

Hebrew School Report for the Annual Meeting, 5/7/23

Respectfully submitted by Shelly and Loren

Hebrew School this year started with a renewed excitement. The doors were flung open welcoming students and parents back into our building. Hebrew School student enrollment was 65 Students, up from last year's enrollment of 48. We have had 4 B'nei Mitzvah ceremonies already this year with 5 more coming up in 2023. We already have 4 more scheduled in 2024 and 1 in 2025!! Please make these celebrations special for our students and their families by attending in person. Check the website for dates and times!!

This year 4 Hebrew High students have returned to volunteer at Hebrew School as Madrichim to assist the teachers in working with the students. They are Xander Christian, Sylvie Rubin, Vivian Russell and Nina Skelton. Each is assigned to a specific class and teacher. Also this year, there are 4 Hebrew Tabernacle adult members who volunteer their time at Hebrew School. They are Susan Edelstein, Susan Gellert, Rita Hamburg and RoseEllen Neidish, Talk about multi- generational learning! We thank them for their time and effort in enabling our students to make progress in their studies.

We experimented with a new structure for Hebrew School which worked really well. All students started Hebrew School in the Social Hall for assembly. This experience was truly enhanced by the songleading skills of Kitah Vav teacher Sarah Millstein. Thank you, Sarah! At 4:20 PM students went to their Hebrew Language Groups. At 4:50, the students met with their Hebrew School Teachers for class designated Judaic curriculum.

The Purim Carnival, organized and run by Loren and Jesse, was one of the highlights of the year. We also had a great turnout for Rabbi Paula's Purim "Un-Service" which was thoroughly enjoyed by EVERYONE!!

The in- person Family Services featuring presentations by our students, followed by the return of community dinners, were also immensely popular!

Our end-of-year Siyuum will be on Friday, May 19th at 6:30 pm. Please join us to celebrate our students and our community!

We also enjoyed Tot Shabbat services and Saturday morning, in-person Family Services. Rabbi Paula is constantly working on new ways to engage everyone in synagogue activities. Give one a try!!

Hebrew High School had 8 very involved students, including a number of students who celebrated B'nei Mitzvah ceremonies in the past year. They met with Rabbi Paula once monthly. At the beginning of the year, the group had conversations about contemporary issues like abortion and what Judaism says about them. In the second part of the year, the discussions focused on homelessness and what our responsibilities are as Jews to help those in need. The group then concentrated their efforts on planning and organizing "The Midnight Run". This was done last Saturday Night, April 22, when the

students brought food and clothing to our neighbors in need. What a great way to live their Judaism through "Gemilut Chasadim- acts of loving kindness. Thanks Rabbi Paula for your inspirational leadership in engaging our teens and Kitah Zayin students.

The school enjoys the encouragement and total support of our President, Joan Laufer, and the entire Board of Directors, who are aware of the important role the Hebrew School plays in the Hebrew Tabernacle Community. The Tot Shabbat and Hebrew School programs are the primary ways new families with young children are introduced to the life of the community and brought into the fold as members.

Our school is thriving. Our students enjoy learning here as is proven by our excellent attendance. We are also excited at the thought of increased parent participation in the school community with the HT Parents Circle and look forward to working together for the benefit of everyone, especially our students! We have openings in all grades for the

Fall so if you know of any potential students, please refer them to us at principal@HebrewTabernacle.org and hebrewschool@hebrewtabernacle.org . The children and their parents will thank you, and so will we! Everyone is invited to be a part of our activities.

Parent Circle and Tot Shabbat Reports Spring 2023

Laurie Slodounik

In the fall of 2022, we developed, administered, and analyzed a Parent Circle survey and determined parents were most interested in Friday night dinners with Family Services. Hebrew school and temple staff made those happen successfully this year. Discussions around getting parents interested in Chesed/Bikur Cholim were begun in the Spring.

No independent events were run by the committee.

Goals for next year currently include:

- B'nei mitzvah parents raise funds toward increasing Rabbi's hours
- Parent-centric programming
 - B'nei mitzvah overview
 - Book group
 - Socializing
- Recruit new Parent Circle Committee members

Rabbi Paula is experimenting with tot service times to draw in the most families—still a challenge.

Hebrew Tabernacle Book Club Report

2023 Annual Meeting – Susan Gellert

We continue with our monthly meetings. Most participants are non-members and we rotate leaders. Selections include many genres and feature Jewish communities around the world.

