

## **HEBREW TABERNACLE COMMITTEE REPORTS for MAY 2024 ANNUAL MEETING**

### **Program Committee | Rita Hamburg, Chair**

Rita Hamburg and Sarah Silver plan and execute **Blood Drives** in partnership with the NY Blood Center in the Tabernacle Social Hall, from 1:30-7:30 pm

Dates: Feb. 8, 2024 (95 pints collected) and June 14, 2024

(Note: 2023 dates, during which over 90 pints were collected each time: June 15 and October 19, 2023)

Rita Hamburg, an experienced PT, leads ninety-minute **exercise classes** in the Tabernacle Social Hall on Monday evenings @ 7:00pm, and Friday mornings @ 10:00am. Class fee is \$15 per person.

Rita Hamburg organized a fund-raiser **tour of the Woodlawn Cemetery** in the Bronx led by two Woodlawn docents, on Sunday, March 10, from noon-2:00. Theme: "Telling the Jewish Story of the Woodlawn Cemetery." Cost was \$20 per person and there were 20 attendees. The trolley fee was \$100 and the balance was donated to HT.

HT, together with Beth Am, hosted a fund-raiser **concert by the Klezmer group, Hot Pstromi**, on Thursday evening, Nov. 9, 2023

### **Tot Shabbat Committee |**

The Tot Shabbat community was slower coming out of Covid, but this year we really started to gain momentum. We have a solid group of families who come regularly, many of whom are HT members. Tot Shabbat is typically Friday nights (once a month) at 5:30. We do a lot of singing and moving around. Rabbi Paula's puppet, Miriam, often makes an appearance and there is always a good story. In March and April, the parents helped Rabbi Paula and her collection of puppets act out the Purim and then Passover stories.

The short service and oneg have helped families meet one another but the families were looking for an opportunity to get to know each other better. They were very excited to have our first Tot Shabbat dinner in April. We did Shabbat blessings, singing and dinner together. The families brought sides and desserts to go with our pizza. Everyone got to know each other better. We will continue to try new ways to bring our youngest families to HT for community, fun and lots of singing!

## **The Religious School Parent Committee |**

The Religious School Parent Committee has met several times with Rabbi Paula over zoom. We've discussed scheduling options, priorities for Hebrew instruction, preparation for Bnei Mitzvah, talking with children about what's happening in Israel, and ideas for community building, including a family retreat. The primary request of the parent body has been to have regular family services with meals, and these have been occurring monthly, facilitated by our Hebrew School and office staff. A hope for the future is to offer a baking/cooking experience for families, such as challah baking in preparation for Shabbat.

**Social Action Committee | Co-Chairs Rita Hamburg & Kadijah Spence; Sec'y Laurie Slodounik**

*Highlights from. 2023-2024*

Summer & Fall Social Action Picnic & kick-off Meeting discussed and chose priority campaigns for the year: Climate Justice, Reproductive Rights and Voting Rights/Civil Rights.

Kadijah Spence and Justin Shames collaborated to design Social Action Banners on each of these priorities which include the support and logos of Beth Am and Uptown Community Church, in addition to Hebrew Tabernacle. These banners hang permanently outside our building.

We also responded to the crisis that began with the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, identifying organizations to support in Israel and also Doctors without Borders in Gaza. Discussions that began in Social Action led to Rabbi Paula's dialogue with parents about how to talk with their kids, and age-appropriate sharing in Hebrew School. Later two Hebrew School parents, Amy Feinstein & Micaela Podlipny, working with Rabbi Paula, initiated a monthly intergenerational discussion group on Israeli and Palestinian Peace and Solidarity.

Fall & Winter successful Mitzvah Day on Feb. 11 – 70 people participated—40 in-person and 30 as donors of funds or goods. New features: kid/parent Care Kit Assembly Line; Knitting Circle before & during to make hats/scarves; Art projects for Kids on Repairing the World; Kid workshop on Fruits of the Earth; adult workshop on Climate Justice Campaign. Tremendous all-Committee effort!

