TO SERVE WITH PRIDE

When the Israelites lived in Egypt, they were avdei pharaoh (slaves to Pharaoh). When they escaped to Mount Sinai, they entered into a covenant as avdei hashem (servants of God). While the word for slave and servant is the same – eved – there is a world of difference between them. As Jews, we serve not out of compulsion but conviction, not because of oppression but out of gratitude. We see service as an honor, a privilege and a duty. Beth El Women’s League volunteers exemplify this ethic, and, therefore, even as we finish up our hametz (leavened bread) in preparation for Pesah, we feature them on this cover baking hamantashen and in Bonnie’s article (p. 5). For their commitment to serving our community with love and devotion, we say, “todah rabbah (thank you).”
Pesah is a time of questions. So here is one for you: What is the most important mitzvah? As a parent, I’d vote for “honor your father and mother!” On the other hand, God is Avinu Shebashamayim, our true Parent. So perhaps the first of the Ten Commandments, to believe in God, is primary. Measured by frequency of appearances in the Torah, welcoming the stranger could be a top contender as Rabbi Olitzky writes on p. 3. I’d like to offer a different suggestion: “talmud torah k’neged kulam, Torah study surpasses them all.”

A passage in the Talmud explains:

Rabbi Tarfon and the Elders were once reclining in the upper story of Nitza’s house in Lod when this question was posed to them: Which is greater, study or action? Rabbi Tarfon answered saying action is greater. Rabbi Akiva said that study is greater. All the rest agreed with Akiva that study is greater than action because it leads to action. (B. Talmud Kiddushin 40b)

This text probably sounds familiar. It is similar to the story of the four rabbis of the Haggadah who stay up all night, engrossed in learning. Two of the rabbis appear in both stories. Moreover, while this story is set in Lod rather than B’nai B’rak, the towns are near each other (close to today’s Ben Gurion Airport). So perhaps this was a different conversation at the same seder. Or maybe the rabbis went seder-hopping?!

According to Rabbi Akiva, learning must lead to doing. Talmud Torah surpasses all the other mitzvot because it leads to all of them.

Over the last two years, we have made great efforts and strides to take this message to heart in our Ben & Bernice Fiterman Bar/Bat Mitzvah Training Program. Today, we are focusing on the mitzvah of bar/bat mitzvah. We learn not just for the sake of performing at one service on one day. Instead, all of our learning must lead to a lifetime of doing.

Rather than wait until the third year of the program to teach about mitzvot, our program now starts and ends with mitzvot. And in between? Mitzvot. “Mitzvah Heroes” — congregants with a special expertise and love of specific mitzvot — speak to our students regularly. They inspire students to try new mitzvot outlined in our mitzvah curriculum. After their b’nai mitzvah year, students participate in our Mitzvah Corps that teaches principles of Jewish philanthropy and encourages hands-on hesed work. This year’s Mitzvah Corps was so popular that past participants asked to join for an additional year of learning and serving. Our students clearly recognize that study must lead to action.

This spring, we are thrilled to bring our Beth El Serves year to a close and a climax with Stillman Scholar-in-Resident, Danny Siegel. Danny is a beloved teacher, author and true mitzvah hero who embodies the spirit of Rabbi Akiva. He will be the featured in our own, all night learning: the Tikun Leyl Shavu’ot on May 23 (see back page for more information).
The most repeated commandment in the Torah is not an instruction to keep kosher, or keep Shabbat or wear tefillin. It is a charge to each of us to welcome the stranger—for we were strangers in the land of Egypt. But welcoming the stranger is far beyond a simple “hello.” It is what our friends in the Church refer to as “radical hospitality.” It was Saint Benedict (or better, the Benedictine monks) who popularized this mitzvah and embraced this notion as one of Benedict’s rules over 1500 years ago.

Mayo Clinic in Rochester, for example, is excellent at radical hospitality. A visitor or patient cannot move 20 paces without being approached by a volunteer or staff member, checking if they are all right. They serve to serve; they strive to serve. But it’s more than continuously checking on the wellbeing of those who cross your threshold.

Minister of Music at Trinity Presbyterian Church in University City, Missouri, suggests that “Radical hospitality means vulnerability.” Or better put, “I have to change what is comfortable or simply familiar for me in order to provide what is best for others. I have to step out of my comfort zone, my safety zone, into the disturbing place beyond, where I am awkward, afraid, and unsure, and where I am in a position to make mistakes or even to fail.”

We are most vulnerable at Beth El when we welcome the stranger, when we let our guard down and show our neighbors who we really are and what we’re really about. And we’re proud to do so. And this is the reason that, at Beth El, part of our embracing of radical hospitality is opening up our doors as far and as wide as possible. It is our way of serving the greater community and recognizing our role and responsibility in that community. This is not limited to guests and visitors on Shabbat morning or Benilde-Saint Margaret’s students visiting during Sukkot. This is about outreach on the grandest of scales, filling our halls and sanctuary with people of all walks of life for the greater goal of change.

Over the past year alone we’ve partnered with nearly 100 different organizations, institutions and agencies, all in the name of serving as a steward for the Jewish people, for Saint Louis Park, for Hennepin County, for Minnesota and for humanity.

In 2014, Saint Louis Park Magazine awarded us with the Editor’s Pick: Best Place to Hear a Famous Speaker in the Park. This is not only because of our beautiful venue and the personas that grace our bimah. This is because we play host to thousands—and they become part of our family when they enter our tent.

