

HHD Appeal 2018 – 5779

Different synagogues have different traditions around this appeal. For some, it's the case that you are expected to have donated by Yom Kippur and in others the appeal is given on Kol Nidrei. Whenever it is, the objective is of course the same. However, I've often wondered about our HHD appeal. Does it really matter? Does it really make a difference? I know that like most members, I can't personally give enough to make a long term impact on my own, but what about the thousands of pounds that we, collectively donate as Radlett Reform? Do we really make a significant dent in the enormous amounts that all charities need to raise just to survive, let alone to achieve their aims? Doesn't matter whether they are local or national, working alongside our overstretched NHS or providing any other sort of valuable service. Their challenge is exactly the same.

So, I therefore felt a bit nervous to accept an invitation earlier this year to the first major building works taking place at the Noah's Ark Children hospice at their headquarters in Barnet. I wondered how the few thousand pounds we raised a couple of years ago could possibly stack up against some of their donations by larger organisations, whom I imagined, were able to give much, much larger sums.

Of course, I needn't have worried. The reception and thank you that I received on behalf of Radlett Reform was incredible. The charity couldn't have been more grateful. The inspiring work they are doing, as the first specialist Children's Hospice in the country with accommodation, is phenomenal and literally every single penny counts. Knowing that we, as the Radlett Reform community had helped make their building dream come true and what it will mean to hundreds of local families is just amazing.

Likewise listening to how our money from last year will be spent at an equally grateful Macmillan charity in order to support cancer victims. And again when I asked the CEO of World Jewish Relief about the significance of donations at our sort of level, he described how our money will be used to enable them to create much needed educational and language programmes for refugees; it really set my mind at rest.

This appeal really IS worth doing. Donating together as the Radlett Reform community we CAN make a BIG difference to the daily lives and struggles of many. It is also different for

us to give together as a community not just as a way of combining our gifts but a way of us showing our support and expressing our shared values as a Reform Jewish Community here in Hertfordshire.

So, what of this year?

The impact of cancer is far-reaching. But it's often difficult to know how to help. Chai Cancer Care offers therapies, counselling and advice to members of the Jewish community across the religious spectrum. Ranging from explaining the different types of treatment available, to how to apply for financial help. Their medical outpatient rehabilitation and palliative care service is a unique resource for people who may be struggling to find someone who will co-ordinate their care and medications. Together as the Radlett Reform Community we can collectively fund extra professional sessions.

Our second charity is the Malcolm Hart Foundation. Many of us knew our member Malcolm Hart, a quiet, lovely man, who died far too young last year from leukaemia. The Foundation was setup in his name by his wife Ros and their children, Lia and Ben – all of whom have been heavily involved at Radlett Reform over the years. Malcolm received great care from the NHS, but Ros saw a practical need to plug the gaps where their funding just can't be stretched – particularly improving facilities for the families that spend a lot of time in waiting rooms and by the bedside. Together as the Radlett Reform Community we can collectively help the Hart family reach their first goal of improving the phlebotomy unit at Hammersmith hospital where Malcolm and indeed many of our members received treatment.

Thirdly, as a Jewish community, we aim to support a charity in Israel. This year, we have chosen Beit Tefilah Israeli, a small innovative community in Tel Aviv which aims to serve the needs of the Reform Jewish community drawing on Israeli culture, particularly music. (Their iconic service in the summer months is a lively, musical Friday night service that takes place on the seafront promenade and attracts hundreds of passers-by). Together we can collectively help them to reach more people, particularly young people. For many the first time that they have experienced a religious service that they can really relate to.

And finally, come into our synagogue building and see the kitchen refurbishment that we were only able to complete with the extra support that this appeal provided last year. This year, with your support, we want to make another visible difference to the synagogue interior, the physical home that we share – particularly to make improvements to our bimah area at the front, that otherwise just wouldn't happen.

We have made the process of giving as easy as possible, please pick up your leaflet and in the coming days, please donate online, or write that cheque or pick up the phone to the synagogue office. However you do it, please give what you can afford, even a small amount, because every penny really does count and donating together as a large Radlett Reform Community we can collectively make that dent a little bigger and improve the lives of many people locally, nationally and in Israel.

Thank you on behalf of all of our charities & Chatimah Tovah.

Irene Blaston
Chair, Radlett Reform