Thanks to Shelly for organizing the seltzer and Mitch for maintaining our webpage.

Suggestions and new members are welcome.

Ritual Committee Report 2023 – Denny Kelk & Rabbi Paula Feldstein

This year the congregation made several ritual changes and did a lot of experimenting. During the past summer we moved services to an earlier time so that people could have dinner afterwards. It is unclear how well this worked and if we will continue it this summer (to be decided at our next meeting).

In the fall, we put a lot of focus on the High Holidays and reviewing what went well and what didn't. It was the first time since Covid that we had everyone back in the sanctuary.

We also welcomed Cantor Josee Wolff who has brought so much to our singing, the spirituality of our services and our learning about Jewish music. She is with us about twice a month – on Friday nights and/or holidays. We are very excited that she will be with us for the High Holidays in the fall and again for a few services a month during the year.

We also experimented with Shabbat mornings. We tried several different modalities: a traditional, hybrid service in the sanctuary, a family service with activities, a regular zoom service followed by Torah study and a zoom learner's service followed by Torah study. We were invited to join Beth Am once a month on Shabbat morning for a traditional, in-person (and on zoom) service. We will be continuing to collaborate with Beth Am next year which will allow us to offer more worship options. The goal is to begin working on next year's calendar soon so we can be very well organized and offer a variety of Shabbat experiences next year.

Family services drew great numbers (our best attended services all year) and Tot Shabbat is struggling a bit to return to pre-Covid numbers but we are going to keep working at it. We will have had 6 B'nei Mitzvah this year and the students are learning and thriving.

It is also worth mentioning that we had a very festive Shabbat Hanukah service with music as well as meaningful Kristallnacht, Yom HaShoah, and Yom Ha'atzmaut services with special music and learning. Kristallnacht was commemorated with Temple Sinai of Bergen County (they came to us) and we had two cantors!

Finally, our Passover seder was a huge success (Thanks to Mike Klein!). We had almost 90 participants and more ordering meals to go. When Rabbi Paula got Covid right before Passover, Rabbi Jordan Millstein (her husband) and Rubin Feldstein (her father) jumped in and led the seder.

There is much coming into place for next year and we hope to keep experimenting, growing, and engaging our congregation in worship in meaningful ways.

Social Action Committee Report – May 2023

Kate Sussman & Rita Hamburg, Co-Chairs

The Hebrew Tabernacle has a long history of commitment to social action efforts – from Civil Rights marches in the 60's, to speaking out for social justice and the rights of immigrants across the nation and the world. We believe that as stewards of Judaism this is part of what we do.

Our committee has grown: We have 20 HT members working with our Committee, plus one liaison from FTJC and 6 members from Beth Am! We partner frequently with OSA and other faith groups in the community.

This year, the HT Social Action Committee has ...

... helped organize an Uptown Wagon “Free Store” for fall/back to school on August 28. Our volunteers worked together with Ft. Tryon Jewish Center volunteers to FILL the hallway between front doors & Gold Wing doors with donated men's clothing, winter clothes, and back-to-school kid things.

... attended the Jewish Climate Action and You event on 10/16 @ JCC Manhattan. Two Committee members attended this Jewish Climate Action Network (JCAN) event, heard amazing leaders: a 14-year-old in the Jewish Youth Climate Movement (www.jewishyouthclimatemovement.org); from Greenfaith in the Bronx; from Environmental Justice group Hunts Point/Bronx; Assemblymember Dinowitz, who described the initiatives the climate movement is proposing to pay for the climate justice commitments that the NYS Legislature passed last year, and which Gov. Hochul signed into law. There were Action Idea tables at a Climate Justice fair after the panel.

... participated (again) in the Faiths 4 Climate Justice event. On November 5th, in collaboration with global Greenfaith and several local congregations. This was an interfaith event, hosted this year by Our Saviour's Atonement Lutheran Church (HT hosted the Faiths 4 Climate Justice event last fall). This interfaith event will alternate between Sun and Sat afternoon each year. We met for some inspirational speeches, wrote letters to our elected officials, and went out in pairs/trios to local parks and subway stops to leaflet about the Climate Justice Bond that was on the back of the NYS election ballot Nov. 8. There were refreshments and fellowship afterwards at the church.