No doubt, most of these major events serve as vehicles to raise funds for our congregation and community. But it does not take away from our involving hundreds of students in the learning process who otherwise would not get that opportunity. It does not downplay the way we contribute major dollars to various causes year after year by way of these series. And it does not discredit the way we support our troops with care packages and caring systems for their families through these series. We serve the world and change it all at once with these series. And, simply put, it is a challenge to ensure the success of each and every one. But it is our version of radical hospitality.

But we do it—and our institution and community soar higher as a result. The buzz around town is true: Beth El is the place to be. And it is so because we welcome those around us in with open arms—and we know they’ll be back, too.

By Rabbi Avi S. Olitzky
Sometimes even small ideas can have big results. That was the case with a program we called Tzedakah Centerpiece Baskets. Here is the story.

In 1996, Betsy Edlavitch visited her hometown of St. Louis, Missouri. She came back with the innovative idea of using centerpieces as a way to promote tzedakah. That year, Beth El was working to revitalize our Gemilat Hesed (acts of kindness) program. Tzedakah Centerpieces were a natural addition. But, we sure underestimated the impact they would have for many years to come!

Here is how it worked: Individuals chose a tzedakah cause and rented baskets to benefit that charity. Volunteers created decorative, personalized tags with the names of the honorees and charities. The baskets rented for $20 each; $18 went directly to the charity of choice, with the remainder used to replenish supplies.

Cookie Abramson, who headed the project with Betsy, recalls, “With the help of numerous volunteers, we began collecting empty containers. A professional decorator showed us how to make attractive baskets with colored shredded paper and cellophane wrapping. Initially, we created 24 baskets that looked beautiful and could be used repeatedly with a simple tag swap. Eventually we also created baby and birthday theme baskets (pictured on right)—and they were all in active use!”

While recipient organizations were happy to receive checks, this program served a greater purpose: to encourage families to direct money they would have spent on centerpieces to organizations whose work touched their heart and served our communities. And that is just what happened. Today, because many families choose to make their own creative centerpieces personalized to charities with which they feel connected, Tzedakah Centerpieces are no longer being used and have been recycled. They had a good run…but it was time. I’d like to think that the “seed” of this beautiful trend came from this Beth El project.

We thank all those throughout the years who played a role in the Tzedakah Centerpiece Baskets program. This program inspired us to give tzedakah, beautify the s’mahot in our Gruman Social Hall, and become an even more giving community.

Over the years, Tzedakah Centerpieces have graced tables at more than 120 celebrations at Beth El and other Twin Cities synagogues. The program raised more than $31,000 for organizations such as STEP, Second Harvest, Mazon, Ronald McDonald House, American Cancer Society, Crisis Nursery, and The Animal Humane Society.

Serving Those Who Serve

On Thanksgiving Day, approximately 140 congregants of all ages gathered to pack gift bags and to write “thank you” messages to public servants. Volunteers delivered 10 baskets to St. Louis Park first responders and to caregivers on the Sholom campus, as well as 90 cookie bags to the local National Guard 34th Combat Aviation Brigade. In addition, volunteers packed 500 snack bags for Minneapolis Public School students who are homeless, highly mobile or struggling with food insecurity. This initiative, coordinated by our Gemilat Hesed (Acts of Kindness) volunteers, was part of our yearlong Beth El Serves theme. While volunteers were thrilled to “give back” on Thanksgiving Day, recipients were delighted by the appreciation and support they felt from our Beth El community.
As you know, “Beth El Serves - self, others and God” is our theme this year. Beth El Women’s League embraces this value at its core. Our beloved Shirley Raskin Abelson⁷⁸, the late wife of our Rabbi Emeritus Kassel Abelson, rightly claimed that, “Women’s League is the right arm of Beth El Synagogue.” The Women’s League’s important and creative activities could fill the pages of this Shofar, but I’ll mention just a few. Women’s League volunteers run our gift shop. And as soon as the Hanukkah rush is over, more volunteers step into the kitchen to bake over 10,000 hamantashen for Purim. Women’s League proceeds help support Aleph Preschool and USY; defray costs of unsponsored kiddushim; and make possible the needlepoint handiwork on our Torah covers and wedding huppah.

To reach beyond the Beth El community, Women’s League collects and distributes items for various groups, such as The Sojourner Project (a shelter for battered women and children), the Minneapolis Crisis Nursery and STEP.

I asked my mom, Lou Ann Bongard, a 50-year Women’s League member, “How has Women’s League helped you grow personally?” With a smile on her face she answered, “I gained inner strength and personal growth during my years as President of Beth El Women’s League, and then as Regional/Branch President. It served me so well—I became more independent and self-confident, as well as more comfortable speaking before large groups. I learned to travel alone throughout the region, which was significant as I had never previously travelled by myself. I met many wonderful women that I am still friends with today.”

In addition to serving our community and providing opportunities for personal development, Women’s League is a vehicle for serving God.

The Torah Fund is a national Women’s League campaign with funds used exclusively to promote and perpetuate the Conservative movement. Having raised $90M since its inception, it provides scholarships for the training of rabbis, and Rabbi Olitzky benefitted from this support. According to Rabbi Olitzky, “Not only did I get financial aid support from Women’s League and the Torah Fund, but, as an undergraduate, both of the dormitories in which I lived were furnished and built by the Torah Fund. In my time as a student, I gave over 900 tours of the Seminary Campus, many of which were Torah Fund groups and it always gladdened my heart to do so. What a privilege it was to become a rabbi and give thanks to those who have supported Torah Fund over the years.”