Climate Advocacy: 18-person Zoom Meeting with our Assembly Member Al Taylor's Chief of Staff: 1 Beth Am & 17 Tabernacle constituents, led by District Captain Rita Hamburg Feb. 26. Thank you to this cross-section of our membership: Allman, Bazaar Rubin, Dornfeld, Douglas,

Dubiner, Fein (BA), Hamburg R., Hawn (teen), Holtz, Kleeman, Nasarre, Perelman-Sorrentino, Rubinstein T., Scherer (dad & teen), Stivelband & Silver, Zatz, Zukerman. This was made possible by Ben Epstein researching the NY Assembly and Senate Districts for all our members.

Spring Jewish Climate Summit attended by 5 members & Rabbi Paula, connected Tabernacle to the Jewish Youth Climate Movement, Donnel Baird of Bloc Power which documents city/state/federal funds available to Green buildings (including ours), and to a dozen other Reform congregations fighting for climate justice.

This Summer: Keep an eye out for:

- Pride Shabbat Friday, 6/14;
- Judaism & Reproductive Rights documentary “Under G-d” and discussion Friday, 6/21;
- Reclaim Our Vote -voting rights education Postcard Parties
- Outdoor Mitzvah Projects – in local parks, planting/trimming our building’s plots,
- Baby Shower for Nidos de Esperanza a local group supporting migrant new mothers.
- Climate Justice eblast to support HEAT Act & Climate Superfund through Tabernacle & the Reform Religious Action Center (RAC)/NY Climate Campaign

*Please consider joining this dynamic, effective, multi-issue committee!*

### **Chesed Committee Report | Hilary Zatz, Chair**

The Chesed Committee continues to reach out to members and friends of Hebrew Tabernacle in many ways. This has been accomplished by phone calls, notes, and cards, as well as to visits to the sick and homebound.

One of the special aspects of the Chesed experience (Chesed, in Hebrew, means compassion and lovingkindness) is the ability to share in a variety of activities on behalf of our community family.

Last September, with the help of Hebrew Tabernacle congregants, the Chesed Committee was able to fulfill the request from Holyrood/Santa Cruz Church for several hundred dental and personal care items to help those in need. (And special thanks to the HT staff, too.)

And this past February, it was great to be part of the team of children and adults that made Mitzvah Day such a success. Eliot (my son and ace assistant) and I had the honor of being tasked to purchase a variety of items for enhanced care kits as well as women’s health care kits. These kits were designed to help the homeless through the organization Uptown

Wagon as well as to help others in need of support. The assembly of over 100 kits by an expert team of young volunteers was made possible by the generous donations from members of Hebrew Tabernacle and Beth Am. We also had good experiences working with various vendors. One such vendor, who wishes to remain anonymous, donated personal care items and will continue to donate for community needs.

It was also great to be part of the Mitzvah Day caravan of nourishing food items, brought over by Hebrew School families, to the Fort Fridge at 181st Street. The Fridge is there 24/7 on behalf of hungry neighbors.

More recently, the Chesed committee was glad to help out with Hebrew Tabernacle's wonderful distribution of Mishloach Manot this year for each worshiper. We were able to deliver a number of boxes of delicious treats to those who found it difficult to come to the HT building for various reasons. We were also able to reach out to those who were only able to receive Mishloach Manot after original distribution. (A sweet Purim assignment indeed!)

The Chesed Committee looks forward to continuing work on behalf of the needs of our Hebrew Tabernacle congregation and community families--from newborns to the elderly. If you would enjoy helping out in projects to come, or know of someone we can reach out to, please contact me at any time through my email address, [pizzatzh@gmail.com](mailto:pizzatzh@gmail.com)

### **Membership Committee | Gisele Garelik, Chair**

The Membership Committee had a busy year! We continue to welcome new members, nurture and develop potential members, and survey current members for important feedback on our synagogue.

