'nai Israel; Millburn, NJ

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Janice Colmar**; cbieducator@cbi-nj.org

M'dor L'dor is a program created by Rena Gitlitz, a teacher at the Blanche Bayar Religious School of Congregation B'nai Israel in Millburn, NJ and Janice Colman, Education Director. The sixth graders in the school study the holidays through a historical prism. The students study the evolution of each holiday from its original inception through today. Additionally the students decided to celebrate holidays with the seniors at a local senior housing program. This year they visited and shared holiday stories three times and we anticipate this program to continue next year.

Elementary Education: Creative Program - Silver Award

A Joyful Collaboration

Congregation Kol Emeth; Palo Alto, CA

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Rabbi Laurie Matzkin**; rabbimatkin@kolemeth.org

In 5771, Kol Emeth Religious School created a number of unique, school-wide holiday programs. This year, our Religious School moved to a different parent volunteer model that created a greater sense of ownership by parents in specific grades while simultaneously increasing morale throughout the community by taking pressure off of the greater parent body to generate volunteers for every program. Together with the Director of Lifelong Learning, the committee brainstormed the vision of the holiday program, the Jewish values or mitzvot to focus on, and the flow of the activities. All of our teachers were the lead educators for the different stations and activities, and the parents helped prepare materials, food, and keep things flowing. These holiday programs were designed to fulfill our mission statement: to lay the foundation of a strong and joyful Jewish identity, upon which every child can build a life of learning, celebration, and ethical action.

The four holidays that were emphasized for these school-wide programs were Sukkot, Chanukah, Tu b'Shvat, and Pesach. For Sukkot, the teachers studied the Talmudic description of the SimchatBeithaShoevah during Temple Times (Tractate Sukkah, 51a-51b and 53a) and discussed ways to bring the festivities of this ancient water festival to life for the students. The 6th and 7th grade room parents in charge of Chanukah felt strongly about experimenting with a more reflective and calm program than the stereotypical celebration. The Tu b'Shvat program, generated by the room parents of our Kindergarten class, focused on creating a lasting environmental impact at the synagogue. Each student had a chance to work on our garden beds, paint a tile with a message of bal tashchit, prepare their own Tu b'Shvat trail mix and prepare recycle and compost bins for each classroom and the courtyard. The energy around this program was strong enough to "lobby" the synagogue to move completely to using compostable kitchen goods such as plates and utensils. By the Pre-Pesach Program, the team (led by 3rd grade parents) was able to come up with learning outcomes. Students would be able to: SING the songs of the Seder using Hebrew and not transliteration, EXPLAIN the general idea of each song, INTERPRET how the songs of the Seder relate to the theme of freedom, EMPATHIZE with the Jewish slavery experience and the metaphoric slaves of our time, and REFLECT on their own inner struggles for freedom. This program was a wonderful alternative to the Model Seder, allowing students to not just go through the motions of yet another Seder but instead internalize on the learning objectives. All four of these programs left parents feeling empowered, teachers feeling creative, and students feeling joyful and engaged.

Elementary Education: Creative Program - Bronze Award

Tzedakah Fair

Congregation Beth Shalom; Atlanta, GA

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Loli Gross**; loli@bshalom.net

The Congregation Beth Shalom Annual Tzedakah Fair helps students focus on the act of "giving" to help others. Rather than assign an organization to be the recipient(s) of the tzedakah funds raised during the year, the students were given the opportunity to research and choose their own favorite charity or organization. The classes selected one student or group of students each month, whose organization(s) would be the recipient of all money raised by that class during that month. Parents were invited to help with the selections, which resulted in over 34 different designated organizations. At the Tzedakah Fair in

December, students shared with the entire student body their reasons for choosing each of these organizations in what proved to be a very moving ceremony.

By giving the students the opportunity to make their own tzedakah choices, and by including the family in the selection process, the result was extremely gratifying. Not only was more money raised throughout the year, but the percentage and consistency of contributions increased dramatically. Contributions also included collected articles of clothing and other personal and household items, as well as letters written and volunteer hours to help those less fortunate. Students clearly demonstrated greater understanding of the mitzvah of "tzedakah".

Elementary Education: Creative Program - Bronze Award

Build a Bird Feeder for Shabbat Shira

Congregation Agudas Achim; Bexley, OH

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Mitch Levine**; mlevine@agudasachim.org

Build a Bird Feeder for Shabbat Shira is a 90 minute Religious school, Family Education and Religious School bridge/outreach program designed by Rabbi Mitchell Levine and the Agudas Achim Academy of Bexley, Ohio. It is appropriate for students of any Judaic knowledge background in grades 1st – 6th and their parents. The concept for the program derives from the minhag of feeding wild birds on Shabbat Shira (cf. Aruch HaShulchan, 324:3). The program focuses on the minhag of feeding wild birds on Shabbat Shira and teaches an aspect of Judaism intended to be received as authentic, novel, and relevant.

We met onsite in the Lowe's lumber section and worked at tables grouped together. In order to set the mood for an event celebrating song, we had live Jewish guitar music performed as participants entered the area, and at other points in the program. After a brief welcome from the school's administration, and safety instructions from a Lowe's representative, families unpacked their kits and began building them. Kits and tools were provided by Lowe's. The school provided materials to decorate the feeders with, including instructions on how to correctly write "Shabbat Shira" in Hebrew letters and so forth. Teachers sat among the families in order to answer questions and lend a hand where needed. The sound of so many little hammers tapping away was amazing! Kids who finished early began working on a multiple choice Question & Answer sheet about Shabbat Shira, with the answers spelling out "Shabbat Shira." Completed sheets were collected for a drawing for prizes at the end of the program. Each participating child took home a bird feeder he/she had made and decorated (we also took a group photo of lots of smiling kids).

Elementary Education: Creative Program - Bronze Award

Creative Arts Program

Temple Sholom; Greenwich, CT

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Lori Baden**; lori.baden@templesholom.com

The Temple Sholom Religious School is in its 2nd year of offering our CAP program. It is designed to explore a Jewish theme through the arts. This unique program integrates our formal curriculum with our informal.

This year's theme is "Jewish Heroes/Jewish Values". Each grade was assigned a value and a hero/heroine that exemplifies that value. For example, students in 3rd grade (Gimmel) were assigned Tzedek and Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Louis Brandeis.

Students in grades 3-7 choose an art medium to explore their assigned value and hero/heroine. They then create projects showing their understanding of the material learned. Groups present their work twice a year. Art projects include banners, tzedakah boxes, etched glass, soft dolls and more. In addition to individual projects related to assigned themes, the children participating in the Art elective also help to make backdrops and scenery for the school's Chanukah presentation and end of the year production. A copy of this year's Chanukah presentation on DVD is included with this entry, along with a copy of our CAP newsletter. Other art electives include music and drama.

The purpose of CAP is to integrate the arts with Jewish learning and to create a fun, religious experience. We want our children to want to come to school and be excited to learn.

Elementary Education: Creative Program - Bronze Award

Kosher Kwest

Temple Israel of Great Neck; Great Neck, NY

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Tracy Klirs**; rabbiklirs@tign.org

Kosher Kwest is a family education program designed to teach elementary school aged children and their parents the basic laws of Kashrut, their biblical origins, the ability to distinguish between kosher and non-kosher animals, and between milk, meat and parve food items, the separation of milk and meat, and how to find hechshers. The program was designed by the Religious School Director, Rabbi Tracy Klirs, and was introduced for the first time during the 2010-2011 school year. It was held on a Sunday afternoon. In addition to providing a fun, interactive way for children and parents to learn more about Kashrut, we included a Tikkun Olam/Chesed component. Participating families were asked to bring a number of canned and packaged goods to the program, so that we could use them as examples of different kinds of hechshers. When the program was over, all the canned goods were collected and donated to a local food pantry.

Approximately 40 people participated, representing families with children from grades K-7. The families who participated in the program were very enthusiastic. They reported that the children were engaged, enjoying the various games involved and the snack at the end, but that the parents also learned something new and useful. In evaluating the program and the response in a Religious School Education Committee meeting afterwards, the consensus was that the program should be repeated annually, but turned into a grade-level Family Education program for a specific grade, and done during school hours on a Sunday morning, so that families would be likely to attend.

Family Education - Gold Award

Shabbat Around the World

Keneseth Israel Congregation; Louisville, KY

Size Category:101-249

Contact: **Leigh Bird**; toleigh@insightbb.com

Appreciating the erosion of the concept of people-hood in the modern context, "Shabbat Around The World" seeks to strengthen the bond which we as Jews share as part of a broader family. Each program takes participants on a "journey" (complete with custom 'passport') to a different Jewish community

throughout the world. As participants enter the synagogue, their passports are 'stamped' to show they have made the trip. Further they receive an additional pamphlet describing the make-up and history of the current situation for Jews in the land that they are now visiting.

The evening begins with socializing and appetizers from the culture being visited. This is followed by the evening service punctuated with different customs indigenous to the particular community – related to nusach, music, order and style. Our Cantor's Club Children's Choir performs one or two melodies from the community. During the service members of our congregation, or community, raised in the respective communities, share their experiences and histories growing up Jewish in these far away lands, comparing and contrasting those with the American Jewish experience. The experience is enhanced through decorations from the culture as well as memorabilia brought in by the participants. The service is followed by a delectable meal featuring the traditional cuisine from the community being visited. The evening concludes with a questions and answer session.

Family Education - Gold Award

Congregation Beth Am Israel; Penn Valley, PA

Contact: **Nadine Slavitt**; nadineslavitt@gmail.com

Family Torah Study at Beth Am Israel has become an integral part of our Shabbat-centered community and education program. Families with children from Kindergarten through 6th grade gather every other Shabbat morning in age appropriate groupings to study the weekly parsha together. What makes our program unique is that parents organize the program and, on a volunteer and rotating basis, our families do 100% of the preparation and teachings.

What has made our Family Torah Study particularly successful has been the enthusiasm, creativity, and seriousness with which our families approach their teachings. Families have presented the weekly parsha through songs, skits, games, role-playing, and Shabbat appropriate arts and craft projects, just to name a few of the engaging teaching tools used. The children of the family presenting play a "star" role and the program often ends with a child-centered group conversation about how we can apply the lessons from the Torah to our lives.

The professional staff and the congregation as a whole have wholeheartedly embraced Family Torah Study. At the conclusion of Family Torah Study, parents and children join the rest of the congregation in the sanctuary where our Rabbi facilitates an interactive dvar Torah. For many, this is a highlight of our community's Shabbat morning – everyone is together studying Torah. Family Torah Study has been a wonderful catalyst for bringing families together, empowering parents to be their child's primary Jewish educator, building community, and promoting intergenerational Torah study.

Family Education - Silver Award

Ahavath Achim Synagogue; Atlanta, GA

Contact: **Laurence Rosenthal**; lrosenthal@aasynagogue.org

Congregation Ahavath Achim has created a robust pre-Passover experiential educational calendar allowing children and families practice the rites and ritual associated with holiday of Passover.

Family Torah Study

Size Category:250-499

Pre-Passover Educational Experience

Size Category:900+

A few weeks prior to the holiday, families engage in age appropriate programming. Bedikat Chametz (age of 4-7 years old) focuses on the meaning of chametz (Leavened bread & associated grains/forbidden foods) and our Jews obligation to avoid these food items throughout the 8 days of Passover. Children create their own Bedikat Chametz Kit and are led on a chametz search throughout the synagogue. The aim of this program is to acquaint young children to the concept of chametz, how our relationship with God and Jewish tradition is effected by abstain from chametz during passover and engage in the traditional gathering and disposal of chametz.

Children age 8-13 enjoy a model seder unlike anything they will most likely experience in their own home - A Chocolate Seder. This hour long model seder provides our children with the opportunity to explore the meanings of the various foods and ritual of Passover by enjoying them in a chocolate abstract - Four cups of wine turn into 4 cups of chocolate milk; parsley dipped into salt water are substituted for strawberries dipped in chocolate. Through this fun and sometimes silly medium, children enjoy a focused and engaging journey through the rituals of the Passover seder and are encouraged to ask questions about our tradition foods, their meaning and purpose.

Parent's Passover seder workshop: While their children are learning about either the search for chametz or participating in a chocolate seder, parents are working together with the rabbi in a workshop entitles, "How can this night be....better than all those boring seders we experienced in the past." The Rabbi takes parents and seder leaders through the hagaddah helping them to understand themes, uncover rhythm present throughout the hagadah to empower participants to lead an engaging and meaningful seder.

The day before Passover, families are invited to the synagogue for a synagogue tailgating party where the focus will be on the final removal of all leavened products. Taking place entirely outside, people drive up to the synagogue where members of our teen youth groups are waiting to vacuum out their cars. There is a cost associated with the vacuuming which benefits youth group activities. Once the car is vacuumed, participants drive forward into the parking lot where various stations are available for their participation. Four activity stands spaced around the parking lot add to the tailgating atmosphere. Station 1: Food donation; Station 2: Mekhirat Chametz (Selling of the Chametz). Station 3: Biur Chametz (Burning Chametz); Station 4: Concession. The goal of this program is to raise awareness and importance of these cleansing rituals in preparation for the holiday of Passover.

Family Education - Bronze Award

Ushpizin on Wheels

Beth David Synagogue; Greensboro, NC

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Risa Hanau; ncreeser@aol.com**

Beth David Synagogue has always had traditional celebrations for Sukkot – services, a Sukkah attached to the shul and education to the Religious School children. This however was not family directed. Three years ago our Youth Education Director (part time position) created and implemented Ushpizin on Wheels, which moved the learning out of the classroom and into the community, not only for the students but for the entire family. The concept is a simple one: identify the congregants who have a Sukkot and live within close proximity to Beth David and then ask them to host a stop on the Ushpizin On Wheels tour and to put out refreshments so each stop is an opportunity for learning, resting and re-fueling. There is no program budget, and makes use of existing staff from the religious school and volunteers. Ushpizin on Wheels has become not only a popular family activity for the Religious School families, it also has provided a way to include members of the congregation who might not have children

in the Religious School but do have a Sukkah. The Beth David Rabbi and Men's Club have a good idea of who has a Sukkah from year to year, so compiling the list of possible stops on the tour is not difficult. Well ahead of the event, the Youth Education Director sends an e-mail out to those in close proximity of Beth David who are known to have a Sukkah – they are provided with an overview of the program – the time frame and expectations. Everyone who is willing is put into the tour – with a map of the route development once all the participants are identified. Year to year, the program has grown, with 60 participants this past year. In addition this past year a shorter route was also designed so that families with preschoolers could also participate. The congregants with a Sukkah love having the tour stop at the Sukkah and from year to year there has not only been an increase in the number of stops on the tour, but also the Sukkot have become more elaborate, as have the snacks that are provided! Lots of pictures are taken along the way which are then posted on the Beth David website and featured in the congregation newsletter to bring heightened awareness of the event and those who participate. The benefits are many. Family education is provided about Sukkot allowing for co-joint learning to occur about this holiday, the traditions. Some of the families who have participated in Ushpizin On Wheels have gone on to have a Sukkah of their own – evidence of the learning having an impact and helping younger families to meet some of the congregants that they might not otherwise meet and interact with. Once the meeting takes place in a member's Sukkah over a snack, they are more likely to interact when seeing each other in the future at services or other synagogue functions. This has created an opportunity for inter-generational learning and friendship.

Family Education - Bronze Award

DorWays

Shaare Zedek Synagogue; St. Louis, MO

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Gary Kodner**; gkodner@n-kcreative.com

DorWays brings together Shaare Zedek's younger members with or without children, single or married, to have their own programming within the synagogue. The purpose of our group is to share a common young family life while integrating into the larger Shaare Zedek community. We already have 60+ young families who belong to Shaare Zedek (and counting!)

Through a generous grant from the Crown Family Foundation, which has funded the creation of our young families chavurah (DorWays), we are proud to announce our own Jewish Environmental initiative here at ShaareZedek. Families with children in early elementary school are invited to be our primary shomrim, or guardians, of our very own garden. We will begin to compost appropriate food from our kitchens, research our carbon footprint, and learn about sustainable food, and more, all from a Jewish perspective, while planting and tending havdalah spices and vegetables. Each DorWays holiday celebration this year, from Sukkot to Tu b'Shevat, Chanukah to Purim, will have a green bent, with activities and fun that tie into Jewish environmentalism.

Family Education - Bronze Award

Congregation Beth Shalom; Atlanta, GA

Contact: **Loli Gross**; loli@bshalom.net

Family Education at Congregation Beth Shalom is designed to bring families together to learn about and experience Jewish holidays, rituals, and customs which can then become new family traditions. Formal programs include parallel learning sessions for parents and students in each grade level of the religious school. Students learn about holiday background and traditions, while parents learn more in-depth about observances and halacha surrounding each of the holidays. Each program also includes a hands-on learning experience with real take-home value for families to continue the practices they've learned.

Informal family education includes the annual family mitzvah day, where parents and children of all ages gather at the synagogue with one common goal – to help others. Children and adults are invited to tackle projects of various shapes and sizes all around the synagogue, including projects that will benefit those less fortunate in the community. Those who participate often give suggestions for new projects the following year, and feedback from those who participate year after year, is a positive, "it feels good to know we're helping others." This annual family education program gains strength in increased volunteer numbers and hours each year, as participants step forward to help others.

Family Education

Size Category:250-499

Fundraising - Gold Award

B'nai Shalom; West Orange, NJ

Contact: **Steve Coltin**; coughy1@aol.com

This year, B'nai Shalom held its first auction in over 10 years. This event, held on 12/11/10, was the culmination of a year long plan. The planning committee contained 5 core people. They laid out the plan and then formed 5 different committees. The committees included solicitation, catalogue, set-up, night of, and clean up. Each committee had a lead person who was responsible to get others to join and laid out a timetable in which to work. Over 100 congregants worked on the various committees. The entire project was coordinated by the laity of the congregation.

From May 2010, the congregation was sent information about the auction, which included save the date cards and a list of items to bid on in the live auction. These items included trips and sports memorabilia. At the end of August, information about the patron events was sent out. These events were so successful, that the venue for the first two was changed from an individual's home to the synagogue.

To let the community know about the event, advertisements were placed in the Jewish News, signs were put throughout the community, it was advertised on JM in the AM and there was a banner hanging up in the front of the synagogue.