So when I think about our theme “Beth El Serves” on a personal level, I am aware that Women’s League Torah Fund has helped my rabbis, who in turn have provided me with both spiritual guidance and a greater connection with God. Because of my mom’s personal growth and path to leadership through her Women’s League experiences, she instilled in me the confidence to be President of Beth El Synagogue. As President, I am grateful and indebted to Beth El Women’s League for their boundless support to our synagogue community.

Wishing you and your family a Happy Passover.
December 29, 2014 (Israel) / 7 Tevet 5775
Va’ye’hi

**JEREMY MICHAEL MALLIN**

 jeremy michael mallin
Son of Dan & Deb Mallin

From Masada to the Dead Sea, the Mallin’s trip was the journey of a lifetime. Not only was celebrating Jeremy’s bar mitzvah in Israel an unforgettable experience, it left everyone dreaming of their next time they’d return.

April 18, 2015 (Minha) / 29 Nisan 5775
Tazria-Metzora

**LILY GRACE ERICKSON**

 Lily Grace Erickson
Daughter of Bret & Rachel Erickson

On the outside, Lily is sweet and kind. Inside she is also strong and determined to help those in need and to do the right things. Lily brings an open heart to her bat mitzvah, the first life cycle event for her family at Beth El.

April 25, 2015 / 6 Iyar 5775
Tazria-Metzora

**ZACHARY SAUL MASHAAL**

 Zachary Saul Mashaal
Son of David & Cynthia Mashaal

Zachary’s route to his Beth El bar mitzvah took him literally around the world. He grew up in Singapore. Last year, he and his family moved to Minneapolis and joined Beth El where his grandparents, Diane and Saul, eagerly anticipated his arrival.

May 2, 2015 / 13 Iyar 5775
Aḥarei Mot-Kedoshim

**ETAI JOSEPH WERT**

 Etaí Joseph Wert
Son of Joshua Wert & Randi Levine

Etai doesn’t shy away from asking difficult questions and probing for satisfying answers. He approaches his bar mitzvah wanting to understand the whys and not just the hows of Judaism.

May 2, 2015 / 13 Iyar 5775
Aḥarei Mot-Kedoshim

**ANNA RILEY WERT**

 Anna Riley Wert
Daughter of Joshua Wert & Randi Levine

Anna finds great joy in Jewish community through the strong friendships she has made at school and at camp. She celebrates her bar mitzvah at Beth El with her brother, Etai, and a family whose name is synonymous with Jewish community.

May 9, 2015 / 20 Iyar 5775
Emor

**ALLISON LENA BIRNBERG**

 Allison Lena Birnberg
Daughter of Brad Birnberg & Stacy Pinck

Allison has absorbed the lessons her parents and her family have modeled for her here, at Beth El, and in the broader community: being a Jewish adult means learning never ends and involvement in community is both an honor and a responsibility.

May 16, 2015 / 27 Iyar 5775
Behar-Behukotai

**MIRIAM CIS HOPE**

 Miriam Cis Hope
Daughter of Bruce & Anne Hope

Having grown up in the halls of Beth El and attending shul regularly every Shabbat, Beth El is practically Miriam’s second home. And following in the footsteps of her family, Jewish living is second nature.

May 16, 2015 / 27 Iyar 5775
Behar-Behukotai

**MARGO ROSE MANDEL**

 Margo Rose Mandel
Daughter of Joel & Peggy Mandel

Margo follows the example of her family who has been involved professionally in the Jewish community for years. She exhibits the same passion for life and helping others and will bring these gifts to Jewish adulthood.
May 23, 2015 / 5 Sivan 5775
Bemidbar
MARISSA BETH BEUGEN
מַרְיָס בֵּית בּוּגֶּן
Daughter of Troy & Mara Beugen
Marissa is a warm young woman who always has a smile on her face. She treats adults and children with kindness and caring, and brings that compassion to Beth El where her family has been longtime members.

May 30, 2015 / 12 Sivan 5775
Naso
IVY HOPE GREENBERG
יִבְעֶה אַתְרָם בַּעַבְרָם טוֹבָה שַׁיָּנָה
Daughter of Jeff & Lori Greenberg
Ivy’s family has a long and close connection with Beth El. Through her bat mitzvah preparation, she has proven to herself and to others that effort and will are a winning combination allowing her to accomplish her goals.

June 6, 2015 / 19 Sivan 5775
Behaalot’kha
SAMANTHA PAIGE WOLK
סָמָנְטָה פּיָגֵי הוֹלָק
Daughter of Shawn & Norma Wolk
Excited by all of her Jewish learning, Samantha has soaked up knowledge and skills at Beth El and HMJDS. She is a young woman of faith whose love of Judaism has grown as her understanding has deepened.

June 13, 2015 / 26 Sivan 5775
Shelah
LIBBY EDEN GREENBERG COHEN
לִבִּי אֶדְוְן גְּרַנְבֵּרג כּוֹהֵן
Daughter of Tony Cohen & Susie Greenberg
Libby’s endearing personality along with her derekh eretz (proper behavior) are hard to miss. With hard work, not only does she take pride in her accomplishments, she has given her family much nachas as she becomes a Jewish adult.