... passed Board Resolutions proposed by the Social Action Committee on Reproductive Health Rights, Voting Rights; Civil Rights, Immigration Justice and LGBTQ+ Equality. The Committee members and other Tabernacle members have been advocating the top three priorities in this list, based on the survey of our Committee members.

... **circulated petitions on Reproductive Rights in NY and the Climate Justice Bond** and received almost 100 signatures in local parks, at Hebrew School pick-up, after HT services, at the Sukkot Palooza, and at the Rosh Hashanah table of the Columbia Univ. Irving Medical Center's (CUIMC's) Jewish Employee Resource Group at the 168th street GreenMarket.

... **joined with Reclaim Our Vote (ROV) to send postcards to GA, NC and FL.** Many of our Social Action Committee members and several other Tabernacle members are participating in preparing and sending hundreds of ROV postcards to voters of color in GA, NC and FL with important voter education, in an environment where the rules keep changing and votes are in danger of being suppressed.

... **organized a well-attended Mitzvah Day in February.** More than 55 people attended, including members of HT, and Beth AM. About half of our attendees were children. We also had more than a handful of neighborhood/unaffiliated participants. We accomplished our goals of loving kindness & social action:

- 9 Hebrew School parents (over the course of the day) sorted all the Rummage Sale leftover and newly-donated clothing for Cabrini Migrants and for the Teens' Midnight Run. Other items that were not needed for either of these were distributed to other places, including for recycling.
- 60 toiletry kits (with a decorated affirmation note in each) were assembled by kids under the leadership of an HT teen & later a Hebrew School parent.
- Knit hats made at home were delivered and many kids & adults were learning to knit from the neighborhood knitting circle volunteers (not HT members). HT & Beth Am members just enjoyed knitting together.
- Kadijah led a kids' sensory workshop on fruits with real fruits for Tu Bishvat & she read a story book aloud.
- Everyone composed some Advocacy Letters and signed petitions on all the HT Social Action priority issues & more—led by 3 Beth Am members & two HT Social Action volunteers.
- Two representatives from the Community Fridge (181 & Ft Wash) gave an update, encouraged food donations, solicited volunteers for transport/unloading of donations that come to the Fridge from Food Pantries and answered questions.
- By specific request, kids books in Spanish were donated for a Rabbi who is traveling to Central America soon (connection via the Y).
- Rose Ellen brought Tu Bishvat-themed snacks, Mike Klein made coffee, and Shelly bought pizza.

... **joined with Reclaim Our Vote (ROV) to send postcards to WI before the Supreme Court Judicial election on April 4 .** Many of our Social Action Committee members and several other Tabernacle members are participating in preparing and sending hundreds of ROV postcards to voters of color in WI with important voter

education, in an environment where the rules keep changing and votes are in danger of being suppressed.

...attended a Jewish Climate Summit on April 23 organized by Reform Judaism's Religious Action Center/NY branch and Dayenu and hosted at Shaaray Tefila in upper east side. Seven HT members and one Hebrew School student joined over 200 activists and clergy to learn about

- Impacting NYS Climate Policy
- Greening our synagogue buildings
- Aligning our Investments (and bank accounts) with Our Values
- Storytelling to Build our Movement

Report of the Building and Licensing Committee - Andrew DaSilva

The unofficial motto of the Building and Licensing Committee is: "There's always something happening at the Tabernacle!" Sometimes it's a good thing, sometimes not so good, but always something new.... This past year has been no exception.

Building Committee

The big news is that our long-awaited, state-of-the-art air conditioning system is nearly operational. We expect to flip the switch in the coming weeks.

The Building Committee has completed a number of other, smaller projects around the building during the past year, including (among others): replacing a condensate pump in the electric room; repairing a recirculating pump in the boiler room; installing new steam valves on radiators; and filling in a pit in the courtyard.

Now that the A/C project is nearly behind us, the Committee is contemplating new projects. We plan to focus on work which is required to keep our beloved, but ancient, building up and running, such as our ongoing work to replace our many roofs. We are also considering projects which will make our spaces *more accessible* -- such as creating ADA-compliant restrooms and ADA-accessible entries to the Sanctuary and Social Hall -- and *more beautiful* -- such as renovating the Social Hall and the former Sisterhood room (by the Fort Washington Ave. entrance). This work will not only benefit HT's members, but also help attract additional licensees to the building.