A Night at the Auction

Size Category:250-499

Fundraising - Gold Award

Temple Beth Torah; Tamarac, FL

Contact: **Nathan Winton**; doobyman@aol.com

Temple Beth Torah was in need of a complete refurbishing. In addition to being over 34 years old, the building suffered greatly during Hurricane Wilma in October, 2005. As a result of this natural disaster,

Opening the Doors to a Bright New Future

Size Category: 250-499

not only was the second floor destroyed and rendered uninhabitable by the city of Tamarac, it was determined that in order to bring the building up to current code, the roof along with the entire infrastructure (including electric and plumbing) would need to be replaced. This meant that in addition to losing our Youth Lounge, Library and various classrooms, the cost to repair would easily be in excess of \$3 million. Shortly following the aftermath of Hurricane Wilma, the City of Tamarac approached Temple Beth Torah with a proposal to purchase our existing building and land, deed us a piece of property 2 blocks west of the existing facility and also provide us with enough funds to be able to build our new building. While the footprint is substantially smaller than our original location, and while many members were not happy with the idea of moving, the handwriting was on the wall – this came at the time of the peak of the housing market and real estate was expensive. We either took this opportunity or remained in debt with a dilapidated, outdated building. We took the opportunity, and what a gift it has proven to be.

We initiated a Capital Campaign that focused on development strategies to support the furnishing of the new facility as well as several opportunities for general fundraising. These allowed us to move into our new home mortgage free. Our campaign was so successful that we exceeded our initial goal of 1.2 million dollars by 0.7 million dollars. Our fundraising initiatives have resulted in a net gain of \$40,000 to date and we are continuing to implement new events. In addition to our annual events including the Golf Tournament, Sisterhood Fashion Show and Cantorial Concert, we held our Inaugural Gala in our new building, hosted a red, white and kosher wine and food pairing event, a night of 1,000 laughs. We also developed and implemented our Tree of Life campaign, which has to date raised of \$4,700 and still going strong.

Fundraising - Gold Award

Congregation Beth Shalom; Atlanta, GA

Contact: **Loli Gross**; loli@bshalom.net

Fundraising

Size Category:250-499

Fundraising is an integral part of our synagogues operation. If dues were high enough to cover the synagogues expenses, it would put membership costs out of the reach for many in our community. We rely on our donors to help us bridge this gap and welcome everyone in our community who is seeking to make Congregation Beth Shalom their spiritual home.

- Stan Schwartz, VP of Development, and his committee have done a phenomenal job this year developing new and creative events and activities to help raise money and address the challenging economy that has impacted so many Synagogues similar to Beth Shalom. Our fundraisers this year include The Book of Life, An On-line Auction, ongoing Secure our Future campaign, The 36th Anniversary Celebration Gala Dinner & Dance, and our community Simcha Expo. All of these are critical to the financial well-being of Beth Shalom and help to keep our dues, tuitions and other fees at a reasonable level. By offering a wide range of fundraising programs, it's our hope that there will be at least one event or activity that appeals to each of our members... and in that way, we can all play a role in strengthening our financial well-being.

Fundraising - Gold Award

Battle of the Bands

Beth Israel Congregation; Owings Mills, MD

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Elizabeth Schuman;** easchuman@comcast.net

Take three local bands. Stir in food and drink. Add a huge silent auction with more than 100 must-have items. Mix with more than 350 members and friends of Beth Israel. What do you have? Battle of the Bands II. The March 5 event at Beth Israel Congregation in Owings Mills, Md. raised funds, raised visibility, and, in effect, raised the roof for a rocking good time. Here's what happened:

Battle of the Bands II built on the success of the inaugural music event in 2010. The three bands, two of which happened to have Beth Israel members, took one-hour turns on stage to showcase classic rock songs from the 60s, 70s, and 80s – with some 90s tunes as well. Enhancing the musical fare was complimentary food, a cash bar, and a jam-packed silent auction with such items as restaurant gift certificates, airline tickets, jewelry, hotel stays, tickets to regional attractions, and even a chance to play with each of the bands.

With its energetic vibe, the occasion appealed to a cross-section of congregants: tried and true synagogue supporters as well as members and non-members who rarely attended synagogue functions. More than \$12,000 was raised for general fundraising. The event realized significant donations in financial support, merchandise for the auction, and services. Though the event's moniker implied a "battle," it was all in good fun as the bands played for the appreciative crowd. The ultimate winner: the Beth Israel family.

Fundraising - Silver Award

Parlor Concert

Congregation Beth Yeshurun; Houston, TX

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Luis Dorfman;** ldorfman@bethyeshurun.org

Beth Yeshurun has typically relied on an annual Cantor's Concert and Kol Nidre Appeal to raise funds in excess of dues to support the operations budget for the congregation. In 2010-2011, Beth Yeshurun established a "Special Events" Committee, chaired by Vice President Alan Levin, to create and implement additional special events to supplement revenues for the budget. One of the events was a special, intimate parlor concert by our Hazzan David Propis (in addition to the larger, community-wide Cantor's Concert). A financial goal was committed for \$10,000.

The event was chaired by Vice President Alan Levin and Hazzan David Propis, with assistance from Program Director Tammy Friedman, the Hazzan's assistant Hilary Nitsun, and Executive Director Lu Dorfman. The event was hosted in the home of one of our congregants. Two primary levels of sponsorships were established -- platinum level (\$5,000) and gold level (\$1,000). Attendance was limited to 25 attendees.

Hazzan Propis accompanied himself on piano. His repertoire for the evening included songs of prayer, Yiddish, Broadway and other popular music. The Hazzan shared personal insights and nostalgia. Desserts were personally prepared by Adele Croft, wife of our President, who is a gourmet cook. No one wanted the event to end. It was an intimate, lovely and remarkable evening.

\$23,000 (net) was raised, for exceeding the goal of \$10,000.

Fundraising - Bronze Award

Congregation Beth Yeshurun; Houston, TX

Contact: **Luis Dorfman**; ldorfman@bethyeshurun.org

Beth Yeshurun has typically relied on an annual Cantor's Concert and Kol Nidre Appeal to raise funds in excess of dues to support the operations budget for the congregation. In 2010-2011, Beth Yeshurun established a "Special Events" Committee, chaired by Vice President Alan Levin, to create and implement additional special events to supplement revenues for the budget. One of the events was golf tournament. Our financial goal was \$10,000 since this was a first time event.

A small committee was created to develop and manage the event. The co-chairs of the event were two volunteers – Murray Kalmin (a Board member) and Michael Wiesenthal – and the congregation's Executive Director, Lu Dorfman. The co-chairs recruited other congregants to help solicit sponsors and golfers. Tonya Steagall of the administrative staff was assigned to provide primary clerical assistance and Program Director Tammy Friedman and Publications Coordinator Lisa Unsell provided creative promotional graphics and publicity materials.

Major operational decisions were made by the co-chairs – course selections, golf format, negotiation of greens fees, date, prizes, etc. The course selected – Tour 18 – is well known for its layout (each of the 18 holes is modeled after different holes on the PGA tour, including "Amen Corner" of the "Masters" tournament at Augusta National Golf Club) and their accommodations for charity tournaments. The format was a non-handicapped four-person shotgun-start scramble with a maximum score on any hole of "bogey" (one over par) to maintain the speed of play.

The premise of the event was (1) golfers like to play golf, and (2) the focus on the sponsorships could and should be vendors, not congregants. Financial success was predicated on successful solicitations of sponsors. Two levels of sponsorships were established – tournament sponsors (\$2,000 to \$4,000) and individual hole sponsors (\$500 each). Four tournament sponsors and 20 hole sponsors signed up. Golf registration was set at \$500 per foursome (\$125 a player). Registration included golf and cart, driving range, kosher lunch, and gift bags. 72 golfers – male and female – participated. Awards were also given for first, second and third place teams, longest drive, and closest to the pin. A raffle was also held with a flat-screen TV and domestic airline tickets as prizes.

Over \$22,000 (net) was raised, far exceeding the goal of \$10,000. The golf was extremely successful – players are already asking about next year. It is contemplated that this event will become an annual one.

HAZAK - Gold Award

Bellmore Jewish Center; Bellmore, NY

Contact: **William Berkowitz**; ebberko@aol.com

Since 2003, the year in which it was founded, the Hazak Chapter of the Bellmore Jewish Center has continued to show extraordinary growth in membership and participation in its myriad activities as the need for programs for the growing senior population in our (Long Island, NY) community persists, as evidenced by a membership now surpassing 220 people.

Golf Tournament

Size Category:900+

HAZAK

Size Category:101-249

The injunction in the Introduction to the “Hazak Chapter Manual” that states that “Hazak affirms that mature adults should have the opportunity to continue to learn and be active in the congregations, their communities and among themselves” still resonates strongly among the members of the Bellmore Jewish Center Hazak Chapter who continue to participate in the ambitious and extensive program of activities – in-house presentations, trip, social gatherings, religious functions, community events, etc. – made available to them.

The contents of this entry describe the many and varied activities offered to and shared by members of the Bellmore Jewish Center Hazak Chapter. Guest speakers offered presentations on political and religious issues, current events, art, music, literature, humor, Yiddish culture and history, and Holocaust remembrances. Frequent trips took members to various historical and art museums, many with Jewish-oriented exhibits, and to theater performances (including the Folksbiene Theatre) both local and in New York City. Sponsored by the Chapter, The Folksbiene Troupe will return to the synagogue for a second engagement of a Yiddish musical revue in June, 2011. For the first time, an extended trip has been planned (three days, two nights) to the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, MA and other sights in that area during July 2011. Together, Hazak members organized and led Hazak Shabbatim and Yom Hashoah Commemorations. An annual Chanukkah Party with entertainment and traditional foods is a winter highlight. Game Days, afternoons when members congregate at the synagogue to engage in games – mah jongg, canasta, bridge, and Scrabble – bring people together socially and have promoted new groups to meet privately in their homes. A Sunshine Committee recognizes life-cycle events of our members.

HAZAK - Gold Award

HAZAK

Congregation Beth David; Saratoga, CA

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Howard Gannes**; hazak@compular.com

Our congregation Beth David Hazak chapter was organized more than 7 ½ years ago. Today, our e-mail communication list includes more than 400 people. We now address almost 60% of our synagogue membership. In addition, our outreach extends beyond Beth David to Jews in the local community whose age is 55 or older. Through our events, 10 to 20 unaffiliated attendees are regularly exposed to Judaism via a Conservative synagogue. Since inception, Hazak has sponsored 58 functions with attendance averaging 50-80 people per event. We communicate with Hazak members generally via e-mail, also making information available in the synagogue’s weekly Shabbat bulletin (print and e-mail) as well as congregation mid-month mailers. We generally publicize each event three or four times, and this repeated publicity (via e-mail) significantly contributes to event success. Reservations, like publicity, are generally made via e-mail.

Congregation Beth David has formally accepted Hazak as an affiliate organization (like Sisterhood and Men’s Club). We are completely self-funding. We also generally have at least one event a year designed to raise funds for supporting the religious school and priority synagogue programs. We were granted our charter in June 2005, and we remain the only Hazak group in Northern California.

The Congregation Beth David Hazak chapter is a vibrant and strong organization, and attendance and support continues to be phenomenal. As we complete our seventh year, we have struck a responsive chord with an important segment of our congregants – members aged 55 and older. We are arguably the most active group in the synagogue, and we look forward to more exciting events and continued growth.

HAZAK - Gold Award

HAZAK

Temple Emunah; Lexington, MA

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Lester Macklin;** admin@emunahlex.org

Demographics are changing the ratio of ages at Temple Emunah. Seniors now make up about half the membership. About 42% of our chapter population is not members of Temple Emunah as we draw from some 12 surrounding communities. In an effort to keep all our members up to date, a copy of the 55+ HAPPENINGS informational column, which appears in the Temple Emunah monthly newsletter, is included with each monthly mailing to our members. For temple members who are not computer-literate, arrangements are made to send copies of important Temple email notices to them by weekly delivery via US Postal Service.

Our chapter's calendar lists a Break-the-Fast meal, monthly breakfasts with an included program, breakfast Board of Directors meetings on Tuesday prior to the Sunday breakfast, matinee movies during winter months, a book club, afternoon weekly bridge games, plus day and overnight bus trips to round out the calendar activities.

Being a Charter Member of HAZAK was the foresight of the first president of our group. We are glad to see the growth of the organization (HAZAK) meaning development of better communication between chapters and programs made available beyond the ability of single chapters, such as trips to Israel.

HAZAK - Gold Award

Aging Matters: Helpful Answers to Complex Questions About Growing Older

Beth Israel Congregation; Owings Mills, MD

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Sheri Knauth;** biomprograms@comcast.net

Beth Israel Congregation hosted a communitywide event for seniors, their family members and caregivers: Aging Matters: Helpful Answers to Complex Questions About Growing Older. Held on Sunday, March 27, the half-day event featured keynote speaker William H. Thomas, M.D., Professor, Erickson School, UMBC, and international authority on geriatric medicine and eldercare, who discussed Eldertopia: The Rise of New Old Age. This conference brought together leading experts on Elder Care Lifestyles, Health Care, Law, and Family. We recognize the growing Senior Population and Diverse Needs of this population at Beth Israel and the Jewish community at large.

HAZAK - Gold Award

The "Joy of Life" Series and the Social Scene

B'nai Torah Congregation; Boca Raton, FL

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Cheri Kalvort;** Cheri.kalvort@bnai-torah.org

B'nai Torah Congregation's Hazak "Joy of Life Series" in Boca Raton, Florida brings entertaining, yet stimulating programs to our large mostly-retired senior population. Always including a D'var Torah from one of our rabbis or educators, and coffee and cookies, these afternoon events usually attract 120-300 people.

From a Klezmer band to Yiddish comedy to musical virtuosi, the programs bring friendship, joy, ruach and thought-provoking discussion to our members and seasonal visitors to our community. Chaired by

Dr. Bernard Metrick, the Hazak group is a cohesive organization that is always available when needed, and willing and helpful. Hazak members conduct a Hazak Havdallah Service and inspire the younger generations. Many of our active Hazak members are well into their 90's and add to the multi-generational aspect of our shul. Hazak is an asset to our congregation and an example of how the wonderful golden years can enrich one's life.

In addition, B'nai Torah's "The Social Scene" ... a sensational place for seniors, began this year. It's a way to schmooze with shul friends without any hassle, watch movies, play games and be together. So much to do for our beloved seniors!

HAZAK - Silver Award

HAZAK

Temple Beth Sholom; Cherry Hill, NJ

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Saul Grossmann;** saulmir@comcast.net

Temple Beth Sholom's HAZAK chapter has had innovative programs in 2010-2011. They have included concerts by The Biava Quartet, Davyd Booth of the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Nostalgics, and the Odessa Klezmer Band. With a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, professors from Rutgers university -- Professor Leslie Fishbein who discussed Anna Yeziarska "Sweet Shop Cinderella" and Michael Rockland, American Jewish Authors. Both of these were evening programs in an effort to engage those members still employed or otherwise engaged at the time of our Tuesday afternoon monthly meetings. We cooperated with the Auerbach Center for Outreach to read and discuss the chosen books for One Book, One Jewish Community: All Other Nights and By Fire By Water. The TBS Book Club joined our meetings for this discussion. Breakfast meetings on Sunday mornings were co-sponsored with Men's Club, Sisterhood and the Jewish War Veterans. A special Sunday breakfast in collaboration with the pre-school board and staff, and Sisterhood focused on autism with professionals involved in diagnosis and treatment as discussants. 30 people participated in a trip on March 15 to the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia. Other programs have featured humor, exercise, genealogy, 300 Ways to Celebrate the Seder. Most programs have had an audience of 70-100 members. HAZAK members participate in Mitzvah Day, Cooking for the Needy, help with the school's Purim Carnival and prepare synagogue mailings. Several are also involved in Lunch and Learn. At least six are members of the TBS choir.

HAZAK has collaborated with the Jewish Community Center. This summer's program at Camp Kislak at Lake Como, PA has been advertised as South Jersey at Kislak. Interest in our programs has stimulated 40 people who are non-members of TBS to join and participate actively.

HAZAK - Bronze Award

Shabbat Dinner and Service to Honor All Veterans

B'nai Shalom of Olney; Olney, MD

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Linda Reba;** lereba@comcast.net

To honor all who serve our country past and present, we planned a special dinner and service. We invited the local Jewish War Veterans Post to join us. Our social hall was decorated in red, white and blue. We had centerpieces with the American Flag. After a delicious meal our cantor, Hazzan Geller, distributed song sheets she had prepared. Along with patriotic songs, each service branch song was included. She also had the Jewish War Veterans song. Everyone joined in some robust singing.

Then it was time for Friday night services. Our sanctuary was filled. We had some special musical accompaniment to the prayers. Rabbi Sunshine led the service. He spoke about the service our veterans perform. He had all the veterans stand and be acknowledged. The evening was highlighted by a speaker, Lieutenant Colonel Miriam Rothchild, a decorated military veteran and member of both our congregation and Jewish War Veterans Post 567. To bridge the generations, we had a recently retired Army congregant read the prayer for our country.

Our publicity for the event began in September with an ad in our Annual Synagogue Program and Information Guide. We spoke about this event at our October meeting. We sent an e-mail invitation to the entire congregation followed by an e-mail reminder to our Hazak members. The dinner and service was announced from the bimah and in the congregation weekly e-mail announcements. We also did personal word of mouth.

The Hazak Steering Committee had the idea for the event in the spring of 2010. We met with the Rabbi and the Executive Director and the idea took off. Our chairmen made calls to co-ordinate the evening. The food was catered by our local kosher caterer and handled by our Executive Director.

HAZAK - Bronze Award

Jewish Mission Trip to Cuba Presentation

Congregation Anshai Torah; Plano, TX

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Sandy Balis**; sbalis@shelton.org

On August 29, 2010 at Congregation Anshai Torah's Hazak's annual paid-up membership dinner, Michelle Meiches, Executive Vice President, Congregation Anshai Torah and her husband Mark entertained us with their fascinating and meaningful story of their Jewish Mission trip to Cuba.