June 20, 2015 (Israel) / 3 Tammuz 5775
Korah
GAVRIELA CHANNAH SILBERFARB
גַּבְריֶלָה חַנָּה סִילְבֶּרְפַּרְבּ
Daughter of Stephen & Laura Silberfarb
Following the footsteps of her older sister, Gavi is fortunate to be celebrating her bat mitzvah in Jerusalem. Over the years, her family has developed close ties to Beth El and the broader Jewish community and has learned from their example.

June 27, 2015 / 10 Tammuz 5775
Hukkat
ANDERSON ELI BLUM
אֲנַדְרְס בֶּלום
Son of Leonard & Missy Blum
Anderson and his family relocated to Minneapolis from California last year and immediately joined Beth El. Anderson jumped right into his bar mitzvah preparation and has begun to build lifelong friendships and skills.

Did you know?
Beth El’s Ben & Bernice Fiterman Bar/Bat Mitzvah Training Program students focus on one mitzvah each month. A key component of this program is to expose them to modern-day examples of mitzvot “in action.” In conjunction with the study of the mitzvah of teshuvah (repentance), for example, students had the opportunity to meet with congregant Debbie Walstein. Debbie, one of several “Mitzvah Heroes” the students will learn from over the course of the year, has spent the majority of her professional career as a probation officer. The students were engaged listeners as Debbie shared real-life experiences and lessons.
Busy Teens Make Service a Priority

By Haley Carneol, Youth Director

Overcommitment is a running theme with teenagers today. Our teens in BERUSY (Beth El Rishon United Synagogue Youth) are no exception. Between classes, homework, sports teams, debate, student government, yearbook, newspaper, choir, band, theater, ACT tutoring, applying for college, part time jobs, maybe a few hours of sleep, Talmud Torah, Yachad, youth groups, just to name a few (and not to mention having a social life!), it seems our kids schedule 28 hours of activities into a 24 day.

While overcommitment can lead to disengagement, our teens, on the other hand, seem to be using their busy schedules to understand the value of prioritization. Most likely without intention, our teens have positioned “Beth El Serves” as one of the top priorities in their lives.

They say that there is a trickle-down theory, but here at Beth El, things seem to be trickling upward. Our teens’ commitment to service started at BERUSY chapter functions; it permeated throughout our USY regional leadership; and it has made its way to the highest level as Jamie Halper heads up international USY service initiatives. Our teens have taken Beth El Serves to new heights. We can only imagine what the future holds.

This past fall, our USYers and members of the international Abraham Joshua Heschel Honor Society touched the lives of hundreds beyond our Beth El community. Did you know that our teens...

- Unloaded trucks of food from our Yom Kippur food drive at STEP?
- Raked leaves and cleaned out gutters for elderly homeowners through the Neighborhood Involvement Program?
- Sorted and packed 5,000 lbs. of food at Second Harvest Heartland?
- Shared the first night of Hanukkah with the residents at Menorah Plaza, leading them in the prayers and songs?
- Installed a tzedakah box in the Youth Lounge?
- Ventured into the neighborhood and coved the streets with inspiring and uplifting messages written in chalk?
- Have plans to spruce up St. Louis Park by giving fire hydrants a desperately needed new coat of paint?

Our active teens also find time to take on leadership responsibilities and serve as role models close to home and across state lines. Did you know that Beth El...

- Sent 70 representatives to our regional Kinnus where they engaged in service and social action projects?
- Hosts 30 or more teens for weekly programs?
- Has 25 youth in leadership positions at the BERUSY chapter level?
- Boasts 7 teens on the EMTZA Regional General Board?
- Calls our very own Jamie Halper, the 2014-15 EMTZA Regional President AND the 2015-16 International USY Social Action/Tikkun Olam Vice President?

Our teens used one of their regularly scheduled Tuesday Lounge Night to assemble care packages for the Minnesota National Guard. The USYers donated supplies, packed boxes, wrote notes to the soldiers and learned firsthand from four soldiers who joined us for the evening to share their stories of how these packages can truly change lives.
New Members

In the spirit of welcoming families to the congregation—so everyone can put names with faces—we are now offering new families the opportunity to place their photo in the Shofar. If you have joined Beth El in the past year, please email apayton@bethelsynagogue.org with a family picture. It is our goal to feature as many photos of new families as possible.

Please Welcome

Joe and Liora Dobrin
Adam Fink and Galina Guterman with Joseph
Scott Hoffman with Talia and Sam
Danya Kornblum with Aidan
David Levine and Joanne S. Ring
Daniel Lieberman and Sophie Abergel with Samuel and Eliam
David and Cynthia Mashael with Sarah, Aiden and Zachary
Oscar and Lucy Mayren with Frida
Fred and Jody Rappaport
Jason and Jamie Saxon
Sandra Streitman
David and Amy Zaroff with Jordan and Noah

Help Our Simha Tree Blossom

Pesah is almost here—and that means springtime is around the corner. Honor friends and family by “planting” a leaf, acorn or dove on Beth El’s Simha (Celebration) Tree. Your personalized and inscribed gift will be displayed in the Gruman Social Hall for years to come.

• Births
• B’nai Mitzvah
• Milestone Birthdays & Anniversaries
• Weddings
• Graduations
• Any Happy Occasion

For more information contact Abbe Payton, Director of Engagement & Outreach, at 952.873.7303 or apayton@bethelsynagogue.org. All Simha Tree donations are 100% tax deductible.

