



**President & Board Member – Desma Holcomb:** I would be honored to serve the Hebrew Tabernacle community and the Board as President. As Board Secretary and a Board member, I have been committed to working with all of you to fulfill our mission—nurturing a love of Judaism among adults and children, helping repair the world, and engaging leaders among both our new and longtime members. I served on the Search Committee which brought us Rabbi Paula Feldstein. As a leader at HT, I

support diverse religious services for our diverse membership. With the Membership & Fundraising Committees, I have motivated neighbors to join and members to offer volunteer skills, time, and funds.

I retired as Director of Labor Education at a union, the NYS Nurses Association. I have used my skills in education and organizing for our Social Action Committee. With my master's in economics, I enjoy analyzing our finances and planning our fiscal future.

My active involvement in synagogue life started three decades ago when Miriam Frank & I co-chaired the Hebrew School at Beth Am. Our daughter Ruth Frank-Holcomb was in elementary school then, and I became a Jew by choice. After we joined the HT family, Ruth became Bat Mitzvah. I was so happy to marry Miriam in 2010—after a very long (24 year) engagement—under the chuppah in our sanctuary.



**Vice President & Board – Rita Hamburg:** I would be honored to serve a second term as a vice president of The Hebrew Tabernacle (HT). During my vice-presidency, I have been co-chair with Desma Holcomb and with Kate Sussman, respectively, of two dynamic committees: Membership and Social Action. Together with Sara Silver, our Associate Treasurer, I have organized quarterly NY Blood Drives at HT. With New-York Presbyterian Hospital, I have helped arrange an annual flu shot clinic at HT. For 30-plus years, I have led a weekly, 90-minute, co-ed, gentle stretching/strengthening exercise class for adults at HT Monday evenings. I have recently added a Friday morning class.

As an experienced physical therapist, I bring my expertise in musculo-skeletal conditions to these classes by tailoring the exercises to the participants' needs, and all proceeds are donated to HT.

Two generations of the Hamburg family have been actively involved in the leadership of HT for nearly sixty years and counting. My father-in-law, Dr. Max Hamburg, was a president of the Tabernacle in the 1970's. My husband Mark is a former President of HT (1999-2004), and I have served as a Tabernacle VP and, for a number of years, as a member of its Board of Trustees.

In March, 2021, I retired from my position as the Site Director of Rehabilitation Therapies at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, Columbia University Irving Medical Center, after having worked there for 35 years. My email address is [rita.hamburgh@gmail.com](mailto:rita.hamburgh@gmail.com). Please contact me about the exercise class; ideas for new programs; or if you want me to reach out to prospective members.

I look forward to continuing to work energetically and cooperatively with the Tabernacle's executive committee and board; with its clergy and with the other Tabernacle committees and constituents for the goals of increasing our membership and community involvement.



**Vice President & Board – Michael Klein:** I would be honored to serve in the position of Vice President of the Hebrew Tabernacle of Washington Heights. I am proud to have been born and raised in Washington Heights and of the third generation. I attended Hebrew School at Mt. Sinai, although I was brought up in a family with Jewish values in the Reform Movement. I began working professionally immediately after I was graduated from Baruch College. I retired from MTA New York City Transit as a Senior Director in March of 2022 after working there for 38 years. I've supervised a diverse staff while administering multimillion dollar capital construction projects. This has freed up more time to devote to Hebrew Tabernacle (HT). Melanie and I became part of the HT family in 1999 when we were looking for the right place for our wedding. Since then, we have been involved in synagogue life cycle events from baby naming, B'nei Mitzvahs to remembering loved ones.

I have volunteered in many capacities, serving as a member of the Board of Trustees, Associate Treasurer, and Vice President. I am the Chair of the Building Committee, Chair of the Seder Committee, serve on the Ritual Committee, Licensing Committee, a strong supporter of the Yad b' Yad (Legacy of the Sisterhood) and involved in the collaboration project with Fort Tryon Jewish Center. I was honored to receive the Community Leadership award at the HT gala. You will usually find me at services, participating and making sure everything is as it should be. I take my role as a Jew very seriously, and guard our Torahs, making sure they are properly handled.

Growing up and remaining in this community with my immediate family has allowed me to develop and maintain friendships at various houses of worship and local organizations over the years. Over the years I have volunteered with many HT events. Melanie and our daughter Julia (a proud Hebrew School grad) volunteer with me at all sorts of events, like the Purim Carnival, Rummage Sale, and Community Passover Seder. We volunteer at HT all the time.