In May,2010, Michelle and Mark traveled with her parents and a group from the JCC of San Francisco on a weeklong mission trip to Cuba. The group traveled to meet, learn about, and bring tzedakah to the Jewish communities in the cities of Santiago de Cuba and Havana. But Michelle and her parents had a personal agenda as well. Michelle's family lived in Cuba for approximately 10 years after leaving Russia in the 1920's. Her mother was born in Havana, but left as an infant and had never returned to see the place of her birth until this trip.

They held our attention for almost 2-hours telling the story of their emotional trip in words and with 260 power point slides. After the presentation Michelle and Mark joined the 70 (out of 101 members) Hazak members in attendance for a fantastic dinner prepared by the shul's kitchen staff.

HAZAK - Bronze Award

The Rape of Europa and The Monuments Men

Temple Sinai; Dresher, PA

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Betsy Lewinson**; betsysewitup@live.com

The first phase of the program was to present the film "The Rape of Europa" which chronicles the Nazi efforts to confiscate and destroy the cultural treasures of Europe and the efforts of the special US Army corps of artists, conservators and architects who were assigned the task of uncovering and protecting the monuments, fine arts, and archives. This corps became known as "The Monuments Men". (Because

there was such high interest within the congregation about this film, we presented it again the following week.)

The second aspect of our double header was the presentation of a guest speaker, Harry Ettlinger. This octogenarian is the only living person featured in Robert M. Edsel, 's book titled "The Monuments Men". Mr. Edsel researches the efforts of each monuments man who marched through northern Europe along side the allied troops. Neither artist nor conservator, Mr. Ettlinger became a part of this special force because of his fluency in German. His personal history of escape from Germany as a child as well as his adventures with the Monuments Men as an eighteen year old draftee created a spell-binding morning. Again, because of high interest, Sisterhood and Men's Club joined us in promoting this standing-room-only Sunday brunch event.

Holocaust Remembrance and Education - Gold Award

Holocaust Education and Outreach

Congregation Agudas Israel; Saskatoon, SASK

Size Category:101-249

Contact: **Simonne Horwitz**; simonne.horwitz@usask.ca

For our small community of about 100 families, Holocaust Remembrance and Education is a priority. We are a community that benefitted from the presence of a number of survivors who settled in Saskatoon after the War; we are a community made up of members who suffered the losses of the Shoah; and we are a community who strives to always bear witness and to educate Jews and non-Jews about the Holocaust in the hope that "never Again" will have meaning for communities around the world. Our holocaust education program as a whole strives to use the lessons of the holocaust to teach tolerance and the importance of the human rights of all. This is particularly important in light of recent events in Saskatchewan.

As will be outlined in more detail below our program has three intertwined branches. The first branch is the education of our Jewish youth; almost all of our eligible youth take part in the Asper Holocaust and Human Rights program and in the March of Living. Our second branch focuses on the general education of the public and of non-Jewish school students. Our holocaust outreach program enters into individual classes at schools and in 2009, 2010 and again this year we had 2,000 students hearing the stories of survivors. This takes place on the Thursday and Friday before our Sunday Memorial Service. Our final branch is that of remembrance which we do through ceremonies such as the Raoul Wallenberg Memorial in January each year. All these branches all come together in our annual Holocaust Memorial service held on a Sunday in May of each year. This year CAI welcomed 700 members of the public to our display and service.

Holocaust Remembrance and Education - Gold Award

Tolerance Education Program

Congregation Gesher L'Torah; Alpharetta, GA

Size Category:101-249

Contact: **Steve Sutton**; info@gltorah.org

In keeping with the fervent commitment to Holocaust Education, Congregation Gesher L'Torah exemplifies its commitment to "z'chor al-tishkach", "Remember, do not forget" in every aspect of its presence in the Atlanta community, from its physical building, congregational programming, and religious school education, to its original community outreach programming, named "The Tolerance Education Program". The themes of remembrance and tolerance permeate all of our congregational and

religious school programming. To maintain our presence in the community, we have a separate, ever-growing website, www.embracingtolerance.com, dedicated to Holocaust education. Our unique program that brings public middle school students to our workshops has been recognized in local newspapers several times in the last two years. Our building, barely three years old, includes a Holocaust Memorial Wall inscribed with names of victims of the Holocaust, primarily children, and funded by donations from congregants and around the world. It is currently the only such memorial in the North Atlanta suburbs, filling a void in our metropolitan area. Along with its accompanying Monuments to the Righteous of the Nations, the Wall is truly a gesher, a bridge, that connects generations and opens dialogue, fulfills the Jewish imperative of Tikkun Olam, and ties the lessons of the past to the challenges of the present to create a brighter future.

Additionally, the Tolerance Education Program has developed a dynamic workshop format designed to educate our target audience of 6th through 8th graders on the effects of unchecked hatred, intolerance, and apathy. Lessons learned by studying the history of the Holocaust, as well as genocides in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur, give students the opportunity to create bridges between these historical examples and events playing out within their own lives and in schools today. We hope to create more sensitive citizens who will model tolerance in the face of different racial, cultural, social, and religious differences that exist among their peers.

Another component of our program is our Trunk Program. These trunks are refurbished FEMA disaster trunks that we invite schools and community groups to embellish with artistic interpretations. The trunks are then filled with instructional aides, designed to teach social consciousness and good citizenship thus making students aware of personal responsibility and moral courage. The trunks teach about genocide with age-sensitive materials that encompass both social studies and language arts. Once these trunks are complete they will be distributed to underserved areas through Regional Libraries across the state of Georgia. The libraries will then allow materials to be checked out by educators in that local area for use in their schools.

Together, all these program components deliver the message of survival, courage, and the importance of tolerance. The pervasive message is the reminder that freedom is a privilege that each individual must guard with diligence."

Holocaust Remembrance and Education - Gold Award

Holocaust Learning Center

Temple Torah of West Boynton Beach; Boynton Beach, FL

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Esther Adler**; esteedler@aol.com

With the establishment of the Holocaust Learning Center at Temple Torah of West Boynton Beach in 2008, Shoah Related events assumed a more prominent place in the life of the synagogue. We now had the physical capacity and the academic ability to plan and offer a greater variety of programs that were open to the community at large. Joint Yom Hashoah events were planned with the JCC and neighboring synagogues.

An affiliation with the Center of Holocaust and Human Rights of Florida University enriched our library and resulted in a number of joint programs. Our teleconferencing equipment brought Professor Yehuda Bauer into our HLC for an exciting lecture. We plan to contact other lecturers to reach us via this equipment.

The acquisition of DVD's made it possible to initiate a very successful film program that includes introductions and discussions after screening. We invited prominent lecturers, cantors and musicians to enhance our programs. The religious school avails itself of our resources. The translation of Shoah related documents is an ongoing process.

It is our hope that we will be able to expand our programs to include the public school population and non-Jewish institutions. However, we feel that we have accomplished much in the short time of our existence.

Holocaust Remembrance and Education - Silver Award
Holocaust Remembrance at the Yorktown Jewish Center

Yorktown Jewish Center; Yorktown Heights, NY

Size Category:101-249

Contact: **Sol Krongelb;** solkron@optonline.net

Since 1999, the Yorktown Jewish Center has built interest in the study of the Shoah throughout the year and promoted remembrance of the victims on Yom Hashoah by creating a new, original program for each year's commemoration. Each program is designed to honor the memory of those perished by involving the attendees in an educational and emotionally significant experience. 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 gather 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 Orot Committee (formerly known as the Adult Educational Committee) responsibility for the Yom Hashoah commemoration, all arms of the synagogue including Sisterhood, Men's Club and the Religious School are 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 enables each attendee to light a personal memorial to the victims.

The following pages describe The SHOAH – Remembrance and Issues of Faith and The Shoah – Portraits in Fortitude, the commemoration events for 2010/5770 and 2011/5771, respectively, along with other activities in the synagogue which are related to these programs and which contribute to Holocaust study throughout the year. Because the Yom Hashoah commemoration this year takes place on the evening of May 2 after the submission deadline, the section on Portraits in Fortitude in this submission describes the program as planned. However, we have found that our congregants have been profoundly moved by our past programs, and we believe that the current program will be similarly received. In fact, attendance at our annual Yom Hashoah commemoration has been increasing from year to year to the point where the sanctuary was essentially filled for the 2010/5770 event. Also, congregants have been showing a greater interest in remembrance of the Shoah throughout the year by contacting the committee to suggest material for the next program. This entry is submitted with the hope that other synagogues will be able to adapt elements of our approach to their own Holocaust programs with equally effective results.

Holocaust Remembrance and Education - Silver Award

Students Bearing Witness

B'nai Israel Congregation; Rockville, MD

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Deedee Jacobsohn**; deedee@jacobsohn.org

Our "Students Bearing Witness" class allowed a group of our Talmud Torah Upper School students the unique opportunity to really learn what it means to "bear witness" to the atrocities of the Holocaust.

What started out as a class project where students could learn to take oral histories of Holocaust survivors, evolved into a meaningful and lasting experience for the students, the survivors, their families and our congregation. The "Students Bearing Witness" class, a 12-week old session held during Tuesday night Talmud Torah Upper School, allowed the students to really get to know 3 Holocaust survivors with 3 completely different stories.

This class was funded through an Initiative in Congregational Education grant from the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. The idea for this class was to answer a need for students who wished to expand upon the foundation of Holocaust studies which is a major part of the 7th grade Judaic Studies curriculum.

The class began with the students discussing their goals and brainstorming questions that would be asked of the survivors who volunteered to tell their stories. Heidi Krizer Daroff, their teacher, brought in members of our congregation who have expertise in the fields of journalism and Holocaust education to teach the students proper interview techniques and the sensitivity needed when working with Holocaust survivors.

The students planned to film each of the stories; however, the class took on a whole new level when Geoff Chesman, a professional videographer and the grandchild of a Holocaust survivor himself, agreed to donate his equipment, time, and talent to his worthwhile project. Geoff let the class know that not only would he help, but together they were going to create a documentary of the survivors and their stories.

Holocaust Remembrance and Education - Bronze Award

Spokane Community Observance of the Holocaust

Temple Beth Shalom; Spokane, WA

Size Category:101-249

Contact: **Hershel Zellman**; zellpeople@comcast.net

In the past, Yom HaShoah was observed by a small portion of the Temple Beth Shalom community. In 1995, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the camps, the organizers expanded the Observance to the wider community in Spokane. Participation of local clergy, political leaders, school choirs and keynote speakers changed the Yom HaShoah observance from an almost unnoticed event to a Spokane Community Observance of the Holocaust, attended by 350-400 people with 2/3 of the audience being non-Jews. Traditional elements of the observance include the Mayor's presentation of a Proclamation for Holocaust Observance Week, readings from the "Megilat HaShoah", a Children's Candle Processional (which includes children from both Temple Beth Shalom and the Reform congregation), music by members of the Spokane Youth Symphony, and a candle lighting ceremony honoring Holocaust survivors, children and grandchildren of survivors, and survivors of contemporary genocides (eg., Sudan, Rwanda, Bosnia). Poetry and songs from the Holocaust as well as instrumental music have enhanced the mood of the program. Keynote speakers have included Jews and non-Jews, survivors, a newspaper

editor, Holocaust educators, Harold Kushner, and, this year, an Adventist minister who stayed to protect lives in the Rwandan genocide. Students from a local high school's media class video-document the service. People leaving the services comment on how much they learned and how worthwhile the evening was for them.

Five years ago the organizing committee added another dimension to its objective of teaching about the Holocaust. To increase awareness of the Holocaust among the youth of Spokane, each fall a Holocaust-themed creative writing contest is promoted to all area high school students. Past subjects of the contest have included: Holocaust denial, how someone becomes a rescuer, and how ordinary people are corrupted to participate in genocide. This year, the essay prompt asked students to imagine they were child survivors of the Holocaust, and to write about the lessons they would want to teach their children. 52 quality entries were received. Three winners were chosen and all received a monetary scholarship and had their compositions published by the local newspaper. The first place winner also received a trophy and read his entry at the Yom HaShoah service.

The Temple Beth Shalom community has been very supportive of the organizing committee's efforts. In 2005 a Holocaust Memorial Sculpture was dedicated on the grounds of the synagogue. Last year the Board authorized the creation of the Yom HaShoah Fund, which has since received many generous donations. This will allow the committee to expand the creative writing contest to middle schoolers next year.

Holocaust Remembrance and Education - Bronze Award

Beth Israel Butterfly Project 2009

Beth Israel Congregation; Owings Mills, MD

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Sheri Knauth**; biomprograms@comcast.net

The Beth Israel Religious School hosted 350 participants from grades kindergarten through grade 10th in an age-appropriate Yom HaShoah activity which lasted from Winter 2009 through Spring 2009. "Beth Israel Butterfly Project 2009" was an opportunity for students to take an active part in commemorating the Holocaust through Jewish acts. The theme underlying the collection of the butterflies was "For we must remember to never forget". The collection of 1,500 butterflies signified the modified number 1.5 million – the number of children who were murdered during the Holocaust.

Inclusion - Gold Award

The Alefbet Preschool

Congregation Beth Shalom; Atlanta, GA

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Loli Gross**; loli@bshalom.net

Established in 1998, the Alefbet Preschool and Camp Alefbet provide a stimulating environment specifically designed for early childhood development Judaically and emotionally. Each child has a unique potential, which develops through the unfolding of innate capabilities through experience and environment. Our preschool has always been a partner with early intervention. Our director is a participant in Atlanta's AMIT Early intervention Task Force.

The Alefbet Preschool has always been an environment willing and open to children that learn differently. We have an open door policy when it comes to additional therapies that a child might need. We believe that it takes a village and are willing to go above and beyond for the success of all children.

Inclusion - Gold Award

Do Not Put Stumbling Blocks

B'nai Amoona; St. Louis, MO

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Lester Goldman;** lesterhgoldman@gmail.com

There are all kinds of stumbling blocks which must be eliminated so all persons, young and old, able and not so able, regardless of lifestyle can feel fully included in the life of our synagogue community.

Over the years we at B'nai Amoona have embarked on a mission to remove those stumbling blocks one by one. To date we have: redesigned our bimah to make it more accessible and less remote; authorized our Klei Kodesh to perform commitment ceremonies for gay and lesbian couples in a committed and loving relationship and recognize them and their children in the same manner as we would married persons and their children; provided the means by which students with physical disabilities and learning differences are able to fully participate and be included in all the learning experiences offered by our religious school, Pardes; established, through the generosity of two families, a fund titled the Vishinantam Levanecha Fund to provide financial assistance for our inclusion efforts; and published, in memory of Pearl Alex, through the generosity of her husband, Dr. Morris Alex, a literal translation and transliteration of Siddur Sim Shalom for the Sabbath and Festivals (based on the one created by F. Ephraim Linker) with modifications suitable for our Congregation to help people for whom Hebrew is a challenge, to more comfortably participate and feel included in our Services.

Inclusion - Silver Award

Minyan Meyuchad

B'nai Shalom; West Orange, NJ

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Susan Andron;** susantober@comcast.net

Minyan Meyuchad is a monthly Jewish Shabbat service and afternoon experiential education program that takes place at B'nai Shalom Synagogue in West Orange. The minyan serves young adults and adults with developmental disabilities.

Minyan Meyuchad members come together to sing, pray, learn, ask questions, eat lunch and socialize in a warm, spiritual environment where all are welcome. Members often bring non-Jewish friends who also enjoy sharing in the day's activities and the camaraderie they have established over the years.

A special siddur (prayer book) created for Minyan Meyuchad allows each congregant to use the book with little or no assistance. Prayers have been simplified to allow for greater understanding by the congregants. Senior high school students work as volunteers at each minyan to allow congregants to participate to their maximum potential.

The monthly Minyan is divided into three parts: the morning component (approximately 11:00 am – 12:15 pm) is the religious service where members pray, sing, and enjoy coming to the Torah for an aliyah (blessing) before the reading of the weekly Torah portion; lunch is provided from 12:15 pm – 1:00 pm; and from 1:00 pm – 3 pm members share in study, discussion, song and life stories and experiences.

Inclusion - Silver Award

Aliyah Campaign

Congregation Ohev Shalom; Wallingford, PA

Size Category: 250-499

Contact: **Bonnie Breit**; bonnieb1@comcast.net

Ohev Shalom is known as a welcoming community. Over the past several years, it became increasingly apparent that our congregants were changing. We began seeing our members aging and not moving around quite so spryly, and we began to have some younger member families with children, some with special needs. Recognizing the need to accommodate these subtle changes, we believed it essential to remove both the physical and programmatic barriers preventing access for our community. We never really separated the two ideas, but rather began the journey of inclusion on both levels.

We engaged our programming committees to find products and activities to engage our member with diverse need, such as large print siddurim and training to better address our children with special needs. Our congregants are thrilled when children who might not have been included in past decades are able to celebrate their b'nai mitzvah with our community.

Our one story building designed in the 60's, accessible for walkers or wheelchairs throughout most of the space challenged us only in the main sanctuary as our bimah had a raised platform, requiring six steps to access it. Therefore, we decided to try to raise the funds for an accessible design, had an anonymous congregant donor give us a challenge grant for \$20,000 and through community outreach, we successfully raised over \$47,000 to create a solution with a hydraulic lift. We finished with the help of both state and county licensure representatives, which allowed a long time congregant to take his first Aliyah on the Bimah in over 20 years at the High Holidays 2010!

Inclusion - Silver Award

Kesher

Temple Beth Tzedek; Amherst, NY

Size Category: 500-899

Contact: **Janet Gunner**; jmgunner@aol.com

The Temple Beth Tzedek Kesher Program is the vehicle for actualizing a core value of Temple Beth Tzedek as articulated in our mission statement, that: "We view all human beings with infinite dignity, created in the image of God." Indelibly woven into our being is the knowledge that our humanity and our need for relationship, community, worship and learning – a life of Torah- are undiminished by disability, illness frailty and loss.

Inclusion of individuals with disabilities in our synagogue programs has been developed and implemented expansively, passionately and effectively by our entire Temple Beth Tzedek ("Beth Tzedek") congregation, through our Kesher (Bikur Cholim) program.

Kesher means connection. Kesher was formed in 2000 to strengthen connections with all members of our community, especially those isolated by illness, surgery, loss, frailty, disability and care provider duties.