L’Chaim!

To celebrate life and the growth of our Beth El family, we have begun announcing births and adoptions of those in our synagogue community through special Keshers emails.

To sign up to receive these and other Keshers, contact Liz at 952.873.7300 or lrappaport@bethelsynagogue.org.

To submit information about a birth, contact Abbe at 952.873.7303 or apayton@bethelsynagogue.org.

Help Our Simha Tree Blossom

Jim and Marlene Bukstein have honored each of their grandchildren with an inscribed acorn on the Simha Tree. According to Jim and Marlene, “The kids love finding their names on the wall, giving them yet another special connection to Beth El.” Pictured L-R: Saba Jim holding Logan Louis Rohe, Baubee Marlene holding Ilsa Twilight Rajkowski, Reuben James Bukstein and Delilah Rose Rajkowski.

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The Beth El Shabbat morning experience provides families with young children a sense of fellowship and community. More than Spirit of Asia’s great food, more than convenience, and more than a way to pray together, the ritual of attending shul on Saturday mornings is building memories and a habit of connection and engagement. Below—straight from their satisfied mouths and souls—are what some Shabbat morning regulars have to say about why they value this aspect of the Beth El experience. **So when we serve lunch, we’re serving our community more than you know.** We are proud and grateful that our synagogue and Women’s League have committed to serving Shabbat lunch on weeks when it is otherwise unsponsored—this is a grand investment and should not go unnoticed. And of course, we thank our b’nai mitzvah families who have contributed to this holy act of service.

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**By Efrem Berman**

“Prior to moving to Minnesota last winter, we were not a synagogue-going family. And yet, every Saturday morning… here we are. As the parents of three kids under the age of six, one of the things we enjoy most about Beth El is the social aspect. The kiddush and congregational Shabbat lunch allow us to connect with our friends while the kids get to hang with theirs. (Thank you to Deena and Bridget for supervising in Victor Hall!) The Aleph Preschool and the larger Beth El community have been warm and welcoming since we arrived and have eased our transition to a new city.”

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**By Dana Rees**

“Our decision to attend services regularly and stay for the congregational Shabbat lunch has been priceless. We feel part of a smaller, intimate community within the larger Beth El community. We have seen each other’s families grow in number and witnessed many life stages together. We have come to look out for one another right there at lunch and outside the synagogue. The bonds and connections that we’ve made on Shabbat mornings have extended beyond Shabbat. And returning after an absence feels like coming home.”
By Louise and Steven Schoenberger

“Almost every Saturday morning you can find us at Beth El. Sometimes we are sitting in the sanctuary–our kids listening to the service or playing with the toys in a ‘Grandma Fay's Shul Bag.’ If we are not sitting in our regular seats off to one side, maybe we are in the Quiet Room or down in the Aleph Preschool book nook for a reading break. It’s also not uncommon to find us chatting with friends in the Ring Lobby. Going to synagogue has become a great activity that we look forward to on Saturday mornings. After services, our kids eat quickly and then dash off to play in Victor Hall. As adults, we get to sit and visit with an ever-growing group of friends, without our kids nipping at our heels. We love Beth El. It is a community that cares for our kids and our family. Good food, meaningful services and great friendships, what more could we ask for on Shabbat?”

By Uriel Lewis

“Beth El serves congregants in many ways. One of which is the weekly Shabbat kiddush and congregational lunch, encouraging us to shmooze after services rather than run home to eat. Some of us grew up with a scaled down kiddush, involving mainly herring and Schnapps (still served for those who want). How lucky we are that Beth El offers a more substantial and appetizing meal every week. This is by design: Forming and growing relationships is a priority and what better way to do that than serve delicious food!”

By Robyn Schein

“During the week, meal time can be a bit crazy for our family with two working parents and three growing kids. Even Shabbat dinner can be a bit hectic as it comes together after a full day of work. But Shabbat lunch is different and it has become a highlight of my week. Our family can sit down and share a meal (one I didn’t have to cook!) with other members of our Beth El community. It is a meal with people at so many different stages of life and I am fulfilled by the conversations around me, which is a reflection of the vibrancy of our congregation. Whether I am catching up with people who watched me grow up at Beth El or meeting someone new, I am proud that on a regular basis my family is a small contributor to the vitality of our congregation. I always leave shul feeling full, satiated by the food and the community I share it with.”
Condolences to....