Licensing Committee

The good news is that our oldest long-term licensee, Uptown Community Church, will be renewing its license agreement for several years. The other news is that another long-term licensee, Fort Tryon Jewish Center, has decided to leave our building and take up residence at

Fort Washington Collegiate Church. Although the loss of FTJC will be a (hopefully) short-term financial loss, it will eliminate the space conflicts which have arisen by virtue of two synagogues using the same building during the same times.

We are currently seeking one or more additional long-term licensees, not only to fill the financial gap resulting from the loss of FTJC, but also to expand the use of the building to 7 days per week. In addition to churches, we are contemplating possibilities such as a weekday senior center and other community organizations.

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We invite the entire HT community – which represents a broad range of backgrounds, expertise and interests – to participate with us in our brainstorming efforts with respect to building projects and additional licensees.

Membership Committee Report – Rita Hamburg & Desma Holcomb Co-Chairs
With Paul Glassman & Gisele Garelik

Committee Mission statement:

To increase membership and provide opportunities for participation.

Membership Growth Progress!:

We now have 157 members (2 joined this month), compared to 137 in May 2022. This is 20 net new members, double our Board goal of 10 net new members. This influx has more than made up for the members who moved away, passed away or transitioned from regular membership to our non-voting category: our “Senior Circle.” We are growing at a pace that can support our progression towards a Full-Time Rabbi.

Composition of Our Committee & Change in Leadership

We met our goal of adding a Hebrew School parent to our Committee: Gisele Garelik. Gisele, along with Paul, Rita and Desma engaged each of the 35 new members with an individual Welcome Email. As a result, we have been able to use our Membership Survey to connect new (and existing) members to volunteering in services, at events and on committees. One of us also made individual contact with every person who expressed an interest—by phone, email or in person—in joining our synagogue.

Gisele Garelik has agreed to Co-Chair the Membership Committee with Rita Hamburg.

Ideas for Engaging Members, including HS parents as adults

- Special Service to welcome new members – part of a Family Service
- Connected adults to Social Action activity—now our largest Committee
- To do: Welcome dinner at members' home for each new member/family.
Could be Shabbat dinner or Havdalah and dessert.
- Choosing Hebrew Names, for children & adults, including a naming ceremony.

Ideas for deepening engagement of adult members

- Cantillation Class for two adults
- For future: possible adult B'nei Mitzvah

Ideas for engaging new people who may become members:

- Created a Welcome Brochure & used it at Columbia Med. Ctr. Jewish Employee group events (thanks to Richard Allman), Y events & HT events which were open to the community
- A Taste of Judaism taught by Rabbi Paula Feldstein – this April/May.
- Organizing Welcoming Ushering by Richard Allman, Mike Klein and others; connected with new members and new attendees at services
- To do: Prospective members tea/coffee at members' home, get to know Tabernacle & some of our members

Chesed Committee Report for Annual Meeting 2023

Over the past year, the easing of COVID-19 restrictions has enabled greater opportunity to visit congregants at home, or to be at bedside at care facilities. Everyday activities continue to include sharing of friendly phone calls, as well as sending a variety of notes and cards to mark special occasions and life-cycle events.

Chesed in Hebrew means compassion and lovingkindness. There is great joy in growing in friendship with our beloved members and their families. There is also the challenge of reaching out in times of illness or loss. Each person you meet in a Chesed experience helps enrich the path along one's own life journey.

To that end, I am grateful to friend and mentor Diana Douglas, President of Yad b'Yad: Legacy of the Sisterhood, who has collaborated in a number of compassionate ways with Chesed over time. We recently were able to be together to make an end-of-life visit to a much-loved worshipper. The experience was filled with joyful moments, with the shared delight of song, and the warmth and power of friendship.

Our Hebrew Tabernacle membership as a whole participates in many community events. It was wonderful this past year to see how so many hands can make things happen. One example was our synagogue's annual Mitzvah Day event that took place in February, held in conjunction with Beth Am, The People's Temple. A variety of projects and activities attracted participants of all ages on behalf of Tikkun Olam, the desire to heal our world.

And earlier this past year, as colder weather approached, Holyrood Church reached out to the Chesed Committee for help in supplying warm winter items for newly arrived immigrants receiving services on their site. Hebrew Tabernacle congregants and friends joined together so that these needs could be fulfilled. This was one of a number of ways that people in our community have supported the many urgent requirements immigrants have faced seeking a new life in our country.