Led by Rabbi Perry Netter, with Cantor Mark Spindler and a synagogue community of lay leaders and congregants, Kesher has been elevated to become an enduring pillar of our synagogue, seamlessly integrated into our synagogue mission and daily synagogue life. Beth Tzedek has defined and distinguished itself by its deep, caring commitment to meaningful synagogue outreach to help reduce the

painful isolation of illness, disability, frailty and loss. Every Beth Tzedek member of every age is a member of Keshet, at times providing Keshet services, at times receiving Keshet services.

Inclusion - Silver Award

Our Space

Valley Beth Shalom; Encino, CA and Temple Aliyah; Woodland Hills, CA **Size Category:500-899**

Contact: **Irv Weintraub; president@vbs.org**

OurSpace offers a full range of learning, social, and spiritual Jewish experiences, such as educational classes, youth groups, a choir, and an arts program. Each of these experiences aims to empower participants so that they are confident to live a full Jewish life and participate as active members of the Jewish community. Moreover, OurSpace intends for its participants and their families to experience the embrace of a warm and welcoming Jewish community, indeed an inclusive Jewish "space." Accordingly, the OurSpace classes are warm and safe places that boast a very low student-teacher ratio, in which each student's placement is based upon individual ability and need. The OurSpace director and staff seek to meet the educational, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of the participants, as well as those of their families. All of this results in a warm, active environment where creative teachers differentiate instructional techniques and students thrive socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

Susan North Gilboa is the Director of OurSpace. She collaborates with the Valley Beth Shalom rabbis, cantors, educators, youth director, executive director, and lay leaders, as OurSpace programs associate with various synagogue departments. It is also worth noting that OurSpace collaborates with several community organizations, such as Camp Ramah in Ojai, CA, the USY Hevrah youth program, the Conejo Valley Friendship Circle, and Etta Israel Independent Adult Homes.

Overall, the OurSpace is a successful way for the synagogue to work together to serve Jewish individuals and families with special needs. Undoubtedly, OurSpace has enriched not only the Jewish lives (and life, in general) of countless families and individuals with special needs, but also the Jewish community that has supported it and has been touched by it.

Inclusion - Bronze Award

Inclusion Committee

Beth El Congregation of the South Hills; Pittsburgh, PA

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Joan Charlson;**

In the Fall of 2010 Beth El Congregation in Pittsburgh created an Inclusion Committee, initially consisting of parents of children with special needs and the professional staff of the Congregation. One of our first tasks was to develop a Mission Statement that guides us on our journey towards ensuring that our synagogue serves as a model of inclusion for other synagogues to follow. At our second Disability Awareness Shabbat Service in February, 2011 children with special needs took parts in the service; Religious School students signed the She'ma, and adults with physical limitations were on the Bimah for an aliyah. A lunch and learn panel session explored the challenges that parents of children with special needs face both within and outside of the synagogue. We continue to examine the subject of inclusion for all persons within our synagogue community.

Inclusion - Bronze Award

Committee on Inclusion

Congregation Beth Yeshurun; Houston, TX

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Richard Kammerman**; richardkammerman@sbcglobal.net

Congregation Beth Yeshurun, the largest Synagogue member of the USCJ, has always prided itself on being a warm and welcoming Congregation. However, in January, 2010, Dr. Steven Croft, President of the Congregation, realized that Beth Yeshurun did not have a program designed especially for people with disabilities in the life of the Synagogue. So, he asked Richard Kammerman to chair a new Committee to be formed, called the Committee on Inclusion of People with Disabilities.

Since the creation of the Committee, its membership has grown to over twenty people including a physician working in the area of rehabilitation, a neurologist, the CEO of Jewish Family Service, social workers, an attorney, educators, the Senior Rabbi, and Hazzan. The Committee recognizes that the longest journey begins with the first few steps. During the past year and a half, the Committee has: made it possible for Congregants to open the Parochet without ascending the many stairs to the Ark; made it easy for those in wheelchairs to use the sidewalk in front of the building; with the help of a survey, acquired donations to buy sixty large print Siddurim so that people with impaired sight can enjoy the Services; installed in a beautiful ceremony new Mezzuzot at a lower level on the door posts of the Chapel so small children and those in wheelchairs may easily touch the Mezzuzot in the Chapel; conducted an Inclusion Shabbat to make Congregants aware of the needs of the disabled.

The Committee is now working to: obtain grants to install automatic doors throughout the building; implement the Gathering Place, a monthly activity program for people with memory loss and a respite for their caregivers to be funded solely by donations; add "Streaming" to the Congregation's website so that those who are unable to attend Services may listen and pray over their computers; and create an awareness program using the most authoritative and comprehensive professional materials available. And, this is only the beginning of the journey. There will be more in the future!

Israel and Masorti Affairs - Gold Award

Israel Innovation Weekend

Congregation Mishkan Tefila; Chestnut Hill, MA

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Sidney Lejfer**; slejfer@harvestsolutions.net

In keeping with the emphasis on showcasing Israel's innovation economy that followed the publication of StartUp Nation, especially Israel's contribution on environmental technology, CMT designed a major series of programs designed to maximize impact in our congregation and the broader community. In addition to a full weekend of events at Mishkan Tefila, the Boston Museum of Science held a week of events focusing on clean technology and life science innovation. Events were broadcast on Newton Cable TV, and articles appeared in the Boston Globe and Herald, the local Jewish paper and on-line Jewish websites. Full use was made of e-mail, e-vites and Facebook to spread information about the program to diverse communities. Finally, over 50 co-sponsors joined the effort sending messages to their constituencies.

The program became with a FRIDAY NIGHT service, program and dinner featuring Israel's Minister of Economic Affairs in Washington, Asaf Vitman. Shabbat morning services included a talk by the founder of Jewish Hearts for Africa and then a luncheon. Saturday evening was a "Night on Ben Yehuda" street with vendors, music, dance and food. Sunday a VIP breakfast for academic and opinion leaders in the

area followed by break out sessions led by Israeli academics and entrepreneurs. The formal program ended Sunday night with a discussion led by the President of the Technion, the President of Brandeis University, other academics and an author of Startup Nation, Dan Senor. Over a thousand people came to the programs at Mishkan Tefila and hundreds more visited the Museum and attended programs there.

Israel and Masorti Affairs - Gold Award

Yisrael B'Koleinu

Kol Emeth; Palo Alto, CA

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Barbara Schapira**; bjschapira@gmail.com

During the past year, 30-plus volunteers recorded Israel stories of 63 fellow congregants — all of which are archived on the Kol Emeth's web-site, www.kolemeth.org. Rabbinic and office staff helped implement the project through invaluable contributions of their time and expertise.

Beyond providing a forum, Israel in Our Voice has enabled a dialogue in our congregation about our respective Israel connections. Spanning pre-statehood times to recent visits, members' stories have been and will continue to be used for special event programming. Congregants were treated to some of these stories during Rosh Hashanah Services and special Shabbat programs. Sometimes participants wore "Ask Me My Israel Story" stickers encouraging others to share their experiences during Kiddush lunch after services.

A "Yisrael b'Koleinu", Israel in Our Voice logo was designed for project communications, and photos of congregants' connections to Israel are prominently displayed in the synagogue's social hall.

Kol Emeth celebrated the completion of the 2010-2011 Ma'alot Project on Shabbat, June 4, 2011 with Deputy Consul General of Israel, Gideon Lustig, as guest speaker. He, too, shared his Israel story. Certificates of appreciation were awarded by the Israeli Consulate to project volunteers whose exceptional commitment helped make the program a success.

This next year's initiative (Ma'alot 2011-2012) will enable Kol Emeth to expand its story archive through a new project "Yisrael b'Kolam", Israel in their Voice. In this endeavor, congregants who have made Aliyah will record their Israel story. It will include a photography contest, adding a fun dimension to sharing member's Israel experiences. Both projects will enrich and strengthen our bonds with Israel and with each other.

Israel and Masorti Affairs - Gold Award

Israel/Masorti Affairs

North Suburban Synagogue Beth El; Highland Park, IL

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Sandy Starkman**; starsky613@gmail.com

Support of Israel, the land, its people and the language is a basic value of NSSBE, as evidenced in our mission statement: "We are a congregation... We are committed to support Israel..." Our clergy support Israel often from the bimah in their sermons, the Shabbat recitations of the Prayer for Israel, Prayer for the Israel Defense Forces, and lately the Masorti inspired Prayer for the captive soldiers. The clergy led by example in traveling to Israel and leading missions for our congregants. All three of our current clergy are fluent Hebrew speakers, and they are often promoting programs on Israel and our Masorti movement. We are a leader in Mercaz USA membership, one of the three largest in members' numbers. We register the most people for the 2006 World Zionist Congress from any Conservative Synagogue in North America; mention is made, as no elections were held for this past Congress. NSSBE has been

twinned with Ashkelon's Masorti Kehilla Netzach Yisrael for several years. Some of our NSSBE members are overseas members there, and several of our congregants and young adults have visited there in the past few years as well.

Our congregants visit Israel on a regular basis, on our NSSBE, local JNF or on Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago missions, with their families or as adults. Our youth go to Israel on organized programs, especially with USY and Ramah programs. NSSBE is a supporter of the Chicago Jewish Federation's SKIP program, to assist families in sending their students to Israel with financial partnering. Several of our post college students have been on NATIV in recent years; one student is currently on NATIV, and one or two for the fall. Some of our congregants, both young adults and those with their own children, have studied at the Conservative Yeshiva in the past 10 years, including our Rabbi Michael Schwab and his wife, who were students there for at least one year.

We have two special "boards" about Israel – in the main hallway and in our Youth Wing. There is a section in most printed bulletins about Israel or a related topic, as well as an Israel News page in our weekly printed Shabbat bulletin. Our website has an Israel Affairs page and many links, including MERCAZ USA, Masorti, etc. Programs on Israel, supporting Israel, educating about Israel, discussing Israeli politics and the current situation, are frequent at NSSBE. The Lederman Family Continuing Education program has many Hebrew and Israel related classes, and its printed brochure was eliminated. The recent Educational Vision Taskforce spends an entire session on both Israel and Hebrew language, which reinforces our strong commitment. Our schools and Youth Community teach, share experiences, etc. about Israel as a part of their curriculums throughout the year.

Israel and Masorti Affairs - Silver Award

Experience Israel in Four Parts

Adath Israel Congregation; Lawrenceville, NJ

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Hedda Morton;** hedda@adathisraelnj.org

"Experience Israel in Four Parts" is an innovative series of programs developed initially by a small committee of congregants and professional staff who wanted to raise a deepening awareness and connection to Israel in the congregation and the community, especially among our teens, college students (Rider University is across the street), and young adults. Gradually the committee expanded to include representatives from various arms and constituents of the congregation including day school families and Rider University students. In addition, we actively sought the participation of students in the area's many private high schools, and there was aggressive publicity in the community at large.

Experience Israel: Movie Night for Teens. On Saturday evening, February 12, 2011, USYers, confirmation students, madrichim and teens from area private and public schools gathered for Havdallah and then viewed the movie "Cast a Giant Shadow" followed by a discussion about the founding of the State of Israel led by Rabbi Daniel Grossman. Teens snacked on a variety of Israeli beverages, fruits and deserts.

Experience Israel: Israel Festival. On Sunday, February 13, 2011, Adath Israel was transformed into an Israeli shuk. Then beginning with special programs for Religious School students (JNF Project Renewal and Israeli Dogs for the Blind) in the morning and continuing throughout the afternoon, a steady stream of more than 250 kids of all ages, teens, college students, congregants, friends and neighbors filled the building. There were Israel jewelry, clothing and food vendors, representatives of Israeli university study and work programs, travel opportunities, AIPAC, JNF, Nefesh B'Nefesh, Fuchs berg Center and Mercaz USA. Crafts for children included paint Chagall-inspired designs, beading and paper cuts. Highlights of

the Festival were fabulous Israeli hot food and cold salads, Henna Painting, the dynamic vibrant musical voices of ISRAMERICA. A major draw was the Israel Deputy Consul Raslan Abu Rukun who gave greetings and remarks followed by a lively series of questions. Visit our website www.adathisraelnj.org for photos of this spectacular event.

Experience Israel: Hannaton: Creating a New Religious Reality for Israel. On Monday evening, March 7, 2011, Rabbi Yoav Ende shared his experiences as the Educational Center Director of Rabbi of Kibbutz Hannaton. He inspired everyone with his views on Hannaton's history in particular, Masorti Judaism in Israel, and the challenges of religious pluralism in Israel. Rabbi Ende eagerly answered questions and engaged the participants in a lively dialogue about the living in today's Israel. Every one enjoyed delicious Israeli beverages, fruits and desserts during this most informative program.

Experience Israel: Israel and the Media. On Sunday morning, May 15, 2011, Hillel Zarembo, Associate Director of Islamic Watch, presented 2 programs. The first, "Why the Media Gets It Wrong about Israel", was open to the congregation and the community. The second was a special presentation, "Wiki Wars", for our confirmation students (grades 8-10), Madrichim (grades 8-12) and Zayin class (7th grade).

"Experience Israel in Four Parts" was made possible by a Ma'alot Initiative Grant, sponsored by the USCJ Israel Commission and Nefesh B'Nefesh in cooperation with the Jewish Agency for Israel.

Israel and Masorti Affairs - Silver Award

Israel Affairs Committee

Temple Israel of Great Neck; Great Neck, NY

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Eileen Putterman**; mputterman@aol.com

In a most dynamic way, the Temple Israel Affairs Committee in Great Neck, NY is at home on any one of the 30 plus committees which make up our spectacular synagogue. The reality is that several members of the Israel Affairs Committee are involved in many aspects of our synagogue, gaining strength and knowledge from the broader temple community.

On Sunday, June 5, 2011, a large contingent of representatives of our 935 family units congregation will be marching up Fifth Avenue wearing tee shirts emblazoned with Temple Israel. The Israel Affairs Committee was and will continue to be a responsible contributor to this special event which continues to grow in numbers of participants year by year. The Israel Emergency Fund brings ongoing comfort and caring to our brothers and sisters in Israel, considering them a primary ongoing mission of the larger committee. Together with Temple Israel, we sponsored our teen trip to Israel this year which included many students from our Waxman Hebrew High School. We are politically involved in bringing responsible speakers and educators from all sides of the political arena. We recently hosted over 70 music school student musicians plus teachers from the Afula Municipal Conservatory in Israel. They performed a concert for the larger community of Great Neck with involvement of students from both public and private schools. We are traditionally involved in Israel Bonds and UJA programs and we encourage attendance from the lay and the clergy communities at all AIPAC Conventions.

Last, but not least, each year the IDF (Israel Defense Force) is invited to perform at Temple Israel under the auspices of the Israel Affairs Committee. Their presence among us annually fosters an ongoing friendship.

With honor and affection, Jerry Ungar of blessed memory needs to be recognized as the organizing dynamo through early formative years. Today with great pride we are led by Lee Harounian whose passion and zeal for the State of Israel keeps us all alert and aware of our responsibility day by day. Jerry showed us the path and Lee now carries the torch!

Israel and Masorti Affairs - Bronze Award

Israel Advocacy and Education Initiative

Temple Sholom; Greenwich, CT

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Lori Baden**; lori.baden@templesholom.com

Temple Sholom proudly supports Israel. Since 2010 we have formalized our Israel affairs and put them all under the heading of our Israel Advocacy and Education Initiative. To begin with, we have established a committee made up of lay leaders who have demonstrated their passion and love of Israel. Each member of our committee represents a portion of our congregation – and part of their charge is to make sure that starting as early as in our preschool program, all the way through to the seniors, that Israel is on the agenda.

Our initiative focuses on several main areas: Education, Cultural, Travel and Advocacy.

Education: We bring in speakers year round to discuss topics relevant to Israel. This includes our annual dinner co-sponsored with AIPAC. Additionally, we run a Sunday Israel study group that meets and talks about topics in the news and examines their controversy. This group is run by the head of Judaic Studies at Fairfield University. Rabbi Mitch brings in other rabbis representing the reform and orthodox movements to discuss Israel topics and how each branch views them. We have had scholar in residence weekends with Israel experts as well as Lunch ‘n Learns with special guests that focus on Israel.

Culture: We know that most of our congregation is not exposed to Israeli culture. So in the past and going forward we look for programs that might enhance this area. Last year we showed the Israeli blockbuster, “Lost Islands”. We have brought in music from Israel, specifically with the IDF Ensemble – thus also giving us an opportunity to teach about the IDF and to give our congregation exposure to Israel’s soldiers.

Travel: Each year Temple Sholom leads a group mission to Israel as a way to promote travel to our homeland. Our next group is scheduled for February 2012.

Advocacy: Temple Sholom leaders are very involved with AIPAC. We sent 10 of our teens to the High School Summit to get up close and learn about advocating on behalf of Israel. Temple Sholom also sends a delegation each year to the annual Policy Conference.

There are other areas in which Temple Sholom celebrates and supports Israel. We have invested a substantial amount of money with Israel Bonds. We purchase trees from JNF. We host Israeli Shaliach to teach in our schools. We celebrate Yom Ha’atzmaut and commemorate Yom Hazikaron.

Judaica and Fine Arts - Gold Award

Treasures of the Temple

Temple Emanu-El of Palm Beach, Inc.; Palm Beach, FL

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Haviva Langenauer;** havival@gmail.com

“Treasures of the Temple” is a project developed at Temple Emanu-El of Palm Beach (Florida) three years ago. The goal of this work is to describe the theme, history and artistic qualities of the Temple’s Judaica, and to make this information available to all by means of publications and guided tours. The work encompasses stained glass windows, bimah art, tapestries (Torah mantles, parochet, huppah and Ben Gavra), mosaics, micrographs and more. The congregation is almost fifty years old and has had renovations and additions resulting in the movement of windows from original sites to a new sanctuary. A volunteer group worked to search synagogue records, contact artists, glass studios and former rabbis who were involved in the original and newer works. Some members of the research group, as well as additional congregants, came to study sessions to learn the material and become docents for guided tours of the sanctuary art, bimah, stained glass windows and other Judaica. The first tours were given on a Shabbat when two of the major donors of windows were honored. An illustrated catalog of the windows they had donated was printed and distributed that day, as well as on future tours. There were also descriptions of the bimah symbols and art in the catalog. Written descriptions of additional stained glass windows and Judaica have been prepared as docent manuals, but it is a goal of the committee that more polished versions be published. The docents have studied Torah, Tanach, Pirkei Avot, history of Jerusalem, Hagim, Psalms, Omer traditions and more. Notices of guided tours appear in the local papers as well as in synagogue publications. The tours have become important not just to the congregation, but as a link to the community. Jews and non-Jews make up the audience. Our school children and teachers have participated in the tours. We have hosted tours for Jewish organizations and art groups, as well as private tours for handicapped members of the congregation.