Some key achievements this year include:

- Welcoming/Responding to inquiries from over ten new families interested in learning more about HT
- Continuing to collect membership dues/work out volunteer opportunities in lieu of paying dues
- Finalizing and sending the HT Membership Directory to entire membership
- Finalizing and sending the Membership Survey to new and established members to reflect goals and objectives of the community
- Work with members and past seder attendees to accommodate everyone's needs for the second night seder.
- Outreach to community members around seder attendance

In the next two months, we plan to:

- Review the Membership Survey
- Finalize membership dues agreements with remaining families who have outstanding balances
- Plan a new member service for families with young children at an appropriate hour so more families can join
- Recruit two new members for Membership Committee

### **Ritual Committee** | Mike Klein, Chair

The Ritual Committee was kept busy working out all of the many details both large and small for the annual Community Seder in conjunction with the Seder Committee. The kitchen was thoroughly cleaned and made Kosher for Passover use.

We are working very closely with the Rabbi and Cantor on a variety of programs for upcoming festivals and holidays.

I restored the torah reading table by sanding it down and restraining wheels were added to make it portable. All in time for the high holidays. (The reading table was kept in storage and is originally from when our synagogue was located at 161st street.)

Our torah ark doors have been looking kind of shabby. We are currently researching for a varnish that comes as close as possible to the existing one. The doors will be removed and totally restored, beautifying our sanctuary.

### **Fundraising Committee** | Aaron Slodounik and RobinAnne Turiel, co-Chairs

The fundraising committee has organized three fundraising campaigns since Rosh Hashanah:

1. Rosh Hashanah Honey from the Heart. This fundraiser uses an external vendor who ships the honey, which raised \$1301.
2. Hanukkah Virtual Candle Fundraiser. We changed the format of this fundraiser to focus on building community through sharing a memory that brought light to our families this year. The campaign raised \$4227 from 48 member families, with 42% participation. The year prior we had raised \$1303 from our Hanukkah campaign.

3. Purim Mishloach Manot Box. New this year, each member family received a box with additional boxes for purchase. We raised \$2202 from 29 families, with 25% member participation. Our expenses were \$1791. Our goal was to cover our costs, but we ended up netting \$411. We also raised \$270 for the Westside Campaign Against Hunger.

Aaron Slodounik has spoken with Rose Ellen Neidish about bringing back the Rummage Sale this year, which has generated significant revenue in the past. Aaron is also looking into fundraising consultants experienced working with Jewish organizations who can support the board in growing revenue. He is currently in the research phase and hopes to bring information to the fundraising committee in the near future to discuss.

### **Grants Committee | Paul Glassman**

#### Division of Criminal Justice Services, New York State

Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes

*Restoring and Hardening Sanctuary Entrance Doors*

Submitted: February 26, 2023

Reimbursable up to \$50,000, match of \$15,000 required (from Homeland Security)

Status: awarded on July 11, 2023 (contract fully executed on March 5, 2024)

Application: toward budget for restoration of exterior sanctuary doors

Next phase: due May 17, 2024

#### New York Landmarks Conservancy Sacred Sites Fund

*Implementation and restoration of and security upgrade for front (185th Street) doors with proposal from Acheson Doyle*

Submitted: May 31, 2023

\$30,000 in support of completion in combination with NYS grants (DHSES & DCJS)

Status: awarded on October 18, 2023; check forthcoming on submission of signed contract

#### Medical Center Neighborhood Fund

*Gold Wing Gallery: Showcasing Northern Manhattan Artists*

Submitted: February 22, 2024

\$3,000 in support of Gold Wing Gallery

Status: pending (anticipated notification in fall 2024); interview on April 11, 2024

#### Partners for Sacred Places National Fund for Sacred Places

*Hebrew Tabernacle Entry Door Restoration*

Submitted: letter of interest, February 28, 2024

\$50,000, match of \$50,000 required (from Homeland Security or Conservancy)  
Status: pending (notification in June 2024)

NewYork-Presbyterian Mini-Grant

*Community Wellness Project*

Submitted: March 7, 2024

\$5,000 in support of exercise class, flu clinic, and blood drives

Status: pending (notification the week of April 8, 2024)

Borough President's Office Cultural Tourism Grant

*Gold Wing Gallery: Showcasing Northern Manhattan Visual Artists*

Submitted: March 8, 2024

\$3,000 in support of Gold Wing Gallery

Status: pending (notification in late spring 2024)

**Building Committee | Mike Klein, Chair**

A new mechanical wheelchair lift was delivered to our Social Hall and can also be used for people who rely on a walker. No construction was required, and it does not use any electricity for its operation.