In the day-to-day life of HT, I have worked on grants such as energy efficient lighting upgrade, parapet wall and roof restoration and I am currently working on others. In addition to maintaining the mechanics and systems for our building and working hand in hand with our custodians, I have been involved in major projects such as replacing drain

lines for the roof, backyard and ground floor bathrooms, installation of a hot water heater, new gas lines, and the new exhaust / fire suppression system for the kitchen. I have saved the congregation thousands of dollars by doing projects on my own and have been there in times of emergencies. Currently I am working with the committee to complete the replacement of the A/C system and moving forward with infrastructure repairs and plastering and painting throughout the building.

I have learned so much about the building and operation of a synagogue. I thought I should learn more about my role in leadership. I have recently attended the URJ Congregational Bootcamp Conference to augment the experience I have gained, with practical and current concepts and methods. I would love to apply modern methods to my old-time goals of increasing membership, engaging the younger generations to carry the torch and keep Judaism alive in their lives. I want to keep working on increasing community programs and involvement and making Hebrew Tabernacle a fully operational synagogue and community center, keeping an eye on the future while celebrating the past. I appreciate your support in re-electing me Vice President of Hebrew Tabernacle.



**Vice President – Dr. Laurie Slodounik:** I am a clinical psychologist and early childhood educator who has lived in Hudson Heights since 2009. I currently work as the Early Childhood Psychologist of the Abraham Joshua Heschel School, a pluralistic, progressive Jewish day school near Columbus Circle.

Along with my husband, Aaron, and my two children, Ezra and Amos — I have been an active participant of the HT congregation for the past nine years. I joyfully co-led Tot Shabbat services for several years and joined the board two years ago as co-Chair of the Tot committee. As a member of the board, I have been an active participant in the Social

Action, Ritual, and Tot committees, and recently collaborated with Jen Talansky and Robyn Schwartz to drive the creation of a new Parent Circle to foster connections between parents of children of all ages within our congregation. I and my family are eager participants in our Hebrew School and love attending family and tot services regularly.

I feel profoundly grateful for the warm, inclusive, creative, and meaningful Jewish community that we are building together under Rabbi Paula's inspiring leadership. I am excited by the opportunity to contribute further to our community as a Vice President.



**Secretary - Kate Sussman:** I have lived in NYC all of my life, and in Washington Heights for the past 22 years. We joined the Hebrew Tabernacle about eight years ago, and four years ago I joined the Board, initially as a parent representative from the Hebrew School. For the last three years as a member of the Board I have participated in search committees and co-chaired the HT Social Action Committee. My son Charlie has been an avid member of the Hebrew School since first grade, and we celebrated his Bar Mitzvah last June.

I appreciate the community and spiritual ties that being a member of HT provide for me and my family. I appreciate how much I have learned from other members about being a part of a Jewish community.

I have worked in education for my entire career. I am trained in special education, and have worked with district, charter, independent and Jewish Day schools on teacher training, school culture and leadership, and organizational change. I plan to continue bringing to the board, and now to the Executive Committee, my experience working with groups and teams on refining their vision, their goals, and their ways of working productively together.

I look forward to stepping up and participating as an officer in the leadership of Hebrew Tabernacle and helping to represent the families of the Hebrew School and the growing community of families in Washington Heights.



**Treasurer & Board Member - Todd Rubinstein:** I am seeking to continue serving on the Board of Directors of Hebrew Tabernacle as Treasurer. I believe I bring a wide range of experience to the Board. I am familiar with many of the issues confronting the Congregation in the last year having served on the Licensing Committee as the liaison with the Finance Committee. The committee is finalizing the installation of the new air conditioning system.

I also currently serve as a Board member of the Community League of the Heights, CLOTH. CLOTH has served Washington Heights since 1952 with Housing, Education, and other Social Service programs. Currently the food bank is providing food to thousands of people each week. I hope that volunteers from Tabernacle will work on some of CLOTH's projects to make our entire community better.

I have served as the President of another congregation for three years. I am retired as the Counsel and Grievance Coordinator for Teamsters Local 237. I am hoping that I can use my skill set to assist the Board in leading us forward. There are many challenges for in the upcoming year. We must move forward keeping our congregation growing, safe and financially stable.





**Associate Treasurer - Sara Silver:** A Trustee since 2017, I have worked to help our synagogue evolve to meet the needs of our fast-growing community in Washington Heights, to offer families the resources to bring up kids loving Judaism.

I shepherded our finances for four years, upgrading our financial reporting to give the board a better view of our finances and building consensus on matching spending to program goals. I helped to bring in major grants to make our building more secure and two forgivable loans to endure the pandemic.

Through careful financial management, in collaboration with Treasurer Todd Rubinstein, I helped the synagogue undertake major building repairs and maintain its financial soundness. I love working with bookkeeper Jesse Gerber and our terrific office staff to support multi-generational programming. I co-coordinate our blood drives, doing poster and Spanish-language outreach for this and other events, fundraisers and children's activities.