The synagogue experience has been enhanced for those who are aware of the themes that surround them in the sanctuary, both in the stained glass windows and the bimah art. The community members who have toured learn the values we cherish as Jews, namely justice, peace and truth (Pirke Avot symbols on the bimah art) freedom, laws of morality, caring for humanity, importance of life, ecology and love of the Almighty, through the art of stained glass, bronze and ceramic sculptures, tapestries, ritual objects beautifully formed, and more, Temple Emanu-El of Palm Beach enhances the celebration of Judaism.

Judaica and Fine Arts - Gold Award

Congregational Museum

Temple Israel of Great Neck; Great Neck, NY

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Gert Gross**

This museum was built in 1964 with seed money from a congregant and with the blessings of Rabbi Mordecai Waxman. We started with a borrowed exhibit from the Jewish Museum in New York.

With the help of some very knowledgeable people at the New York Museum and a most informed private collector, we learned to pick and choose only the best objects for our museum. Our congregants dedicated each piece in honor of or in memory of or just because they wanted to. Through the years, many of our temple families have dedicated pieces to family members and important milestones and now children come in to see their family’s objects of Judaic art. We have 149 good and unusual things,

and the congregants visit after services on Shabbat and holidays, and by appointment. We change exhibits to underline holiday uses of the objects.

Hebrew school students and out of Great Neck groups also come to enjoy and learn. We also have given programs on Friday evenings to temple groups. Catalogs are handed out to all comers, and are most informative. This museum is indeed an ongoing project that gives delight and knowledge to many.

Judaica and Fine Arts - Silver Award

The Mollie and Louis Kaplan Museum of Judaica

Congregation Beth Yeshurun; Houston, TX

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Lisa Unsell**; lunsell@bethyeshurun.org

The Mollie and Louis Judaica Museum at Congregation Beth Yeshurun probably contains the finest collection of Judaica in the south or southwest. Since the initial purchase of the well-known Toubin Collection, about 320 items have been purchased or donated to the museum bringing the total number to about 470 pieces. The collection occupies the entire main lobby and atrium of the synagogue, and the art spreads throughout all public areas in the building. This location provides important visibility for congregants and Jewish and non-Jewish visitors.

Displays include important objects relating to life events of the Jew, and objects arranged by their relation to the Jewish calendar: Sabbath and Havdalah; High Holy Days; Sukkot; Hanukah; Purim; and Pesach. Several cases allow opportunities for changing displays. The Museum also owns an extensive art collection, featuring important oil paintings by Mane-Katz, Krestin, Rubin and others, and a full set of the 30-lithograph suite, B'reshith, the first Jewish attempt to illustrate the opening of Genesis, by Abel Pann, the early 20th century Bezalel artist. An audio tour is available. We have instituted an annual lecture by a prominent figure in the Jewish art world. Members of the Museum Committee have researched the exhibits and, in the past few years, prepared new explanatory cards for all works on display. The Museum has a substantial endowment to support its activities.

In summary, the Mollie and Louis Kaplan Judaica Museum of Congregation Beth Yeshurun houses a major collection of Judaica. The Congregation continues to add to the collection, increasing its depth and breadth. Works are displayed in a public space with accurate and informative explanatory plaques. Display cases are changed regularly. Visitors of all ages and from all ethnic groups are invited to visit. An annual lecture on Jewish art is open to the public. A substantial endowment and sale of photographs of museum objects finance our activities.

Kadima / USY - Gold Award

Temple Beth Torah Toonz

Temple Beth Torah - Tamarac Jewish Center; Tamarac, FL

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Jack Alboukrek**; execdir@tbtonline.org

Temple Beth Torah Toonz Youth Group provides a variety of programs for children in grades 2-12. Our programs provide spiritual and religious growth, as well as educational and leadership opportunities. A number of our programs involve the entire TBT membership as well as the general community. All of the programs offered through our Youth Group help to strengthen the friendships among Jewish youth as well as their connection to Judaism. We are grateful to have re-located to a new building, just down the street from our old building, where we lived for over 32 years. While we have many wonderful memories

in the old building, our new space offers us unique opportunities for programming and new experiences. Our new Youth Lounge is equipped with Wi-Fi, a flat-screen television, computers, a ping pong table and sofas. Our youth are very happy in their new location and their experience with our programming is enhanced as a result.

Our overall membership has increased by 40% since 2009. In addition, we have tripled our 2009 Tikkun Olam pledge this year. In 2010, we were awarded the Regional Chapter of Excellence, one of the 17 chapters nominated for International Chapter of the Year. At USY International Convention 2010, our chapter was recognized for our outstanding achievements in the area of communication. In addition, we were the recipients of the HaNegev Sub-Regional Best Chapter "Joe Nebesh" Award.

As a result of our active programming and engagement, our youth group members have gained valuable experiences, developed lifelong friendships, a commitment to Judaism and its teaching, and a desire to always be a giving member of the community.

Kadima / USY - Gold Award

KUSY

Congregation Beth Shalom; Atlanta, GA

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Loli Gross**; loli@bshalom.net

The Congregation Beth Shalom Youth Department is comprised on nearly 75 members ranging from grades three through 12. In the past three years our program has grown by more than 10 percent in membership numbers and we have seen an increase in programming as well. We provide social, educational, religious, Israeli, and other programming each month for our synagogue youth outside of the religious school and day school settings.

In 2009 our USY chapter was named the Region's "Chapter on the Rise" for most improved chapter. During that time and in the following year we were awarded the region's programming of excellences awards in holiday programming, leadership training, social action planning, tikun olam programming, and religious/non-Shabbat education programming.

The members of "KUSY" enjoy participating in chapter, synagogue wide, sub-regional, regional, and international events. Each year we have seen our numbers grow and our programming expand. The Congregation Beth Shalom Youth Department is an essential part of the synagogue and a wonderful place for the members to be.

Kadima / USY - Silver Award

Working Together For Our Youth

Tikvat Israel Congregation and Shaare Tefila Congregation; Rockville, MD

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Amy Matathias**; matathi@aol.com

In 2009, after much discussion and many meetings to establish a Memo of Understanding, Tikvat Israel Congregation and Shaare Tefila Congregation came together to establish a Joint Youth Department and the Rimonim Center for Learning, a joint religious school. Both synagogues had experienced a decline in the number of children enrolled in religious school and attending our youth programs. Shaare Tefila had sold their previous synagogue building and were in the middle of a four year process of building a new

synagogue. Since Shaare Tefila did not have a building, we came together to hold Joint Youth Department programming and Religious School classes in the Tikvat Israel Congregation building.

The creation of the Joint Youth Department gave us a critical mass of children for each of our four youth groups enabling the participants to meet more people, make new friends, and to have more fun. Our youth programs provide an opportunity for our young people to participate in informal Jewish educational activities that create lasting friendships, to reinforce what they learn in religious school, and bring our children to synagogue throughout the year. As they participate in the youth programs, the children and teens develop leadership skills that will enrich their Jewish experience beyond their school-age years. Through the four youth groups - Bonim, Machar, Kadima, and United Synagogue Youth (USY) - young people enjoy sports, social programming, religious services, and community service projects that develop a tight-knit youth community. Our groups are involved in all regional programming offered throughout the Seaboard Region USY and Kadima.

Keruv - Silver Award

Open Arms

Beth El Synagogue; Omaha, NE

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Margie Gutnik**; programming@bethel-omaha.org

More than a year ago, a group of concerned lay leaders in our congregation, all of whom had a personal connection with interfaith marriages, decided to turn their attention to the interfaith program at Beth El Synagogue. The intent was to ensure that we, as a congregation, offered our enthusiastic support and guidance to interfaith couples so they feel welcomed and comfortable at Beth El Synagogue. This came to be known as the "Open Arms" initiative, a targeted approach of outreach, focusing on more than being open, specifically taking on the task of being welcome to interfaith families.

For many years there have been opportunities for participation at our synagogue. Previously, specific materials were given to those who asked or needed them. For the first time, we compiled that information in one booklet that focuses on three areas: Jewish Life Cycle Events, Jewish Holidays, and Synagogue Programs and Organizations. This was designed as a personal reference book – a guide for celebrating Jewish life – and a reminder of how much Beth El Synagogue values the participation of each and every member and appreciates that the interfaith families have chosen to make a Jewish home and to make Beth El their synagogue.

Koach - Gold Award

Sam Mandelker College Connection

B'nai Torah Congregation; Boca Raton, FL

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Cheri Kalvort**; cheri.kalvort@bnai-torah.org

Our Sam Mandelker College Connection is a bridge between campus life and home and community. Our goal is to keep the college students as part of our larger Jewish community by reinforcing and recognizing the holidays as well as encouraging ritual practice. All our holiday packages are primarily instructional and underscore the appropriate prayers and activities related to the holidays. We do introduce a measure of fun wherever possible and always add an adequate amount to nosh. Our aim is to keep our students Jewish. The program is so popular that we have extended it to post graduates who pay a fee to receive the mailings. Many of the parents and even siblings and grandparents of the students serve on the committee and help pack the gift boxes 4-5 times a year.

We send a different coaster for Rosh Hashanah, Chanukah, Purim, and Passover, so by the end of the year, they would have a set of 4 coasters. Each coaster had the same border, connecting them to B'nai Torah, but with a different center graphic. Other 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 for home." This program is an integral part of synagogue life, and is important to the young adults.

Libraries - Gold Award

Year-Round Jewish Literacy Program

Beth El Synagogue Center; New Rochelle, NY

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Melinda Herman;** mherman@bethelnr.org

The Beth El Synagogue Center Library supports and complements Jewish literacy programs at the Nursery and Religious Schools, Limmud Institute, Sisterhood and Men's Club events, Mishnah and other study sessions. To foster Jewish literacy among synagogue members and Jewish staff, as librarian, I seek new acquisitions to update and to expand a collection of periodicals and of contemporary and classic Jewish fiction and non-fiction, scholarly volumes, large print books, Hebrew language fiction and non-fiction and Israeli fiction, and a special section for bar/bat mitzvah reference. My library-based lessons utilized the Understanding by Design curriculum approach, with reading aloud to children relating to Jewish holidays, the weekly Parashah, and important Jewish principles. In addition, I write a monthly Bulletin article to highlight new developments in Jewish literature and to entice synagogue members to visit the library to read new books relating to Judaism, to Jews throughout Israel and the Diaspora, and to Israel. To complement our library's many programs, in 2011 the synagogue became a community participant in PJ Library. As librarian, I am in charge of registering families in the PJ Library program to bring Jewish books to families with young children. Families enjoying PJ Library books come to the library for additional enriching reading

Libraries - Gold Award

Blumberg-Zalis Family Library

B'nai Israel; Rockville, MD

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Jill Gendelman;** bnailibrary@bnaiisraelcong.org

The B'nai Israel Congregation Blumberg-Zalis Family Library, located in Rockville MD, is an integral part of our synagogue. The mission of the Blumberg-Zalis family library is to offer educational, spiritual and a vast array of Judaic materials to our community, support the Talmud Torah, Hebrew High School, and Schilit Nursery School curricula, support any and all educational programs offered here at B'nai Israel as part of the life learning and adult education series, and welcome all members, as well as the greater community. Our collection is maintained by the librarian and is continually enhanced so that it reflects this mission.

Library materials are drawn from a number of Judaic and other resources, such as Jewish Book World, Jewish Book Council, Jewish Lights, Tablet Magazine, Simon Wiesenthal Center, Association of Jewish Libraries, Say Fair Books, suggestions from patrons, clergy and our in house educators, extensive on-line

searches on various Jewish book and movie websites, and reviews by the Library Committee. We have a number of magazines that we keep current, such as the Jerusalem Report, the Jerusalem Post, The Jewish Week, Commentary, Eretz, B'nai Brith, CJ, Moment, Biblical Archaeology Review, Jewish Women and Lilith, to name a few, plus several quarterly, semi-annual and annual journals. Donations are accepted as long as they meet the goals of the library. Dedication bookplates, in honor of, or in memory of, are placed in the books per request. The library has a Basic Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL). We are in the process of submitting an Advanced Accreditation Application, which should be completed by the end of this month.

The library is 100% computerized using the Surpass Church Library Software system (SURPASS CLS). All books contain bar codes, so that they may be checked out and tracked. Late notices are sent, via-e-mail, to any patron with an overdue book. All of our materials (8,610) which include a large children's collection, tween and teen books, adults books (including large-print and books on tape), reference materials (encyclopedias, dictionaries and Judaic sources), CDs, VHS and DVDs have been electronically catalogued according the Weine Classifications systems for Judaic Libraries. Our magazines, newspapers, and journals are not catalogued since they are for in-house reading only. We have an on-line catalogue that anyone (members and non-members) can access from the comfort of their living rooms through the synagogues web site.

Libraries - Bronze Award

Mobile Shiva Library

Morristown Jewish Center - Beit Yisrael; Morristown, NJ

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Lewis Stone**; lewismoose@aol.com

When you cannot go to the Library...the Library comes to you. Tradition suggests that the mourner observe certain rituals requiring them to stay in the place of Shiva observance. Even if the mourner is not strictly observant, the mourner is expected to be home to receive visitors. Because there are gaps during the visitor schedule and because these gaps are not planned, it seems natural to have books available to the mourner during this time. Thus the books allow the mourner access; even if that access is on a sleepless night at 2:00 AM.

After a death, our Rabbi delivers a large briefcase with siddurim and kipot for use by the family during Shiva. Now, a second briefcase is delivered. This briefcase contains a selection of books on grief and healing. This briefcase is left at the Shiva home and is picked up at the conclusion of Shiva.

These books constitute the Mobile Shiva Library and are part of our MJCBY Library. They cover a variety of subjects and give a number of different views on death, grief and spirituality. They are not necessarily books on Jewish philosophy, but books which hopefully give comfort. No one author has the answer on death because there is no one situation when a death occurs.

It is clear that some people are not ready to read a book on grief during the first seven days nor even the first thirty. Our Center Library has copies of the books contained in the traveling case so if there is a book of particular interest, one can check out the Library copy after Shiva. Copies of the bibliography are inside the briefcase if mourners want to buy books on their own.

Grief is something we will all need to deal with sooner or later in life. Like many of Life's challenges, we know little about the subject until the need arise to learn about it first hand.

Membership - Gold Award

Membership Committee

Temple Beth Torah -- Tamarac Jewish Center; Tamarac, FL

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Amir Watynski**; amir@watt-media.com

Temple Beth Torah's Membership Committee had an extremely active year in 2010 as we moved into our new building. Our committee felt that such a momentous occasion called for a rebranding of Temple Beth Torah -- including a new logo, redesigned website, updated membership packet, new print ads, post cards for direct mail marketing, and new business networking events.

Membership - Gold Award

Shabbas Chefs

Congregation Beth Shalom; Seattle, WA

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Judith Benjamin**; judithbenj@comcast.net

The CBS Shabbas Chefs, now in its third year, builds community through the preparation and serving of Shabbat lunches to the whole congregation. Volunteers in 6-person teams prepare lunch for an average of 150 people, approximately 35 weeks a year (specific family or event sponsorship covers the remaining Shabbatot). The meals are creative, varied and healthy. Shabbas Chefs provides opportunities for congregants to meet one another and work together to perform a mitzvah that they all enjoy -- forming a new small community of men and women, new and old members, with the preparation of every meal. Over 100 people in the congregation have volunteered to help cook. Cooking teams provide an excellent entry point for new members to meet and bond with others. New connections are made virtually every time a member participates. Further the program has deepened and energized the post-services environment at the shul.

On Shabbat, everyone attending services is invited to stay for lunch. The menus are designed to be inclusive: Beth Shalom is 100% nut free, and we strive to provide gluten-free, dairy-free and vegan options. Of course, kashrut is strictly observed. An onsite babysitting co-op organizes activities for the kids after they've eaten, enabling parents to enjoy conversations and learning with the rest of the community. At least one of the week's chefs is on hand to field questions (and talk to those interested in volunteering). Throughout lunch, there is much visiting and table hopping; indeed, for many, Shabbat lunch has become a touchstone of their shul experience. As a result, it is now unusual for congregants to go home immediately after services.

Shabbas Chefs demonstrates tikun olam, hachnasat orchim, and gmilut chasidim. Certain unaffiliated groups and people know that they can come for lunch and take leftovers home if they need them, and the rabbi discreetly offers leftover food for members in need. Our award-winning Mitzvah Corps also brings leftover food to shiva houses, congregant families with an illness in the house, and new parents. We also "practice and preach" environmental stewardship -- nothing goes to landfill. Even our plastic utensils are biodegradable. If available, we use ingredients from our own garden. Finally, aside from the community-building aspects of the program, Shabbas Chefs has saved the shul substantial funds -- we operate on a weekly budget of \$350 -- half as much per week as we used to spend on light catered meals. Shabbas Chefs is a sustainable and affordable program that strengthens our community by inviting members both to volunteer and to enjoy a Shabbat meal together. We are proud of the way congregants come together to nourish the community with excellent meals and good will.

Membership - Gold Award

40 North

Congregation B'nai Torah; Atlanta, GA

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Jessica Levine**; jessica@bnaitorah.org

We recruited our VP of Membership, a 40 North prospect herself, to be CBT's lay leader for new group 40 North. Development of the name "40 North" was almost as important as the calendar that was set during the first year. This name would be an enduring identity for this group and had to feel inclusive. It was quickly decided that anything deeming this group "empty nesters" would turn away people who were never married, never had children or had any sensitivities about a nuclear family structure. It was often described as "CBT Members, ages 40-65, with no children in the home by choice or by chance."

The 40 North lay leader gathered an initial interest group of 12 members to discuss the type of programming this constituency would like to see. These members attend CBT for many different purposes and expressed the fulfillment of spiritual and educational needs through other CBT outlets. This group was to be social, relevant, and active. Some 40 Northerners even refer to it as "an adult youth group." The professional synagogue involvement also helped to encourage the group to participate in Jewish activities, while still keeping the "fun" aspect of the group in mind. A fall calendar was determined (included in submission).