• Friends and families on their loss of our members Sara Press, Roslyn Tarshish and Jeanette Kanter
• David Sussman and Marilyn Sussman on the loss of their mother and former mother-in-law, Shirley Sussman
• Jennifer (Steven) Feinberg on the loss of her mother, Marilyn Furmansky
• Shawn (Naomi Heller) Bulgatz and Harold Smith on the loss of their father and brother, Richard “Dick” Smith
• Donna (Harvey) Leviton on the loss of her brother, Paul Cohn
• Seymour (Saranette) Frank on the loss of his sister, BettySue Morris
• Roger (Barbara) Rubin on the loss of his mother, Eleanor Shirley Bell
• Donald Rosen, Bonnie (Edward) Engler and Marcia (Aaron) Pinkus on the loss of their wife, mother and sister, Helen Rosen
• Judith (Cary) Shaich on the loss of her brother, Merlin Hirschorn
• Mark (Marla Harris) Bass on the loss of his father, Lawrence “Larry” Bass
• Daniel (Suzanne Weinstein) Levey on the loss of his brother, Alan Zane Levey
• Wendy and Lori Malinsky on the loss of their parents, Rona & Burton Malinsky
• David (Naomi) Rossman on the loss of his mother, Ronna Rossman
• Edward (Bonnie) Engler on the loss of his mother, Bess Engler
• Debe (Adam) Fefferman on the loss of her brother, Benjamin Freidson
• Georganne Savitt on the loss of her husband, Arnold Savitt
• Shelley Jacobs on the loss of her mother, Ruth Leiderman
• Paula Beugen on the loss of her husband, Michael Beugen
• Sandra Uri on the loss of her mother, Ruth Lebowitz
• Rose Averbach and Shirley Jacobson on the loss of their sister, Sylvia Field
• Estee Warsett on the loss of her mother, Roberta Marx
• Shirley Ansel and Phyllis (Philip) Garon on the death of their husband and father Harvey Ansel

With heavy hearts we mourn the loss of these loved ones within our community.

Mazal Tov to...

Barb & Phil Herman and Jackie Herman on the birth of their grandson and great-grandson, John Michael James. The proud parents are Lisa & David Lovelace. Mazal tov also to grandmother Sara Lovelace and great-grandmother Juliette Maica.

Marlene & Jim Bukstein on the birth of their grandson, Logan Louis. The proud parents are Carli & Travis Rohe. Mazal tov also to grandparents Jackie Silver and Daniel Rohe.

Amy & Michael Walstien on the birth of their daughter, Evelyn Alice. Mazal tov also to grandparents Deborah & Philip Walstien and Kathy & Steve Sevcik.

Jill & Uriel Lewis on the birth of their daughter, Rachel Bluma. Mazal tov also to grandparents Robert & Cheryl Goldberg and Rabbi Sheldon & Lorri Lewis.

Sara & Marc Warren on the birth of their daughter, Raya Mae Foxx. Mazal tov also to grandparents Lori & Richard Warren and Phil & Chana Weber.

Jamie & Jason Saxon on their recent marriage. Mazal tov also to parents Tammy Schwartz, Donald Saxon and William & Judy Gallagher, and grandparents Darlene & Nathan Schwartz, Natalie & Ron Saxon, Rita & Robert Goldstein and Joanne Gallagher.

Sara Grimaldi & David Jurisz on the birth of their son, Sol Max. Mazal tov also to grandparents Myra & Ray Fishman and Lou & Shirley Jurisz.

Rebecca & Hal Lieberman on the birth of their son, Colin Ryan. Mazal tov also to grandparents Sheila & Steve Lieberman and Lawrence & Sharon Teitel.

If you would like to ensure that your (or your loved one's) milestone, simcha or other celebration are acknowledged in future publications, please contact Abbe Payton, Director of Engagement and Outreach, at 952.873.7303 or apayton@bethelsynagogue.org.

ADORN YOUR SEDER TABLE

If the gorgeous, new, hammered stainless steel Judaic pieces in the Ring Lobby showcases have not yet caught your eye, please make a point to take a peek! These ritual objects and serving pieces — available through the Beth El Women's League Gift Shop — are great as gifts or to enhance your own seder table. The designer is Classic Touch. Their items reflect exceptional functionality and quality at surprisingly reasonable prices!

The Gift Shop is open Sunday mornings from 9:30 – 11:30 AM, or call Linda at 763.545.4301 or Sara at 763.529.1285 to make an appointment.
Nearly 175 people (50 families from across the entire synagogue!) attended a **Pajama Havdalah Family Fun Night** in January. Dinner, Havdalah rituals and songs, and a pillowcase decorating craft were all part of the fun. According to Amanda Awend, Director of Shorashim & Young Families Engagement, "It was especially touching to see families and friends gathered around the Havdalah flame singing *Eliyahu Hanavi*. It was also beautiful to watch the kindergarten and first grade Shorashim Religious School students help lead the Havdalah service. It was an amazing community gathering!"
supporting our youth
AND STRENGTHENING JEWISH IDENTITY

By Susan Lieberman, Foundation Director

Spring is in the air and we all know that summer is around the corner. Summer brings wonderful Jewish identity building opportunities for our youth. Our current endowment helps support Jewish camp and Israel experiences. For many years, congregants have established and contributed to endowment funds that help make life-changing summer experiences more affordable for our youth in financial need. Scholarship support is also awarded to our youth who serve our congregation as educators and mentors of our Ben & Bernice Fiterman Bar/Bat Mitzvah Training Program.

Although these summer experiences are invaluable, the cost can be prohibitive. Increasing the amount of scholarship money available to families for summer camps and Israel experiences is one of the Foundation’s priorities. Our goal is to encourage more youth to participate by reducing financial barriers. You are an important part of making this happen.

If you are interested in supporting summer Jewish experiences for Beth El Youth, please contact Susan Lieberman, Foundation Director, at 952.873.7309.

There are Many Ways to Make a Gift to the Foundation

You Can Create a Legacy and Make a Difference

Help ensure that Beth El thrives for years to come by making a gift to the Beth El Synagogue Foundation so that Jewish traditions and values are passed on for years to come.

- Contribute to the Foundation in honor of joyous occasions or in memory of a loved one.
- Plan to make a gift from your estate.

