

# Mount Sinai Jewish Center Annual Journal Dinner June 19, 2016 at 6:00pm



## Rachel Waldman

GUEST OF HONOR

Anyone who has met Rachel can attest to her desire to give of herself to others. Since joining the Mount Sinai community in 2010, Rachel's mission has been to fill the gaps and make this community into a warm, welcoming, open, and supportive space. It's no surprise that Rachel forged her deep rooted connection with the community by joining the Chesed Committee, where she created many intergenerational programs to bridge different segments in the community, participating in days of service, and attending soup kitchen visits. After chairing the Chesed Committee and joining the board, she served for two years as Vice President, where she has served as a liaison to the Shul's various committees, working with the Chesed, Events, Hospitality, Education, and Family Life committees. In this role, she empowered others to take on leadership positions, organized many events, and helped programs run smoothly. Additionally, she planned many programs, including the Mount Sinai Marathon, the gym clean up project, the Chanukat Habayit, Purim, Yom Hashoah and Yom Hazikaron events, and Welcome Shabbos. Since then, Rachel has continued to strengthen our community by creating important, meaningful, and relevant programs, including Religion and Intimacy programs, the Tackling Taboos series, and the Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast. Rachel feels honored to be the Guest of Honor in recognition of her years of service to the Shul and the community.

## Jason Strauss

RABBI YEHUDA HILEWITZ A"R MEMORIAL AWARD

On the day he moved into the Heights, Jason signed up for a "BBQ" that turned out to be speed dating event - which turned out to be a great way to meet new friends! Coming into the community with a lot of friends and acquaintances from college and beyond, Jason was able to quickly get involved in its day-to-day activities. He has been heavily involved in the education committee, organizing Shiurim by a wide range of speakers, Scholar-in-Residence events, and events with a variety of organizations, including the annual Shavuot program, the Tackling Taboos series, the Religion, Intimacy, & Sexuality program, and Shiur by Your Peers. In 2014, he joined the Mount Sinai Board of Trustees, on which he has served until this summer. Jason also serves as a security volunteer once a month and is a member of the Gabbai committee where he enjoys making innumerable Mi Sheberachs and trying to remember everyone's tribal status. He is also a co-founder of the Washington Heights Women's Beit Midrash at Mount Sinai. He enjoys welcoming new members and soon-to-be members to Mount Sinai and tries to make himself available to be helpful to community members wherever possible. When he is not at Mount Sinai, he teaches 7th grade Judaic and secular studies at the Hebrew Academy of Long Beach and is completing a masters in Talmud at Bernard Revel Graduate School at YU. Jason believes that what makes Mount Sinai Jewish Center special is that it represents both a significant part of the history of American Jewry, as it was part of the 'yekke' community from which his family originates, as well as the training ground for the future leadership of American Modern Orthodoxy around the country. Together with his fiancée, Kimberly, he is so thankful that he has had the chance to be part of such an amazing place and to learn from its leaders, both rabbinic and lay.



## Chava and Zev Lerner

HERBERT HARWITT COMMUNITY BUILDER AWARD

Chava and Zev each joined Mount Sinai soon after they moved to the neighborhood in 2008 and 2009, respectively.

Chava has served on the Family Life Committee and the Nominating Committee. She is completing her third year as a Trustee of the Shul, which has been a rewarding experience for her. Zev has worked with the Shul board on constitutional amendments and New York Not-for-Profit Corporation Law compliance. In their day jobs, Chava is a teacher and Zev is an attorney.

Panoply holds a special place for Chava and Zev, as they started dating soon after playing on the same Panoply team. Zev has served as Panoply trivia chair, and Chava as lead judge. Their daughter, Mindy, a rising Shul star, hopes to one day be a Panoply champion.

Chava and Zev are inspired by Mr. Harwitt's example as a community builder in the Shul, and are greatly honored to receive the award bearing his name.



## Avigayil Zemelman

KETER SHEM TOV AWARD

Avigayil first became a member of Mount Sinai Jewish Center six years ago. Over time, she came to know many members of the Washington Heights Jewish community, including a number of older adults with whom she has connected in deep friendship and compassionate care. Avigayil initially took an active role in Shul programming as an Eruv-checking volunteer, eventually becoming head of the Eruv Committee. In the summer of 2014, Avigayil became involved with security at MSJC. Security at Jewish institutions had precipitously become a heightened concern and Avigayil took it upon herself to inquire into existing programs and build upon the efforts already in place. Together with other members, Avigayil enhanced the safety and security measures within the Shul, including organizing emergency response systems, personally sponsoring CPR classes, expanding MSJC's relationship with the local police precinct, and establishing Shabbat security rotations. Outside of Shul activities, Avigayil works as an occupational therapist in New York Presbyterian Hospital's critical care department. She feels blessed to live in this vibrant community and take part in the diverse opportunities of MSJC life.



For more information about the dinner, or to place an ad in the journal, please visit [www.mtsinaishul.com/dinner](http://www.mtsinaishul.com/dinner) or call the office 212.568.1900