When not working on synagogue finance, I am the Alan Abelson professor of business journalism at Quinnipiac University in Connecticut, an adjunct at Columbia Journalism School and trains newsrooms to analyze numbers to hold power to account. I have two decades of reporting and editing experience in New York, Mexico City, and London for The Wall Street Journal, the Financial Times and The Associated Press. I have edited books on Holocaust restitution and financial crises. I earned an M.B.A. from Columbia Business School.



**Andrew DaSilva, Board:** It has been a great pleasure for me to serve the Temple for the last 9+ years, first as a founding member of the Licensing Committee and, more recently, as a member of the Building Committee and as Board member. It has been rewarding for me to apply my skills as a commercial real estate lawyer with 35+ years of experience for the benefit of HT.

As "consigliere" to the Licensing Committee, I have negotiated and documented long-term license agreements with several churches and other organizations. Currently, I am drafting a new license agreement with Uptown Community Church, which has been using our building for more than nine years, and which plans to stay with us for the indefinite future.

As member of the Building Committee, I have been intimately involved with our efforts to update and replace obsolete building systems. We recently replaced the fire suppression system in the kitchen and our gas lines, and we will be inaugurating our new air conditioning system within a few weeks.

Our community faces serious challenges, including the financial challenge posed by the upcoming loss of one long-term licensee and the ongoing challenges presented by our beloved but ancient building. I have tremendous faith in our community's capacity to pull through these difficulties. I would like to continue to serve on the Board so that I can contribute to our collective effort to overcome these challenges and continue to flourish.



**Board - Stéphane Sesquin:** I was born in France and grew up in Paris. My family is Ashkenazi from Eastern Europe and arrived in France in Late 1920s (Poland on my mother's side and Ukraine/Lithuania on my father's side, my father was born Szeskin and the name was changed after the war). I grew up in a fairly secular environment but with a strong Jewish culture. I was Bar mitzva-ed at the temple of the Place des Vosges in Paris Marais district. When I grew up, it was only conservative temples that existed, and I feel closer to the HT reform style.

I came to study in the early 2000s in NYC and met my now wife, Amanda. We lived in Paris for a few years and moved back to NYC in 2008 and settled on Cabrini Blvd in 2009 where we had our 2 sons Samuel and Jonah. I have been working in the financial software field. We are very attached to the neighborhood, and we believe the Hebrew Tabernacle is a big part of it. I would bring to the Board my experiences of being part of a mixed marriage, being foreign, and being a parent of kids brought up in the neighborhood. I have enjoyed being part of the HT community, and I think being part of the board is a great way to give back to the community and participate in it.



**Board - Rebecca Gonzalez:** I would be honored to serve on the Hebrew Tabernacle's Board of Directors. My kids, Alex and Julia, both attend Hebrew School. I have been happy with our kids' experience, and we have enjoyed attending services and other community events.

Growing up, I attended a Reconstructionist Congregation in Maryland, and I lived on a Kibbutz in Israel for a year while I was in high school. Some of my most vivid memories include the peace and gratitude I felt while praying during the Amidah, the joy from singing within a community, and the times we spent with family and friends savoring challah with butter on Friday nights. Although my husband was not raised in the Jewish tradition, he and I are both committed to raising our kids within it, so that they too have the joy of the traditions, the sense of belonging within a religious community, and the knowledge of these traditions to carry with them into adulthood.

As a member of the Board, I would look forward to contributing my perspective as a parent of young children. In addition, I would love for the synagogue to find ways to explicitly welcome families with interfaith backgrounds so that it becomes an even more inclusive

and welcoming community. I look forward to being in community with all of you in the years to come.



**Board - Dara Herman:** I have been involved with Hebrew Tabernacle since I first started bringing my baby daughter Viv (now almost 15 years old) to Tot Shabbat in 2009. I quickly fell in love with the community, especially enjoying the welcoming, joyous and unpretentious quality of our congregants.

I became one of the co-leaders of Tot Shabbat for several years, approximately 2011-2015 or so, and continued to attend and bring my son, Declan, now almost 8 years old, from infancy, also dragging Viv along to assist, although she had far exceeded the recommended age limit at that point.

As my kids have gotten older, they have attended Hebrew school, and Viv made her Bat Mitzvah here last June. I regularly volunteer for occasions throughout the year, including Mitzvah Day, the Purim Carnival, and more. I can also be seen online posting announcements on the neighborhood list-serv for Hebrew Tabernacle, and I have brought in several other families for services and Hebrew School through word of mouth.

I look forward to the opportunity to participate in the life of Hebrew Tabernacle even more deeply through membership on the board.