Gifts to the Foundation can provide significant tax advantages whether you give cash, stock, life insurance or other assets.

Donor Spotlight
NEW ENDOWMENT FUND AND PLANNED GIFT VALUES COMMUNITY BUILDING

Gary and Bonnie Bongard Goldish have established the Gary and Bonnie Bongard Goldish Fund to support kehilah (community) at Beth El. This fund will help support community building activities at Beth El that help provide a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Gary and Bonnie are connected to five generations of family members who have contributed to make Beth El what it is today.

Bonnie, who is proudly carrying on her family’s tradition of service as synagogue Board President and Foundation Board Member said, “Gary and I are honored to name Beth El as a recipient of a planned gift from our estate, and also to establish an endowment fund. We now know our legacy will live on at Beth El and we are helping to ensure a vital future for the synagogue.”

Foundation President, Gary Krupp, extended his appreciation to the family, “We are grateful for this generous gift and particularly thrilled that Gary and Bonnie’s gift is one of the Foundation’s inaugural endowment funds.”

Gary and Bonnie Bongard Goldish and Family
Left to right: Danny Goldish, Samantha Sosman, Jaimee Goldish, Hillary Aronow, Aaron Goldish, Bonnie Bongard Goldish, Gary Goldish.
TODAH RABBAH (THANK YOU)

Beth El gratefully acknowledges the following contributions:

Alvin & Audrey Kaufman Camp
Ramah Fund
Happy Birthday Alvin Kaufman
Wendy & Howie Bach
In Memory of Louis Marcus
Speedy Recovery Jeanne Kaufman
Speedy Recovery Rabbi Avi Olitzky
Speedy Recovery Esther Burke
Alvin & Audrey Kaufman
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In Memory of Howard Warssett
Julie & Brian Weissberg
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Clarice Cuts
In Memory of Paul Cohn
Charles Horwitz
Judith Nathenson
Burton & Diane Weisberg Camp
Ramah fund
In Honor of Joyce & Ed Prohofsky's grandson's Bar Mitzvah, Mathew Kraelier Hartnette & Fred Burstein
Cantor Audrey Abrams Discretionary Fund
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Alan & Penny Bank
Tristam & Sandy Hage
In Memory of Tomer Bundt's Bar Mitzvah
Jonathan Bundt
In Honor of Cantor Audrey Abrams Joe Rine
Congregational Nurse Fund
In Memory of Rabbi Barry Wolf 1989 Chazzan Gelfand
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Happy Anniversary Mike & Bernie Frisch
Happy Anniversary Roger & Elkie Land
Happy Anniversary Buddy & Phyllis Harris Speedy Recovery Rachel Barnes
Speedy Recovery Arlene Kase
In Memory of Mina Freier
Speedy Recovery Jeanne Kaufman Ed & Joyce Prohofsky
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Mazal Tov Maya Kupritz
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Philip Weber
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In Memory of Mina Freier
In Memory of Dr. Seymour Blinderman
In Memory of Rabbi Larry Wood
Mazal Tov May's Bar Mitzvah
Speedy Recovery Arlene Kase
Mazal Tov Tomer Bundt's Bar Mitzvah
Mazal Tov_Marlene Kraelier's Bar Mitzvah
In Memory of Shirley Sussman
In Memory of Howard Warssett
In Memory of Brachet, Paul Cohn
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In Memory of Ansel Gardner
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Speedy Recovery Rabbi Avi Olitzky
Barbara Friedman

This list, and the subrecipient contributions list that follow, reflect donations made from October 15, 2014 to January 9, 2015. Contributions made after January 9 will be listed in the next issue of the Shofar.
We honor our loved ones through donations that support their values and continue their lives.

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**YAHREZIT TZEDAKAH CONTRIBUTIONS**

We honor our loved ones through donations that support their values and continue their lives.
Upcoming at Beth El

Below is a sampling of only some of the upcoming events at the synagogue. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. Look for more details, in future Hakol and Keshet publications, and as always, feel free to call the Welcome Desk at 952.873.7300 for additional information.

### APRIL
- **3-11** Pasover
- **11** Yizkor
- **12-24** Beth El Eastern Europe Trip
- **16** Yom Hashoah Community Service, Temple Israel
- **18** Gun Violence Prevention Lunch and Learn with JCA
- **21** Yom Hazikaron Community Service, hosted here at Beth El
- **23** Yom Haatzamut observed
- **24** Young Adults Shabbat Dinner
- **24** Choir Sings at Knollwood Place
- **26** Aleph Preschool Annual Pasta Party—everyone is welcome!

### MAY
- **3** Trucksploration (community-wide event for young children and families)
- **7** Inspiring Minds Speaker Series presents An Evening with the Cousteau Family
- **7** Lag B’omer
- **15** Choir Sings at Knollwood Place
- **16** Shabbat Hinukh: Honoring our Teachers
- **20** Minnesota AIPAC Annual Event, Hilton Minneapolis
- **22** Young Families Spring Dinner
- **23** Shavu’ot – Tikkun Leyl Shavu’ot featuring Stillman Torah Scholar in Residence Danny Siegel, services
- **25** Yizkor
- **27** National Speaker Series presents An Evening with Tony Blair
- **28** Aleph Preschool Graduation

### JUNE
- **6** Tiny Treasures/L’hitraot Service—honoring our babies and high school graduates
- **13** Summer Darshanim begins this Shabbat morning—congregants and guests share their insights on Torah from the bimah, through September 5
- **14** Bethelders Picnic & Pontoon Boat Ride, contact Freada at 952.922.6667

### SPRING LOOKING AHEAD

### JULY
- **19** Bethelders trip to Treasure Island Casino, call Jerry at 763.544.4908

### AUGUST
- **31** Annual End of Summer Picnic

### LOOKING WAY AHEAD...2016
Start planning soon! Join Cantor Neil Newman for a trip to Israel May 1-15, 2016 (a year from now). This trip will be designed for people who have already been to Israel.