If you are interested in sharing in the Chesed Committee experience as a volunteer, or know of any member or friend of Hebrew Tabernacle who would like to be contacted, please reach out at any time to Hilary Zatz at pizzatzh@gmail.com

Respectfully submitted,
Hilary Zatz, Chesed Committee Chair

Fundraising Cttee Report 2022-23 – Chair, Desma Holcomb

Will Craig, Paul Glassman, Todd Rubinstein, Sara Silver & Robinanne Turiel
+ Michael Klein & Rose Ellen Neidish as leaders of the Rummage Sale

Review of our projects and progress to date. Context: There are three major components of HT income: Dues/Tuition; Licensing; AND Donations/grants.

Our philosophy: Hebrew Tabernacle creates opportunities in the sanctuary, at the Hebrew School and through social action outside, for us to connect with each other and face the joys and difficulties in our lives and our world together. Show appreciation for each other, our Rabbi, our Cantor and our Hebrew School by donating regularly to our synagogue community.

We are encouraging diverse donation streams!

- Leadership Circle - \$5k to \$10k major gifts over several years, raised \$115K for New Air Conditioning system; \$20K more is available from Circle for major building repairs
- Next Appeal goal: kickstart progress towards FT Rabbi + PT Cantor \$11,500 from last two years. See 7 B'nei Mitzvah Family Pledges below.
- Legacies \$27K this year; \$55K last year. Grave sales: \$5,400. Support members' End of Life Planning through workshops by Rabbi Paula Feldstein and Will Craig. Health care proxies, wills, grave purchases and planned giving.
- Return of the Rummage Sale - \$7.4K, including a plan for donating unsold clothing to Mitzvah Day charities
- New approach to the Seder: Donation appeal focused on lowering ticket prices to increase access
- to the seder. Largest number of donors gave largest total \$4.6K; ticket prices reduced; highest attendance ever, including 19 kids; net funds raised \$2.4K
- Holiday fundraising – goal of many giving small amounts: RH Honey and Hanukkah Candles = \$2K
- Rita Hamburg's Exercise Classes (Mon & Fri): \$3K

- By & for the Hebrew School: Purim Carnival/Mishloach Manot net \$2.3K
- Grants – non-profit: \$12K NY Landmarks Conservancy & \$3K Columbia/NYP Medical Center Neighborhood Fund

Plans for the rest of the fiscal year (through June)

- **Fundraising Concert 5/21: From Bernstein to Weiner: music by Jewish composers in 4 languages.** One of our Tot families (with twins) are professional musicians. Maria Brea, soprano soloist and Colby Charnin, pianist and composer, are donating their performances for this concert on **SUNDAY MAY 21 @ 4pm. Buy Tickets & Bring Friends!**
- **7 B'nei Mitzvah families' special appeal to jumpstart increased Rabbinic hours & PT Cantor** by making 3-year pledges totaling over \$5K and asking congregation to do the same. Announced at Annual Meeting. Letter to members follows.

Yad b'Yad: Legacy of Sisterhood Report for Annual Meeting 2023

Yad b'Yad: Legacy of the Sisterhood has been an integral part of our Hebrew Tabernacle heritage since the turn of the last century. It was instrumental in our synagogue's inception in 1905 as a house of worship and a safe place for youth. Sisterhood has provided funding, support, and guidance of the congregation through its modern development.

In 2021, the Sisterhood held a special vote to choose a new name for our organization that was no longer gender-specific and would be encouraging to the entire HT family. Announcement of the winning entry took place at the 5782 High Holy Days Services, and Yad b'Yad (Hebrew for "hand in hand") was launched.

We are happy to report that this past year a tradition that has been part of our Sisterhood for decades, but had been interrupted because of COVID-19 restrictions, was able to return. Yad b'Yad donated the beautiful greenery which was used to decorate the Sanctuary during Sukkot.

In recent weeks, Yad b'Yad also arranged for a professional cleaning of the lovely curtains that grace the Ark in the Hebrew Tabernacle Sanctuary.

Plans are in the works to explore the possibility of organizing trips to cultural and educational events in our own HT backyard or across the city. Visits to kosher eateries later this year may well be on the menu, too.

We are raring to go. Will you join us?

For further information on membership, please contact Diana Douglas by phone at 917-656-9721. You may also email me at dianaddouglas@hotmail.com and douglasdiana41@gmail.com

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Douglas, Yad b'Yad President