We will soon be restoring the western most double entry doors on West 185th Street. The restoration will make the doors more secure and bring them back to their original grandeur. This set of doors was chosen first since it is the one that is used more often and can be made ADA accessible. We are currently applying for additional grants so we can restore the other two pairs of doors.

Repairs to parapet walls surrounding the roof over the Fort Washington Avenue staircase and some minor brick pointing northeast corner facade will be done with in-house staff once weather permits. The roof on top of the northwest staircase was removed down to its concrete deck and replaced. The pit that sounded the drain has been eliminated and the ponding problem has been resolved.

New gutters were installed within house staff on the Boiler Room Roof.

A new steel safety cage was installed on the ship ladder that leads to the main roof.

The antiquated and extremely heavy roof hatch was replaced with a new metal spring loaded one that is more convenient to open and latched closed from the inside. We will be alarming the hatch for additional security.

New emergency and exit lights were installed throughout the building. The old internal wiring and conduits were replaced so all 3 lights over the main doors on West 185th Street are operational.

Although our new AC system is fully functional the contractor is continuing to work on a few remaining punch list items. Once the work is complete, we will look into possible ways to clean the glass in the dome of our sanctuary.

Plastering and painting continues on the hallway behind the sanctuary. Once that is complete, we will move to other areas of the building.

The Social Hall floor was given quick polishing along with some touch up painting in time for our annual Community Seder. The Building Committee will be working very closely with the Social Hall Renovation Committee in upgrading this facility for every one's enjoyment and the wider community.

The boiler, oil tank, fire extinguishers, gas pipes and fire suppression system have all passed recent inspections. No violations were found during the last FDNY fire inspection.

### **Legacy Planning Committee | Will Craig & Navi Stoller, co-Chairs**

CONTEXT: The Legacy Planning Committee, formerly known as the Cemetery Committee, is in a three year process of evolution. Entering 2023 the Cemetery Committee existed as a pivotal necessity, supported over the years by passionate members of the congregation who understood a vital service must be maintained while seeking to overcome the limited resources that are an issue in every non-profit community and religious organization. The simple reality is that HT's cemetery processes (record-keeping, dissemination of information, spiritual support, etc.) have been in a reactive, safety-net state for a number of years, supported by members of other committees.

The three year evolution represents a shift from a reactive state to an active state, informed by three strategic concerns:

1. Guidance and support through the inevitable major life events leading up to and following end-of-life is one fundamental purpose of Jewish congregational life. Moreover, "doing death well" makes it possible for inevitably sad, stressful times to strengthen and



unify families and our community rather than exacerbate confusion, emotional pain, or division.

2. The upcoming decades represent a time in our own community and American society in which the demographic realities of aging, dying, and death will be of heightened concern. We must prepare accordingly.

3. The financial health of Hebrew Tabernacle, alongside the financial support of its living members, is based in part on the financial legacy of its members who have passed away. Planned giving and memorialization require clear communication, advance thinking, and organizational fluency.

**PURPOSE STATEMENT:** The Legacy Planning Committee assists the community with end-of-life planning by marshaling the Synagogue's various resources and creating awareness as to the support that the Synagogue can provide.

Committee Members: Will Craig, Navi Stoller, Dave Lenok, Andy DaSilva

**PLAN OF ACTION:** The committee aligned on a plan to assess perception of need and existing resources on the part of Hebrew Tabernacle leadership at the board level and committee level, and then on the individual/community level. A survey of the Board and Committee members has been distributed and returned, and its analysis has begun for themes. A congregational survey has been designed for distribution after the annual meeting, likely in June 2024. We are organizing ourselves for action in response to clear themes already communicated consistently in the leadership's responses. The second half of year one into year two of this initiative will focus on immediately implicated actions, including audit of our cemetery resources and processes. Year three will focus on the larger strategic priorities that emerge thematically in the congregational response.