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**ONGOING SERVICES**

**EREV SHABBAT**
Kabbalat Shabbat 5:45 PM

**YOM SHABBAT**
Shaḥarit 9:00 AM*  
Minḥa 5:45 PM

**SUNDAY**
Shaḥarit 9:00 AM (Hevra Breakfast)  
Minḥa 5:45 PM

**DAILY MINYAN**
Shaḥarit 7:00 AM  
Minḥa 5:45 PM

*Apples & Honey Young Family Service May 2 and June 6, 10:00 am.
UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Join the many activities of the Gemilat Hesed (Acts of Loving Kindness) Committee. Make a difference in our own congregation and in the greater community. Activities can be social, family-oriented, multi-generational and rewarding.

Yad V’lev (Hand and Heart): Provides meals, hallot, calls, and more to congregants who have experienced a loss, were hospitalized, or are in need of additional help
Contact: Jo Ann Gruesner, jgruesner@gmail.com, to be on the listserv for notifications

Inclusion Subcommittee: Looks to address inclusion-related issues at Beth El for all with special needs
Contact: Jeanne Kaufman, jeannekaufman@comcast.net or 763.533.1888

National Guard Military: Supports the 34th Aviation Brigade, 2nd Battalion/147th Assault Helicopter, and 204th Area Support Medical Company
What: Donate and pack items to ship to our soldiers
When: April 19, May 24, June 21, 10:00 AM - Noon
Where: Wolson Reading Nook
Contact: Pamela Friedman, pamela.friedman@hotmail.com, or Rachel Parnes, rachelparnes@comcast.net

Ronald McDonald House: A home away from home for families with children undergoing long term hospitalization and treatment.
What: Purchase (in advance), prepare and serve brunch to families staying at RMH
When: May 3, June 7
Where: RMH, 818 Fulton Ave. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55414
Contact: Sarah Hanly, sarah.m.hanly@gmail.com

Loaves and Fishes: Collaborative effort with other congregations to support those in need
What: Cook, serve and clean up a meal (space limited)
When: April 28, May 26, June 23
Where: St. Stephens Church, 2123 Clinton Ave South, Minneapolis, MN 55404
Contact: Diana Rosen, rose0392@umn.edu

Sheridan Story: Food relief organization to prevent students from going hungry over weekends when school lunches are not available. Also offers mentoring/tutoring for students at Nellie Stone Johnson Community School.
* What: Pack bags of food for students
  When: Evenings
  Where: 740 Harding Street, NE, Suite B, Minneapolis, MN 55413
  Contact: Sign up at http://www.besyn.org/sheridanstory or contact Steve Kaplan, skaplan6@comcast.net or 612.492.7169

* What: Deliver prepared food packages to students
When: Thursday or Friday Mornings, 10:00 - 11:30 AM
Where: Nellie Stone Johnson Community School, 807 North 27th Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55411
Contact: Steve Kaplan, skaplan6@comcast.net or 612.492.7169

Ongoing: Sponsor a child for $130. Checks made out to Sheridan Story, sent to Beth El c/o Jill Blustin
Ongoing: Volunteer to mentor a student weekly at Nellie Stone Johnson School
Contact: Karen Burton, kburton@bethelsynagogue.org, or Steve Kaplan, skaplan6@comcast.net or 612.492.7169

Shul Chauffers: Driving program for elderly congregants
Ongoing: Driving from Knollwood Place to and from Shabbat services at Beth El
When: Volunteers needed every Shabbat
Contact: Margie Goldfine, smmaahome@aol.com or 952.525.1248

*Family friendly (children over 8 years)

For more information on these and other Gemilat Hesed opportunities, contact Chair Barbara Krupp 952.212.8587 or drbarbarakrupp@gmail.com, or Cantor Audrey Abrams at 952.873.7317 or aabrams@bethelsynagogue.org.
Arthur & Irene Stillman Torah Scholar in Residence Program presents

DANNY SIEGEL, FROM SHABBAT TO SHAVU’OT:
"Repairing the World, One Step and One Hero at a Time"

Join Danny and your Beth El community for:

**Friday Night, May 22**
Services & Shabbat Dinner

**Shabbat Morning, May 23**
Services, Lunch & Study

**Saturday Night, May 23**
*Tikkun Leyl Shavu’ot* (Nighttime Learning)

**Sunday Morning, May 24**
Teaching

Danny is an author, lecturer and poet. He has spoken at and shared his poetry with more than 500 synagogues, JCC’s, Federations, and other communal organizations nationwide. Danny, sometimes referred to as “The Most Famous Unknown Jewish Poet in America,” is the author of 29 1/2 books on such topics as mitzvah heroes, tzedakah, Jewish values, healing, and tikkun olam.

Look for details about times and topics in upcoming Kesher and Hakol publications.