To kick off the year, a 40 North Sukkot Dinner & B.Y.O. Board Game night was held during a week night (flyer included in submission). Because it was a chag meal, the cost was higher than an average dinner at \$18. In an effort to keep 40 North available to all, game play was free. Events since then have varied greatly. Forty North has partnered with other Jewish organizations in Atlanta like the JCC and secluded themselves in nature while hiking a trail along the nearby Chattahoochee River. The year will conclude with a Lag B'Omer stroll around the Atlanta Botanical Gardens. Each program ranges from 20-60 people in attendance. Forty North has become a true selling point for CBT.

Membership - Gold Award

Growing a New Member Memory

Temple Israel of Great Neck; Great Neck, NY

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Ofra Panzer**; panzerwizardo@gmail.com

Three years ago the Temple Israel of Great Neck went through the process of Re-Imagining the Religious School. In the process a Temple Israel Vision for Education was developed to guide the new model of a T'fillah based program. This year the Membership Committee (Team) took into account this vision statement. A focal point of this model is the Shabbat Hamishpachah service that is family oriented and where parents are included in an intergenerational educational curriculum. We designed a program that both welcomes and integrates our new members to the T'fillah program .

New member families are paired with a buddy from the Membership Team. Typically the team reaches out by phone and/or email to introduce themselves and to explain their role. They are a resource for the new members for information and more importantly a first connection. Our new members range from a working young couple, to a family with five children to the newly retired. Some were new to the community, some were reinstated. For whatever reason the time was right for them to join and we wanted to embrace them and involve them in our synagogue life.

The questions we had in mind when planning this program were:

How can we bring together a group of people who don't know each other and provide them an opportunity to interact with different point of entry interests and- at the same time..... How can we design a scenario enabling the new members to leave feeling they are now a part of a group- and foster the desire to come back for more participation? Can we plant the idea that... soon they will be in our roles? How can we promote the Vision for Lifelong Learning right from the start? What can we give them that is meaningful and supports a continued connection to the synagogue?

Membership - Silver Award

Taste of Israel

Beth Israel; Owings Mills, MD

Size Category:500-899

Contact: ; bgalanter@gmail.com; lwolf823@comcast.net

The membership committee usually conducts three open houses for prospective new members prior to the High Holy Days. In 2010, in an effort to make something a bit novel, we planned an evening consisting of an outdoor Kabbalat Shabbat service followed by an Israeli style dinner for members and prospective new members followed by a traditional open house tour. The evening proved magical with more than 200 coming by for dinner services and dinner. Well beyond our expectations.

The Rabbi and Cantor came in tropical attire and the service included a guitar accompaniment. The meal consisted of Falafel, Salads, Babaganush, Ice Cream, Baklava with wine and soft drinks for a beverage. Because we prepared the meal ourselves we were able to hold the costs down and kept a price of \$10 for the evening. Our youth Kleizmer band played during the meal, a special treat for all. Of the 200 dinner guests, 18 were prospective new members, and many later joined. More important, it was a warm, friendly evening for congregational members and will be remembered for years to come.

Membership - Bronze Award

Ohev Shalom Membership Outreach

Congregation Ohev Shalom; Wallingford, PA

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Naomi Wicentowski;** naomivl@yahoo.com

At Congregation Ohev Shalom, the membership committee strives to provide all prospective members with a positive first impression of our community, whether it be a first phone call, a first look at our new and impressive website, a first attendance at a Shabbat service, or a "drop in and check it out" visit. We want everyone to remember the warmth that is Ohev Shalom. This first impression is not only the responsibility of the membership committee, but of the congregation as a whole. In these situations, all members of the congregation are "on" the membership committee. We are one entity sharing our love of Judaism, community and Yiddishkite.

We have a very active in-reach as well as outreach in place at Congregation Ohev Shalom, utilizing many different avenues to reach our members, be they long standing or new to us. We send out a monthly newsletter, twice weekly announcements, e-vites, Facebook, our website, a phone tree, and most importantly, personal phone calls in order to keep our congregants engaged. We have many different programs to entice all age groups to come into the synagogue for not only spiritual enlightenment, but for social functions as well. We provide meals for the sick or recovering congregants via our Chesed group, a very active social action group which helps the surrounding community with its many projects; a community Shabbat dinner every other month called Shabbat Echad; a casual and inviting luncheon experience at members homes every other month called "Taste of Shabbat"; a very active Men's Club

that has just started up an excellent event called "Torah on Tap", as well as our 47 strong softball league; a vibrant Sisterhood who helps out with just about every holiday for the congregation as well as our Hebrew school, Mispallelim; and now we are embarking on a new initiative, the formation of a Hazak group to re-engage some of our long standing members who might feel "forgotten". They are not!

Congregation Ohev Shalom is a vibrant, innovative and community oriented synagogue. This is made possible by the tireless efforts of not only the membership committee, but the congregation as a whole. We are mishpuchah!

Membership - Bronze Award

Membership

Temple Sholom; Greenwich, CT

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Lori Baden**; lori.baden@templesholom.com

Our goal/mission at Temple Sholom is to provide a family-friendly and multi-generational congregation that feels warm, welcoming and inclusive using a "Big Tent" (Ohel Gadol) approach to welcome Jews from across the Conservative Jewish spectrum. This philosophy is stated on the Temple Sholom website www.templesholom.com.

No one is ever turned away from membership at Temple Sholom for financial hardship. We meet with prospective members who may not be able to afford the cost of membership in a private, confidential manner.

Our staff is trained to be welcoming, no matter their role at the synagogue. From directors to security officers, anyone can and will greet visitors with a smile on their face and an attitude of "how can we help you?"

In addition to staff, we have a membership committee whose role it is to welcome new people to Temple Sholom. Our chair people call new members as soon as they are notified that someone has joined. They try to find out their interests and connect them with other members with similar interests and demographics. For example, a family has just moved to town. They have a nursery school child and two elementary age children, one boy and one girl, who are going to Religious School. Our chairs will find one or two families that want to be this family's buddy. We encourage buddy families to invite the new family to an event, so that they have someone to go with, making it sometimes easier to first get involved.

Our membership program is not only geared towards getting new members, but also to make sure we keep the members we already have. Our attrition rate at Temple Sholom is low. More often than not we only lose members simply because they move out of the area.

Performing Arts - Gold Award

Annie

Temple Sinai; Dresher, PA

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Linda Dwoskin**; linda.dwoskin@dechert.com

For more than 50 years Temple Sinai has been an enthusiastic and committed provider of quality theatrical arts to the Jewish community. Each year, more than 100 congregational and community members volunteer their time, energy and talents to bring musical theater to Dresher, PA, whether under the footlights or behind the scenes. In 1958, in the playbill of one of the synagogue's earliest productions, founding Rabbi Sidney Greenberg wrote: "There can be no flames of sacrifice unless they are fed by the fuel of great devotion." He referred to the dedication of those who invested extraordinary time, talent and effort into the show motivated by a devotion and respect for our synagogue in the life of the community.

Happily this tradition continues. This year Temple Sinai staged a production of Annie, a show about an orphan girl with a big heart and boundless optimism. The show broke all synagogue records: the highest attendance total of any show in the 50-year history of Temple Sinai theater (1700); the largest attendance totals per night for each night of the show; the largest amount of advertising procured for our ad book; the most money raised for Temple Sinai in a theatrical production (more than \$12,000); and the most community marketing and involvement.

Annie was chosen as the 2011 production during the summer, 2010. A sustained, year-long effort followed. The show was performed February 23-27, 2011 and it involved the entire Temple Sinai family - the synagogue's professional staff, administrative staff, educational staff, sisterhood, men's club, and all of the individual creative, energetic and fun-loving members and friends of the synagogue. The dedication and talent of these 100+ individuals is evident in the fine performances that graced our stage and entertained our community. Annie was our most successful venture to date. It is a fine addition to our illustrious theatrical archive.

Performing Arts - Silver Award

Musical Programming (Zimriah, Nagilah, Maoz Tzur)

Forest Hills Jewish Center; Forest Hills, NY

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Heidi Rolnick**; tooth4airy@aol.com

The creativity and talent within our congregation and our clergy along with strong support from within has resulted in a number of musical programs which have become annual events.

The FHJC Yom Ha'Atzma'ut Zimriah is one of our most eagerly anticipated and well attended community events. Now entering its seventh year, the Zimriah is FHJC's annual love song to Israel on her birthday. Our Zimriah is a recreation of Shirah B'Tzibbor – an Israeli custom of community singing, with words provided – together with Israeli café refreshments and salads – free and open to all. The playlist is different each year, except for a few favorites. The one constant is a song that has become our closing anthem – Amen, first popularized in Israel by Liora Simon, which so beautifully expresses our communal prayer for peace for all and praise for God. Nagilah, our choir, performs this as a choral arrangement and everyone joins in singing. The music for the Zimriah is performed by a live band consisting of Rabbi Skolnik and several FHJC members. In addition to a room full of enthusiastic singers, some come with rhythm instruments for some extra ruach. Some get up and dance. A special and important new addition to the 2010 Zimriah was the active participation of the Religious School Hebrew High students who sang and performed several songs with their own guitarists. The audience loved hearing them.

Our congregational choir, Nagilah, is entirely volunteer and lay led. Now in its fifth year, Nagilah has performed both well known and original choral works on an ongoing basis. We participate in the annual Thanksgiving Interfaith Service, Yom HaShoah service and the Zimriah.

This year a new program, Maoz Tzur: The Mystery and the Music was presented on Shabbat, 12/4/2010 following Kiddush. This free program was a coordinated effort presented by Nagilah and our Hazzan, Henry Rosenblum, and supported by our Evening Sisterhood who promoted the event and provided refreshments. It consisted of a lecture about the text and format of the piece. The history of the melodies associated with the text was discussed and various examples were performed by the Hazzan and the choir. The response was so enthusiastic that future programs like this are being planned. Each of these musical events – and others – exist because our own members and a very supportive clergy are willing to take a chance and try something new. We continue to evolve and draw closer as a congregation and a community with music as a catalyst.

Performing Arts - Silver Award

E. Philip Horvitz Memorial Music and Dance Program

Congregation Beth Yeshurun; Houston, TX

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Luis Dorfman**; ldorfman@bethyeshurun.org

An endowment gift was presented to Congregation Beth Yeshurun by Sigmund and Shirley Horvitz in memory of Sigmund's twin brother Philip, who was a lover of music, dance and life. The gift is to provide music and dance programming to congregants and the Houston community.

A committee of six congregants, chaired by Shirley Horvitz, planned the inaugural event, "Klez Amigos", an evening of Klezmer with Latin Fusion, which was held on October 23, 2010. Live music was provided by a local Klezmer band, and Latin dance demonstrations and instruction were provided by a congregant in partnership with a local professional dancer. About 200 attendees listened, sang and danced the night away in a fitting tribute to Philip Horvitz. Food with a Latin flavor rounded out the evening.

Publications - Gold Award

Gems of Torah

Congregation Or Hadash; Sandy Springs, GA

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Ronelle Genser**; genser@mindspring.com

Since the fall of 2007, congregants of Congregation Or Hadash in Sandy Springs, Georgia have come together one weekday morning each week for minyan. As they settled into a weekly routine, one of the regular attendees suggested that each person take a week to present a brief talk at the end of minyan on a topic of their choice. These talks, which began on November 25, 2008, are presented in varied forms, such as D'vrai Torah, drashot, interpretations of prayers, and personal commentaries. Topics covered include: Torah, prayers, holidays, rituals, and the impact of Judaism on daily life.

Participation in the weekly talks is voluntary. Congregants typically choose a week based on their interest in a particular Parasha, the Yahrzeit of a loved one, other life cycle events or simply the inspiration to share thoughts with fellow worshipers. Everyone looks forward to minyan each week, knowing they will be inspired by the service and the special words at the end of it.

The group quickly recognized how special the weekly talks were. One of the attendees suggested compiling the talks into a booklet so these thoughts and insights could be shared with the entire congregation. Rosh Hashanah seemed like the ideal time to provide the booklet as a supplementary, individual use reader. The booklet, named Gems of Torah and covering the dates of 2008-2009 (5770-5771), was so popular that the group decided to produce a second Gems of Torah covering the dates 2009-2010 (5771). New words of Torah, pearls of wisdom and thought provoking D'vrai Torah and drashot continue each week at Or Hadash's Tuesday morning minyan.

Publications - Gold Award

Chai Tea Celebration

Morristown Jewish Center; Morristown, NJ

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Donna Gross**; donna2525@msn.com

The publication is the story of the lives of fifteen of our women who have reached 80 years plus. We sent questionnaires to the individual women or sent "reporters" to compile their stories. We learned that we have some truly remarkable ladies in our congregation including a pioneer in the development of Israel. She is still with us and is 99. Since the publication three of these women are no longer with us, but their life story will live on. This publication was buried in a Morristown Jewish Center Beit Yisrael Time Capsule which will be opened in 50 years when a new generation will learn about these fifteen remarkable women.

These women were further honored at a Chai Tea Celebration and were given a day to remember. Over one hundred women attended. Lunch, entertainment and a tea demonstration were part of the day.

The publication and program were initiated during the time our congregation started to establish our Chevrah Kadisha. Honoring our members who have passed with a Tahara and Shomrim is a wonderful mitzvah; however, we felt that waiting until our elderly members passed on to honor them was too late. We wanted to honor them while they are still here. This program honored these women in style, and we feel that we fulfilled just one of the mitzvah commanded of us: to honor the aged.

Publications - Gold Award

Life Cycle Guide

Beth Jacob Congregation; Mendota Heights, MN

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Sean Murphy**; sean@beth-jacob.org

Beth Jacob's Life Cycle Guide, the fruit of a year-long process, allows members easy access to accumulated knowledge about how to negotiate life cycle events. The digital guide (<http://lifecycle.beth-jacob.org>) answers questions profound and small: about the meaning of events, about issues of halakha, about the training of children for B'nai Mitzvah over a three year period, but also about how to find the best cookie recipes for baking for a Kiddush, and how to adapt the recipe's ingredients to serve 500 people. The goals of the project included creating multimedia content that can leverage the power of the World Wide Web to link to local, communal, and external resources and sites to provide a rich variety of information on each topic. The entire handbook was created by congregants. Congregants will provide ongoing maintenance of the site, and every page gives the reader the opportunity to submit feedback electronically.

The Life Cycle Guide committee researched the content by engaging with the congregation to understand its members' and leaders' needs. Interviews with congregants, rabbis, synagogue officers & board members, and the professional staff allowed the committee to learn what people wanted to know and what our rabbis had to teach us about these events. The language and approach of the guide reflect concerns for economic inequality among members, the needs of gay and lesbian parents, questions asked by families with non-Jewish relatives, and intermarried parents. It reflects our congregation's vision for living a Jewish life. The process evoked important conversations within the synagogue about who we are as a community and what matters most to us. Our guide, published in December 2010, will continue to evolve in response to changing policies, new needs of congregants, and opportunities to link our site with other USJC member digital Life Cycle content. In its content, then, our Life Cycle Guide reflects the current values and practices of our congregation; in its electronic format it is a "living guide," for it mirrors the dynamic character of our Jewish lives, both as individuals and as a community.

Publications - Bronze Award

Book of Remembrance

Beth El Congregation of South Hills; Pittsburgh, PA

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Beth Pomerantz;** teachbap@aol.com

The Beth El Congregation Book of Remembrance is published each year in time for the first Yizkor service of the religious year at Yom Kippur and all subsequent Yizkor services for the year. For the committee it is a labor of love over many months each year. Our congregation has strong roots with many branches; the Book of Remembrance reflects that strength and growth. We include the Yizkor service, as well as the list of new memorial plaques that family members will dedicate at the Yom Kippur Service.

Also included in the book are mourning rituals, tributes to family and friends, pages to remember victims of terrorism and people who have served our country, and family members lost in the Holocaust. The tribute section has short, meaningful readings at the bottom of many pages. The entire Book is dedicated to a special congregant who has enriched our shul, and the family is invited to write about their loved one.

The Book of Remembrance has grown and changed in keeping with the growth and change of our shul. It is a sacred, valued keepsake for our members and others who may have moved away but keep Beth El in their hearts.

Publications - Bronze Award

What's Going On

Rodeph Shalom; Bridgeport, CT

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Mark Block;** mblock@snet.net

Each Thursday afternoon, the congregation receives an e-mail publication titled, "What's Going On." This publication features upcoming programs, special announcements and, importantly, a special message for that week on an item or items of interest. It could be on a topic of Jewish interest that week, a holiday or special event going on in the synagogue, or a completely random topic of Jewish interest that week, a holiday or special event going on in the synagogue, or a completely random topic that may relate to what is occurring in the secular world. Other times it is an image and topic that have been suggested by a congregant. Topics have varied from antique Judaica etrog boxes to snowflakes

and how they form, Jewish artists to theater and contemporary Judaica, cloud formations to botany. The important factor is to in part keep the congregation guessing what will come the next week.

The synagogue's mission statement appears each week, and a short, sometimes longer message from the Director is discussed. Issues may be on membership, programming or fundraising, a synagogue simcha or to augment a printed bulletin article as part of a comprehensive marketing message.

Each week is wrapped up with a commentary on the week's parsha or other interesting Jewish scholarly topic. The e-mailed publication is produced each week, 52 times a year and has become a staple in the communications strategy of Rodeph Sholom.

Social Action / Public Policy - Gold Award

Greening Beth El

Beth El Congregation of South Hills; Pittsburgh, PA

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Andrew Baram**; Andrew.baram@yahoo.com

Beth El has recently undertaken efforts to start greening the synagogue, in large part due to demand from its congregation. While the first step was to use more environmentally friendly cleaning supplies, the real challenge was deciding what to do about all of the products used to serve food. Beth El has events where food is served on a weekly basis, sometimes feeding a few hundred people at an event, creating much waste that went directly to a landfill.