### **Licensing Committee | Andy DaSilva, Chair**

The last 12 months have been a busy and productive time for the Licensing Committee. Although Fort Tryon Jewish Center left our building last summer, our oldest long-term licensee, Uptown Community Church, is renewing its license agreement for several additional years. In addition, we welcomed to our building a new church, Rise to Inspire Ministries. This Church holds its services Sunday afternoons, filling the time slot when Buenos Nuevas Church had been holding its services.

We are pleased that Pied Piper Children's Theater continues to use our building for its rehearsals and performances. Aside from bringing our Washington Heights neighbors into the building, the performances are well-staged and fun!

The Licensing Committee is putting the finishing touches on a brochure filled with attractive photographs advertising our available event spaces. We will be posting this brochure on our website shortly, and undertaking other marketing efforts in order to increase our income from one-time events.

Finally, we continue to meet with potential licensees about bringing a wide range of additional activities into the building. We have high hopes for continued expansion of our roster of licensees in the coming year.

*Long-term continuing licensees:*

Uptown Community Church. Sundays, entire building from 8 am-3 PM. Denine Blevins is the new contact person, along with Mirjam Reis.

Pied Piper Children's Theater. Rehearsals: Weds evenings and Saturday afternoons. Performances: Occasional Saturday and Sunday afternoons/evenings.

Muzosa Martial Arts. Every Tuesday afternoons and evenings. Building being open enables repairs and deliveries that would not be possible if Muzosa were not using the building.

Citykids Music. Two classes on Monday mornings and one class on Friday afternoons.

*Long-term activities that do not pay a fee for use of the building:*

Rita Hamburg's Exercise class has expanded! Now Monday evenings and Friday mornings. Rita donates every penny of the fees she collects to HT! Thanks Rita.

HT book club. Continues to meet monthly on Wednesday evenings.

*New regular licensees:*

Rise to Inspire Ministries. Every Sunday in the Social Hall from 3-7 PM. They are flexible and able to relocate to the Sanctuary when the Social Hall is needed for other events.

Chess club. Friday afternoons, 3:30-5:30 in the Penthouse. Just signed a new license for another 8 weeks.

PTL events using the Penthouse on occasional Wednesday mornings for training staff for catering events.

*One time events:*

- Gumley Haft Management Company, Social Hall 6/12 6-8 PM
- Bat Mitzvah is on for May 5th.
- Dos Puentes School fundraiser. 5/18, 2 PM - 11 PM

**Yad b'Yad: Legacy of the Sisterhood | Hilary Zatz, Chair**

This past year has been one of accomplishment under the direction of our Yad b'Yad President, Diana Douglas. It has been a time of looking back on our history. Our heritage dates back to the very founding of our synagogue, shortly after the turn of the last century, which was made possible by the support of the Sisterhood. This year has been a time of transition, as Diana has chosen to retire from her leadership role. I have had the honor of being elected new President. It is a responsibility that I assume with love and gratitude, looking forward to new challenges with the members of our Yad b'Yad (Hebrew for "hand in hand") family.

In the past twelve months, under Diana's aegis, Yad b'Yad has continued to play an important role in the life of our synagogue. Following the first day of Rosh Hashanah services at Hebrew Tabernacle in September, Yad b'Yad sponsored a beautiful kiddush in our Social Hall. Thanks to the incredible efforts of Mike Klein with a great team of other volunteers, it was truly an event for all our congregants to savor and remember.

**Personnel Committee | Paul Glassman, Chair**

The committee submitted revisions to the Employee Handbook to the Board of Trustees for approval. Topics revised include

- Meal breaks
- Nursing mothers
- Reporting time pay
- Wage disclosure protection
- Access to personnel and medical record files
- Accommodations for victims of domestic violence
- COVID-19 sick leave
- Paid sick leave
- Crime victim and witness leave
- Disability benefits
- Time off to vote

- Separate acknowledgement and receipt