The first step was to evaluate the cups being used. All drinks at Beth El had been served in Styrofoam cups, which are the cheapest type of cup. However, Styrofoam is the worst possible choice for the environment and was the cause of most complaints from environmentally concerned congregants. Changing from Styrofoam cups elicited a very positive reaction and was the first visible sign that progress was being made towards a more environmentally friendly synagogue.

Gradually all paper products, including cold and hot cups, plates, bowls and utensils, were changed to compostable products. Beth El then contracted with a local composting company that comes weekly to the synagogue to remove all of its compostable waste, comprised mainly of the compostable paper products and food. Beth El also began to increase its recycling efforts. It hosts a weekly bingo fundraising night that generates much paper waste that is now recycled. Beth El also takes advantage of single-stream recycling to recycle all of its cardboard, metal, glass and plastic. The combination of composting and recycling has allowed Beth El to reduce the waste it sends to a landfill by over half. With further compliance by congregants and guests, it has the potential to divert 90% of its waste going to a landfill, and instead be used to create compost and recycled products. To that end, we continue to educate our congregants and visitors in our shul-wide composting and recycling efforts.

Social Action / Public Policy - Gold Award

Giving Homelessness a Face in St. Louis: Gateway180 Partnership

B'nai Amoona; St. Louis, MO

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Jennifer Newfeld**; jennifer@bnaiamoona.com

During the Tikkun Olam project with our Confirmation class on our Washington DC trip, one of our students innocently commented that feeding and meeting the homeless had been one of the most powerful aspects of our trip and that he wished there were people in St Louis who needed our help. Our community tends to live in affluent, isolated suburbs and is unaware of the staggering levels of poverty

and homeless, especially of children, in the St Louis area. This initial activity led to our synagogue developing a partnership with Gateway 180, the largest emergency homeless shelter for women and children in Missouri. So far this partnership has included a MLK day of service which involved religious school students, day school students, our Kadima and USY children and parents as well as bringing thirty-four children from the shelter to share in our Purim Carnival, providing for them transportation, lunch and an afternoon of carnival games and fun.

Through this partnership our community has learned about and practiced the mitzvot of Tikkun Olam and Hachnasat Orchim. We raised our community's awareness concerning the issue of homelessness. We have brought together various groups within our synagogue to learn about and act upon a very important and serious issue within our community. We have helped make people living without a permanent home visible. All of this began with striking up a conversation with some people who made a park in Washington D.C. their home. This is a partnership which will hopefully continue, and grow, for many years to come.

Social Action / Public Policy - Silver Award

Gan Ha'Or

Beth El Congregation; Akron, OH

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Ellen Botnick**; ebotnick@aol.com

Inspired by her participation in the first Israel Sustainable Food Conference, Ellen Botnick and two congregants, Bonnie Cohen and Andrea Steinberger, decided to build a community garden at Beth El. But they wanted something more from the experience than growing produce; they wanted to benefit their community. Ellen suggested donating the produce they grew to the Good Samaritan Hunger Center ("GSHC"), Beth El's neighbor of over 25 years. The GSHC is housed in a church behind an unmarked yellow door, and few congregants even knew it was there. The GSHC cooks hot meals for those in need 5 days a week, and serves them in 5 locations around Akron 52 weeks a year. The executive director of the GSHC expressed how much the Center needed fresh vegetables.

The community garden, "Gan ha'Or" (the Garden of Light) met with great enthusiasm and support from members of Beth El, individuals from the 2 other synagogues in Akron, and from the Akron community. Volunteers cleaned out an abandoned area, built five 4'x16'x2' raised beds, and filled them with 20 tons of topsoil and 6 cubic yards of "Sweet Peet". Compost bins were constructed out of wooden pallets. The GSHC provided a "wish list" of vegetables and Beth El Academy students germinated some seeds indoors. Volunteers planted potatoes, tomatoes, peas, beans, lettuces, squash, eggplants, basil and more in our organic garden. A Beth El congregant took discarded pieces of wood from the jungle gym we refashioned into a tool shed, and created plant markers routed with the plant names. Bonnie calligraphed the plant names in Hebrew and Beth El Academy students painted the markers with Jewish symbols. Bonnie also designed a mosaic sign displaying the name: Gan ha'Or. Confirmation students used recycled glass to complete the sign, which sits atop the tool shed. The GSHC's kitchen manager walked over to the garden almost daily, and harvested the produce which she used to prepare the meals, and put vegetable scraps in the compost bins.

In all, over 75 volunteers constructed, designed, painted, planted, rototilled, weeded, watered and harvested the garden. On Lag B'omer, we dedicated the garden, and on Sukkot we honored our volunteers and celebrated the amazingly bountiful harvest. We all reaped the benefits of our stewardship on the land.

Social Action / Public Policy - Silver Award

Holiday Social Action Extravaganza

Beth Israel Congregation; Owings Mills, MD

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Sheri Knauth**; biomprograms@comcast.net

Thirty-three teens attended the Beth Israel Owings Mills' "Holiday Social Action Extravaganza" on Saturday night December 11, 2010. Beth Israel Owings Mills opened its doors to friends of all faiths. Many of our guests were from Key Club at Franklin High School. Our 18 Beth Isarel teens and 15 guests participated in creating the following with their time and donations:

**Blanket Making for Hannah More Shelter in Reisterstown*

**Cookie Baking for Soldiers in Iraq*

**Decorating dreidels to send to an orphanage in Israel (Delivering in Fall 2011)*

**Decorating ornaments to donate to needy families*

**Making Kwanza candles for Local Shelters (Delivering in Fall 2011)*

**Thank you Cards for Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan*

Social Action / Public Policy - Bronze Award

Mitzvah Day

Temple Beth Torah -- Tamarac Jewish Center; Tamarac, FL

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Jacqueline Montag**; execdir@tbtonline.org

We believe in helping others in our community who are in need. Giving back to the community is an important part of our programs. We have events that serve the community throughout the year; but once a year we have our Mitzvah Day which encompasses many Tikkun Olam projects. Our most recent Mitzvah Day was February 27, 2011.

A fundamental principle of Judaism is Tikkun Olam, or helping to repair the world, to make the world a better place while we are here. Temple Beth Torah, through its Tikkun Olam Committee and the Social Action Tikkun Olam arm of its Youth Group, planned a "TBT Gives Back to Broward" campaign this holiday season. Our youth group members, including our USYer's and Kadimaniks, helped sort, organize and distribute the items donated to multiple organizations.

Social Action / Public Policy - Bronze Award

Homeless Shelter Committee

Congregation Beth Shalom; Atlanta, GA

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Loli Gross**; loli@bshalom.net

Homelessness is a major issue in many metropolitan areas, and Atlanta is no exception. Unfortunately, there are many misconceptions about homelessness and shelters do not always have enough support to meet the needs of their patrons. Eleven years ago, Congregation Beth Shalom's Tikkun Olan Committee realized our synagogue could be more involved in assisting the homeless than just collecting food for the

yearly food drives. A need was identified to assist a homeless shelter located in a conservative synagogue (Congregation Shearith Israel) which required kosher food and was having difficulty obtaining it since the local food bank was unable to provide it. The Congregation Beth Shalom (CBS) Homeless Shelter Committee was formed to make a yearly commitment to assist this shelter, involve the entire Congregation Beth Shalom synagogue community, and to help educate others about homelessness.

We have found this to be a very worthwhile and important project that has taught our synagogue community a lot about people and circumstances and the importance of assisting others.

Social Action / Public Policy - Bronze Award

Mitzvah Committee

Temple Sholom; Bridgewater, NJ

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Dorothy Weller**; dawdaphne@gmail.com

What makes the Mitzvah Committee at Temple Sholom unique in its game plan? The Committee has a mission statement which is used to guide all its activities. The key to the Mitzvah Committee's success is its Mitzvah-of-the-Month programs, each with a clever theme or promotion. These programs are run with the goal of reinforcing the Jewish values of hospitality, caring for the needy and acts of loving kindness and epitomize what the Mitzvah Committee is all about. The Committee communicates with the congregation frequently through flyers, bulletin articles (Mitzvah Moments), the Temple web site and e-mail to reach the broadest number of members possible. The committee meets periodically to plan for future projects and to evaluate previously completed projects for their effectiveness. The committee does no fundraising; it is not an income generating entity. The committee's overall annual budget is approximately \$500 - \$750. These funds are required mostly for mailings and support materials. The remainder of needed funds is obtained via donations from congregation members. All programs are run by volunteers from the congregation who give of their talents, time and in some cases their own funds to complete a project. The Committee strives to include Temple Sholom members of all age groups through activities that are positive, inviting and fun; while making sure to recognize all individual contributions in the monthly bulletin and on the Temple web site with a hearty Toda Rabah!

Social Action / Public Policy - Bronze Award

2nd Annual Mitzvah Day

Beth Israel Congregation; Owings Mills, MD

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Sheri Knauth**; biomprograms@comcast.net

Mitzvah Day is a congregation service day created to encourage all of our members from age 1 to 100 to take part in a project that makes a difference in the lives of others. Congregants were encouraged to sign up as an individual, a couple or a family. We ask congregants to coordinate involvement with friends to add to their enjoyment.

Beth Israel Congregation considers service to the community to be among the highest values of our Jewish tradition. Our history of involvement in synagogue based social action shows our commitment to serving the needs of the less fortunate. Our past Mitzvah Day events have had a positive impact on our community and congregants.

Social Action / Public Policy - Bronze Award

Pilgrimage Festivals

Ahavath Achim Congregation; Atlanta, GA

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Alice Taratoot**; ataratoot@msn.com

Ahavath Achim Congregation is engaged in tradition, remembering those that came before us and community. We have created social action drives to coincide with the three Pilgrimage Festivals. Our offerings are distributed to those in our community that are going through personal hardships.

In ancient Israel, people traveled to Jerusalem three times during the year to bring offerings of thanksgiving to the Temple. These "regalim" coincide with planting, harvest and givings.

PASSOVER: ShAAring the Basics of the Journey - Enhancing the pilgrimage holiday of Pesach, we turn toward those with a difficult journey in a caring way

2010 – Toiletries were collected to benefit the Family Violence Council which provides housing and shelter for those whose journeys are often unexpected, frequently long and always difficult.

2011 – We fulfilled the wish list of the Ronald McDonald House, collecting items that would support the overnight stays of parents and families with critically ill children in the Children's Hospitals of Atlanta. With the collection of pantry items, disposable cleaning products and single serving food goods, pillows and hygiene products, we provided some of the comforts of home for those with a long journey to home.

SHAVUOT: Bringing the BAAsics for Learning – The gift of study

2010 – School supplies were collected for The Atlanta Community Food Bank KIDS IN NEED Project. Elementary school children were given back packs with items relevant to their grade level.

SUKKOT: Sharing our AAbundance – helping us by helping others

2010 – Gently used and new clothing were donated for the Battered Women's and Men's Shelters. Over 2000 wearable items were collected, as well as coats and blankets. Those in temporary housing were taken care of before the winter season took place.

Strategic Planning - Gold Award

Ohev Shalom Strategic Plan

Congregation Ohev Shalom; Wallingford, PA

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Richard Kaplan**; rzanek@msn.com

Congregation Ohev Shalom of Wallingford, Pennsylvania is an egalitarian Conservative synagogue in existence for nearly a century. In June 2008 a Strategic Planning Committee was convened to develop a plan for the future of the congregation. Several challenges were facing our synagogue community, including; an aging and declining membership, unfavorable local Jewish demographics, rising expenses and static income, integration of intermarried families, and a watershed moment in our history – the simultaneous expiration of the professional contracts of our Rabbi, Cantor and Education Director.

A Strategic Planning committee representing the wide-ranging demographics of our synagogue membership was formed. After a full year of twice monthly meetings; extensive canvassing of the synagogue community thru focus groups and surveys; discussions with the professional staff and lay leadership; and, comprehensive review of all aspects of synagogue life; the committee had accomplished

its mission of developing a strategy for Congregation Ohev Shalom to “thrive and endure” in a challenging environment.

The Strategic Plan was presented to the synagogue community in June 2009. Since then the professional staff and Board of Directors have been steadfast in their mission to successfully implement it. The strategic plan is a living document that has guided Ohev Shalom on a path of rejuvenation. A wonderfully engaging and innovative trio of professionals have been hired – a new Rabbi, Cantor/Education Director and Executive Director. The Synagogue Board has been restructured, membership is growing, an updated Hebrew School curriculum has been developed, Kadima and USY chapters have been started, and a Hazak Chapter and Legacy Society are in the process of formation. The groundwork for all of these accomplishments can be found in the Congregation Ohev Shalom Strategic Plan 2009. We are proud to be living our strategic plan.

Website - Gold Award

www.templesholom.com

Temple Sholom; Greenwich, CT

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Lori Baden**; lori.baden@templesholom.com

The Temple Sholom website was designed to be an effective communication tool for our congregants, a Jewish information portal and an online presence for those unaffiliated and searching for a congregation. The Temple Sholom website works with mobile devices and is interactive so that people can RSVP for programs through it.

Our internal marketing and communications staff is responsible for the layout and design and copy of the website. Our staffs, who are not IT/web professionals, update the site on a weekly basis – although some of our sections may change daily. We take pride in making sure all of our programs are listed and highlighted as they approach. Candle times, Torah portions and service times are also listed and change weekly.

The Temple Sholom website is actively marketed to our congregation as a destination for programming materials, photos/highlights of past events, as well as a Jewish information portal. Our website has key links to other Jewish sites, including USCJ. We have a section for people to find local kosher caterers as well as local day schools and Jewish camps.

Our website is both functional and graphically appealing. We have created a site that functions both as an on-line brochure and also a resource tool. We know that prospective members, who we may not even be aware of, are looking at the Temple Sholom website. We use it to showcase our strong, vibrant, diverse community; and to get across our mission to be a family friendly and multigenerational congregation and a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment using a “Big Tent” (Ohel Gadol) approach to welcome Jews from across the Conservative Jewish spectrum.

Temple Sholom also uses social networking technology to communicate with our congregants and prospective congregants. Facebook is the tool that we primarily employ. Rabbi Mitchell M. Hurvitz, senior Rabbi, uses it to publish his weekly teaching, connect with congregants and plug upcoming programs. We also have a Temple Sholom page where we promote upcoming programs. And our Membership Director, Lori Baden, has a page that is used both for connecting and for promoting

Website - Silver Award

www.ohev.net

Congregation Ohev Shalom; Wallingford, PA

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Amy Pollack**; amy.pollack@twistnshout.com

In redesigning our website, we had three goals. First was to provide easy access to current and relevant information; second was to serve as a resource to both members and non-members; and third was to use software that makes the site easy to manage and update

We accomplished all three goals and included additional useful features as well. Visitors can easily view our upcoming events, browse our calendar, read Rabbi Gerber's blog, explore membership options, connect with us socially, and sign up for our weekly emails. Our website is current, loaded with information and best of all, it is poised for growth and development.

Perhaps the best feedback we have received is from several of our new members who cited our website as being user friendly and a definite factor in deciding to join our congregation.

Website - Bronze Award

www.tbtonline.org

Temple Beth Torah -- Tamarac Jewish Center; Tamarac, FL

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Amir Watynski**; amir@watt-media.com

In early 2010, Temple Beth Torah's Marketing Committee undertook a complete redesign of our website. Our previous website had a dated look, had several pages which hadn't been updated in several years, and we found ourselves increasingly reliant on our vendor webmaster who would often take several days or weeks for simple updates. Our goals from the outset were to create a more modern-looking, interactive website with fresh content, one that would become a resource of information for our congregants and prospective members. Another item of importance was for TBT's lay people to have control over updating the website, so that updates would be done in a timely manner.

Website - Bronze Award

www.bethelnr.org

Beth El Synagogue; New Rochelle, NY

Size Category:500-899

Contact: **Olivier Vogel**; ovogel@bethelnr.org

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. In particular, the website serves to introduce Beth El to potential new members and to other Jews interested in the numerous events held at the center each and every week.

The website was designed with the intent of finding the subject of interest quickly. The main menu and associated submenus enable the congregants, prospective members or outside individuals to locate their areas of interest easily by listing all options without ambiguity, by enabling a quick search of the site or by displaying a map of the site. Graphics, pictures and clipart have been used to make the site appealing and colorful without making it too distracting with too many graphics. Limiting the number of graphics also enables the pages to load quickly.

Maintaining the website is an essential activity. The frequency of the updates on Beth El's website varies between pages. All pages related to the Minyan, Shabbat Services, messages from the President or Rabbis, and the news from each department are updated once a month. The calendar of events is updated as necessary, more or less daily. The Events & News page under Programs & Events is updated a few times per month as needed. The pages associated with the Beth El staff and the schedule of dues and tuitions are revised at the start of every fiscal year. Web pages are also created on a regular basis to promote new programs, new committee events, and to publicize particular events of importance and to highlight Jewish holidays and activities related to these holidays.

Worship and Ritual - Gold Award

Torah with Laura

Temple Beth-El Mekor Chayim; Cranford, NJ

Size Category:101-249

Contact: **Laura Cohen**; laura.cohen@hp.com

"Torah with Laura" provides training for lay involvement as service leaders and participants in ritual roles. The goal is to increase participation by members in the ritual life of the congregation and broaden the talent base while empowering members with skills. Special needs learners are welcome.

This program is a weekly drop-in session for adults and teens who are practicing for Torah chanting, haftarah, megilla preparation, leading tefila.

Three elements distinguish TwL from other programs:

- *Drop-in style, no appointment needed; first come- first served;*
- *The program is an adjunct to active recruiting for relatively small assignments of Torah readings for beginners and megilla and haftarah skills;*
- *A special focus is made to encourage parents and siblings of b'nei mitzvah to participate in the service by learning a part of the Torah reading*

In January2009 this program was launched with the goal of expanding the number of capable participants in ritual skills. Learningis at a standing time and place for anyone to drop into rehearse or learn a new skill. During the first year of this program 32 participants learned an aliya. In the second year 14 participants learned an aliya. TBEMC boasted 22 Megillat Esther chanters in 2011 who took advantage of the opportunity to practice in advance with the actual scroll to gain confidence with their skills.

Worship and Ritual - Gold Award

Shofar Over the Hudson

Temple Beth El; Poughkeepsie, NY

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Steven Licker**; simstone@optonline.net

On September 12, 2010, Temple Beth El held the first annual "Shofar Over the Hudson" program in Poughkeepsie, NY. It was held in Waryas Park, which is a public park on the eastern shore of the Hudson River between the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Mid-Hudson Bridge and the walkway over the Hudson New York State Park. The program was open to the public, free of charge, and to all Temple Beth El members. It was covered by a writer and photographer from the Poughkeepsie Journal, with a story in the next day's paper and website.

The "Shofar Over the Hudson" program was conceived by Rabbi Neal Loevinger, with assistance from Steven Koch, the Synagogue President. The program's goal was to give people who do not ordinarily attend a synagogue on the High Holy Days the opportunity to hear the sound of the Shofar. The idea was to combine the sound of the shofar with the majesty and natural beauty of the Hudson River to create an unparalleled spiritual experience to usher in the Jewish New Year.

A group of nearly 100 congregants and community members gathered in an open area in the park adjacent to the Hudson River to hear Rabbi Loevinger talk about Rosh Hashanah and the significance of sounding the shofar. He led one our most skilled ba'al tekiah in the set of shofar sounds so that people could focus on the meaning of each distinct sound. Cantor Shapiro followed this with her guitar, leading the Shalom Singers (the synagogue's adult choir) and the Youth Choir in songs with the congregation and guests joining in. Spontaneously, a circle formed and the group participated in traditional dances.

Worship and Ritual - Gold Award

Shabbat and Festival Services

Temple Beth Torah -- Tamarac Jewish Center; Tamarac, FL

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Rabbi Michael Gold**; rabbigold@aol.com

In August 2010, TBT moved to a new building. We immediately began an intensive program to make our Shabbat and festival worship services more attractive to members and potential members. This included a rethinking of the goals of both Friday night and Saturday morning services, as well as creative programming for festive services throughout the year.

On Friday night we believe it is vital to welcome Shabbat with music and singing. We introduced a guitar and a number of new melodies by contemporary composers, including several songs in English. We also began twice a month, family Shabbat dinners. Once a month, the various religious school classes lead services and hear a story told by the rabbi. We also have a regular kid's Shabbat program for our very young children. Our Friday service, which had been dwindling over the past several years, is now growing and has a new spirit.

On Shabbat morning the belief was that the service should center on the study of Torah. Every week before beginning our Torah reading in the sanctuary, our rabbi leads fifteen to twenty minutes of text study. Our members then read a third of the portion. For those who prefer a full traditional Torah reading, we provide an alternative in our chapel. Everybody comes together for the haftarah, the sermon, and musaf. Following services and the Kiddush, every Shabbat we have learning led by various, volunteer lay people. This learning has been steadily growing.

Throughout the cycle of festivals, we also provide a variety of creative programs detailed in this application. This includes a choice of two High Holiday services, a community yizkor service and a healing service on Yom Kippur, bring your own shofar at the end of neilah, a barbecue in the Sukkah, a huge Hanukkah picnic, a tu b'shvat seder, a Purim costume parade, a women's seder before Pesach and two family seders on Pesach, an annual Yom HaShoah program and the Bounty of the Babies every Shavuot.

Besides these Shabbat a festival programs, we are proud that we are one of the few local synagogues that provide a daily minyan every morning and every evening of the year. We also are the only local Conservative synagogue that has a traditional mincha-shalshuedas-maariv-havdalah at sundown every

week. The details of all these programs are available in the application. We believe that through our worship services, we have helped Jews connect to each other, to the Torah and to God.

Worship and Ritual - Gold Award

KICKS

Congregation Kehillath Israel; Brookline, MA

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Rabbi Emma Kippley-Ogman**; rabbiemma@congki.org

KICKS (Kehillath Israel Community Kabbalat Shabbat), launched in March 2010, is an emerging inter-generational Friday night community in Brookline, MA. It draws people who range in age from small children to communal elders, with a plurality of folks in their 20s and 30s. KICKS began as a collaboration between Congregation Kehillath Israel (KI)'s existing Friday night services and a group of younger members of the Brookline Jewish community who were seeking elevating spiritual experiences of prayer as a way to welcome Shabbat. On any given week, KICKS attracts at least twice as many individuals to Friday night services as had been attending and draws on a diverse and ever-evolving subset of the local community. KICKS's signature lively Friday night services (traditional-egalitarian and lay-led) take place every Shabbat, led by shelichei tzibur who consider carefully what sort of atmosphere they are aiming to create and what music they could use to facilitate that process.

KICKS strives to be more than a place to show up on Friday nights, but to become a substantial, earnest community for those who decide to make it their own. To build on what we accomplish during davenning, we host monthly Shabbat dinners throughout the year. During the winter months, during the sometimes hour-long gap between mincha and kabbalat shabbat, a learning community has emerged: a different teacher each week shares a facet of Torah that speaks to them – music, text, arts, practices of Jewish living. Over the past year, KICKS has become situated as both a vibrant sub-community of KI and as a dynamic piece of the diverse tapestry of organizations, shuls and minyanim that define Jewish life in Brookline. As such, KICKS has reinvigorated KI as a whole, serving as a model for the implementation of an inspired vision into reality, attracting new faces to the synagogue, and continuing KI's long legacy of cutting-edge leadership in the community.

Worship and Ritual - Gold Award

Interfaith Women's Seder

The Park Synagogue; Pepper Pike, OH

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Ellen Petler**; epetler@parksyn.org

After the highly successful interfaith celebration for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 2010, co-sponsored by Park Synagogue, Abundant Grace Fellowship and Body of Christ Assembly Heights, Park Synagogue's Women's Rosh Chodesh Group felt it was important to continue the relationship with these two African-American churches. And so the Women's Rosh Chodesh Group invited the women and girls of the congregations to an Interfaith Women's Passover Seder on March 14, 2010. Park's Women's Rosh Chodesh Group had a history of sponsoring a Women's Seder, but had not done an interfaith Women's Seder before.

Important to the afternoon was to make sure that the non-Jewish women and girls felt comfortable with both the service and the food. We wanted the experience to be one of both learning about Passover traditions and ceremonies from the perspective of women and also about feeling the connection our

peoples have in respect to slavery and freedom. And so we embarked on this project with these goals in mind.

The result was a wonderfully successful afternoon with close to 100 women and girls in attendance. The event resulted in increasing our own and our guests' understanding of the Passover holiday, as well as increasing the feelings of community among the three congregational groups.

Worship and Ritual - Silver Award

Shabbat Seder

Adath Israel Congregation; Lawrenceville, NJ

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Hedda Morton;** hedda@adathisraelnj.org

The concept of the Shabbat Seder began with the understanding that the Passover Seder is the single most practiced Jewish observance. Adath Israel has had many successful Shabbat dinners for varying age groups followed by traditional Shabbat eve services. Occasionally, the service did not sustain the energy and ruach of the Shabbat meal. Rabbi Grossman conceived the idea of combining the elements of an active and involved Shabbat meal with the best of the Friday eve service. The Shabbat eve service lends itself to separate units: Kabbalat Shabbat, Sh'ma and its blessing, the Amidah, and the concluding t'fillot. With this in mind, Rabbi Grossman thought it appropriate to intersperse the meal among those units of prayer. There was an immediate and overwhelming response to this new model.

We are now completing the third year of Shabbat Sedarim. An unexpected plus has been that several unique groups within the congregation have emerged as leaders in the congregation specifically because of the implementation of the Shabbat Seder service.

The Shabbat Seder has succeeded in no small part because this level of participation does not require walking to the bimah. In addition, participants have indicated that they are now transferring the Shabbat Seder model to their homes resulting in increased home ritual observances. The Shabbat Seder occurs 3-4 times per year and is now a fully integrated and eagerly anticipated part of the life of Adath Israel Congregation.

Worship and Ritual - Gold Award

Ruach Am'cha: Spirit of the People

Shaare Zedek Synagogue; St. Louis, MO

Size Category:250-499

Contact: **Gary Kodner;** gkodner@n-kcreative.com

Ruach Am'cha, or Spirit of Your People, is a project at Shaare Zedek embarking on its second year, funded by the Legacy Heritage Foundation and the Crown Family Foundation. The goal is to infuse music into all aspects of congregational life, whether home or at shul. Every 4 weeks, each congregant receives a link to the Niggun (tune) of the month, which is sung throughout the month in various settings. A talented cadre of musical Ambassadors (SZ members who bring spirit and song to Shabbat tables across our congregation) is available to help you celebrate Shabbat in your home. At shul, the second Shabbat of the month is Ruach Am'cha Shabbat, which includes musical services Friday night, chanting services Saturday morning, singing after Kiddush, and a "Havdalah Jam" Saturday night, with drumming and singing.

Worship and Ritual - Bronze Award

Glen Rock Jewish Center; Glen Rock, NJ

Contact: **Jane Spindel;** trehugr@aol.com

In its worship and ritual practices, the Glen Rock Jewish Center has sought to expand frequency of holiday services, encourage adults to learn the prayers and take part in a full b'nai mitzvah ceremony, include new melodies to encourage congregation participation, expand involvement of post-B'nai Mitzvah youth, offer training for adult Torah and haftorah readers and gabbayim, and provide more meaningful services as part of shiva minyans.

Ritual Efforts

Size Category:101-249

Worship and Ritual - Bronze Award

Beth David Synagogue; Greensboro, NC

Contact: **Risa Hanau;** ncreeser@aol.com

Ten years ago the Religious Life Committee set forth to develop a bima guide program based on the suggestion of the Rabbi that it would be beneficial to have someone on the bima dedicated to guiding those who came up on the bima for an honor during service and would provide the opportunity for lay members of the congregation to actively participate in services. This concept has evolved and become a valued program within Beth David Synagogue. The evolution of this program has been beneficial to many aspects of worship at Beth David -- both for the bima guide and for those who are coming up to the bima for an honor. The Bima Guide position creates the opportunity for any member of the congregation to take an active part in the worship service -- regardless of their Jewish knowledge or Hebrew reading ability. And for the participating congregant or visitor, there is comfort knowing that they will be guided through their time on the bima without having to worry about where to stand or what to do -- rather they can fully appreciate the honor and their role in the worship service. The Bima Guide program has grown over the years and has become more formalized—but there is still no budget necessary for the program as the Director of Adult Education (part time position) provides training to interested Bima Guides as a part of her job duties. The bima guide receives training from the Director of Adult Education regarding the expectations and duties involved in serving as bima guide. There is a “Bima Guide” guide which is provided that also outlines the specific responsibilities throughout the worship service. A Bima Guide is on the bima during all Shabbat morning and Yom Tov services – a rotation is utilized so that no one guide will be called upon too often – and an opportunity is provided to all who want to participate. While many bima guides are satisfied with their level of involvement, it has also been the case that a number of the bima guides have utilized this role as a stepping stone to increased participation in worship services, going on to lead services or read Torah or Haftorah over the years.

Bima Guide Program

Size Category:250-499

Worship and Ritual - Bronze Award

Congregation Beth Israel; Scotch Plains, NJ

Contact: **Davida Berkowitz;** execdir@cbinj.org

Throughout Congregation Beth Israel's history, our Friday night service never varied. It began at 8:30 pm, and most of the liturgy was led by that weekend's bar or bat mitzvah child. As a result, it was impractical to attempt any new melodies or alternate texts, because each student spent a significant amount of time

Fridays in the Round

Size Category:250-499

preparing the same tunes. Furthermore, the late start time precluded the attendance of any family with younger children. Consequently, the Friday night service was attended by two categories of worshippers: the bar mitzvah student and family, and a slowly diminishing group of older members. It was clear that a change was needed.

After consulting with Rabbi Charles Simon of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, we began by conducting focus groups comprised of randomly chosen members of the congregation, to start getting a sense of why they were not attending Shabbat evening services, and we heard the same answers from many: Services begin too late and families found it burdensome to get all dressed up and sit in such a formal setting after a long day of work and school.

A complete reformat of the Friday night service resulted from these conversations. First, we changed the start time to 7:30 pm, a time that many families agreed would be late enough to enjoy a family dinner together, but early enough for younger children to attend. Casual dress is encouraged, making it much more comfortable for everyone. We also took the service out of the sanctuary altogether, and now daven in the social hall, with chairs set up in the round. In order to enhance the setting, we have the retractable wall to the sanctuary open, so that the darkened sanctuary with the illuminated ner tamid is visible and creates a spiritual backdrop.

The bar mitzvah student no longer leads every prayer. In fact, because much of the Shabbat evening service is simply sung congregationally, we sit in the round and sing together—creating a wonderful sense of ruach. Rather than the clergy standing on a distant bimah and singing at the congregation, the Rabbi and Cantor sit in the round among the congregation, and we are now one kahal participating equally. The Cantor is easily able to teach new tunes and vary the existing melodies from week to week.

Prior to the Kiddush, which is chanted by that week's bar or bat mitzvah student, the Rabbi now includes the traditional blessing of our sons and daughters, and because we are all seated in the round, it makes it much easier and enjoyable for kids and parents to move around accordingly to stand next to their children. One of the most meaningful moments of the service is when kids stand next to their parents, who themselves are standing next to their parents, and each generation recites the traditional "Y'simcha/Y'simech..." text.

The feedback has been wonderful and attendance each week has grown rapidly. The change in time, the heimische setting, and informal dress have all helped to make the Shabbat service a new favorite for families of every demographic of our shul.

Worship and Ritual - Bronze Award

Kol Emeth; Palo Alto, CA

Contact: **Sarah Kummerfeld**; office@kolemeth.org

Shabbat to Go

Size Category:500-899

Shabbat to Go is a Synagogue wide hospitality effort using Abraham's example of hospitality as an inspiration for our community. On the High Holy Days, Rabbi Booth's sermon was on the topic of Shabbat Hospitality. After the sermon, people were given an opportunity to sign up to host. Approximately 80 individual hosts signed up on Yom Kippur. At the same time, we had people register on line to host, creating a form to match hosts and guests. That was followed with an e-mail message to the entire congregation that resulted in an additional 20 hosts, leading to a total of 100 hosts for the first evening in mid-October. Those 100 hosts were then placed on an e-mail distribution list called

hospitality@kolemeth.org. At the same time, easy to cook Shabbat recipes were placed on the website to send the message that anyone could host easily.

At that point, a matching sub committee met to match the guests to hosts. We have been averaging about 60 open seats in people's homes to match. Many of those asking to be matched include older members of our shul, singles in the Synagogue community, and young adults looking for connections, and religious school families.

For our May dinner, we partnered with the Stanford Hillel to offer a place for Stanford graduate students. We are partnering with USCJ to offer each family that hosts a young adult a bottle of wine for their table. This will allow the hospitality program to create a greater awareness among KE members of USCJ, and also means that young adults will have a positive experience of getting something nice from the movement itself. Abraham opened his home and created Jews simply by offering hospitality. In this era of declining affiliation and virtual communities, the Shabbat hospitality effort is an intentional program to reclaim personal connection and home hospitality as the backbone of the community. The altar has been replaced by the Shabbat table -- and we are creating hundreds of altars in our community.

Worship and Ritual - Bronze Award

The Minyan and Shabbat ShAAlom

Ahavath Achim Synagogue; Atlanta, GA

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Neil Sandler**; nsandler@aasynagogue.org

For the past five years we have acted on a worship philosophy that says, "One size does not fit all." We recognize that one Shabbat evening or morning does not meet the spiritual needs of all who truly wish to connect with a congregation on Shabbat. In Solomon Schechter Award cycles we have received awards for some of those alternative services. In the past year we have introduced two new regular worship experiences to the other alternative Shabbat services and programs we offer. Characteristic of both of these services is their complete dependence on lay leadership. Shabbat ShAAlom is a weekly Shabbat morning meditation service offered at 11:00am. The service is now a year and a half old. The use of "AA" in "ShAAlom" is quite intentional. Our congregation is known in our community as "AA," and much of our marketing incorporates the use of "AA" (especially in our alternative services).

Shabbat ShAAlom is typically attended by 10 – 40 people. A core of five lay people alternate in leading it for one hour each Shabbat morning. The nature of the meditation experience varies from week to week and includes singing (with acoustic instrumentation), kirtan chanting, visualization and meditation exercises focusing on either the weekly Torah portion or the current holiday.

The Minyan is a monthly Shabbat evening Carlebach – style service. It is completely lay – led. We typically have one person lead Kabbalat Shabbat, another lead Ma'ariv and a third person offer a D'var Torah. This program began in the fall of 2010 and is typically attended by 50 – 75 people. We have moved this service out of our chapel (traditional straight pews orientation in which everyone faces the bimah) and set it up in a comfortable, nice decorated room in a U – shape with the service leader or darshan in the middle of the U. The level of ruach in this service is noticeably greater than it is in our regular Shabbat evening services. This service has been an effective outreach tool (among others) to young Jewish professionals in our community, a good number of who have joined our congregation in the past year. At the conclusion of the service each month, one of our rabbis hosts a dairy potluck Shabbat dinner in his home. These dinners are attended by 20 – 50 people, again typically consisting mostly of young Jewish professionals.

Worship and Ritual - Bronze Award

Yad Squad

Congregation Beth Yeshurun; Houston, TX

Size Category:900+

Contact: **Luis Dorfman**; ldorfman@bethyeshurun.org

Beth Yeshurun supports three concurrent Shabbat minyanim. In the main service, we have been blessed with a regular Baal Korei who has been leining Torah for at least three decades. The other minyanim have a very small cadre of regular volunteers who are capable of leining. It was felt that we needed to develop a larger cadre of Torah readers.

Hazzan David Propis created and developed the idea of the "Yad Squad," a group of volunteer Beth Yeshurun members who had a desire to chant from the Torah, and would have weekly opportunities to lein. This was whole-heartedly approved by Senior Rabbi David Rosen, and implemented by our Ritual Committee Chair Steve Rudoff. The Yad Squad was created in the spring of 2010 and is now in full swing. 24 members ranging in age from 13 to 75 have learned to lein and have participated in the program.

To maintain continuity, the reading of the first Aliyah in the main service every Shabbat is reserved for the Yad Squad. We have periodical meetings with the Yad Squad with Hazzan Propis to sharpen skills and correct any common errors that are being made.

The biggest benefit we have had from the Yad Squad is seeing families of the Yad Squad, who may not be here on a regular basis, coming to Shabbat services to see their loved ones on the Bimah performing such a beautiful mitzvah, and seeing the pride in all involved when they are done.