

קהילת ניצן

KEHILAT NITZAN

CONTEMPORARY • TRADITIONAL • EGALITARIAN



## From the Rabbi

### Rabbi Yonatan Sadoff

More than perhaps anything else, accelerating change has characterised the era in which we live. Do you remember a time before the internet, email and smartphones? The one that seems to have changed our lives the most significantly is the internet. Those who were born before the late 1970s were the last generation to grow up without the internet. According to a recent article in *The Guardian* called 'Innocence Lost: what did you do before the internet?', social scientists refer to this generation as the 'Last of the Innocents'. Has there been a loss of innocence since the age of the internet? We are aware of its benefits, but what are the costs? Has there been a spiritual loss as well? And what can these High Holidays offer us in response?

We were told that technology would make life easier and give us more free time, but we now have constant email and social media overload, and the internet seems to be an endless source of distraction. A second issue is that before the internet, we actually had to remember things! We have literally outsourced certain cognitive functions, including memory, to this technology. Additionally, we have previously unimagined access to information. This abundance, while valuable, can be overwhelming and



even stressful, especially when so much of it is inaccurate. Of course, all this technology has brought remarkable benefits, but at what cost? And at what spiritual cost?

As the pace of life accelerates, it is simply harder to get our attention. But what are we paying attention to? Kittens doing backflips? We sometimes don't even realise that we are being motivated by entertainment value rather than seeking deeper meaning. Our lives become rapidly flashing images that dazzle and entertain. Then, when we try to slow down, we may find it difficult. But aren't some of the most sublime moments found when we slow down? Watching a baby smile? Stopping to hug someone you love? Our minds are working faster and faster, but what does our soul need us to do?

The High Holidays offer us an opportunity to slow down and reconnect:

- With ourselves: It is a time for self-reflection. Though we sit together in the synagogue, it is a time to ask ourselves those difficult but critical questions. Who are we? What is our life? If I knew I would not live to see another Yom Kippur, what would I make sure to do this year? What did I do this past year, and how did I affect the lives of those I care about? What impact did I have on the world?
- With God: the source of all life and energy. Meditate, pray, listen, hear and feel your connection to the *Kadosh Baruch Hu*, the Holy One of Blessing. This may necessitate a change in our expectations. The service will not necessarily inspire at every moment, but if we focus our thoughts on the holiness of these days, on the holy work that we are to do on these days, it will affect our lives and our world as we move into a new year.
- <sup>a</sup> With community: Human beings are believed to be created in the image of God. *Panim el Panim* (face to face) interaction is the quintessential experience of the divine. Come to be with community, your people, your family this High Holiday.

The world is moving faster and is more complicated than ever. This Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, slow it down, get in touch with what really matters and have a good and sweet new year. Shana Tova.

# From the President

Rhona Rosenberg



As we approach Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we take the time to reflect upon the past year and look to the future. We might ask ourselves the following questions: have I done all I could to promote harmony and unity in my family? Did I treat my parents with love and respect? Did I take time out of my busy day to really listen to my children? Have I been a good neighbour? Did I volunteer to help those less fortunate than myself? Did I try to broaden my mind and learn

something new? Do I need to ask forgiveness from anyone I might have hurt?

It is not enough simply to ask the questions; for true teshuva we must look deep within ourselves and find ways to improve our actions in the coming year.

As president of Kehilat Nitzan completing my first year in the role, I too have taken stock of my performance and asked myself a set of questions. Have I been too judgemental of others? Did I expect too much from them and then been disappointed that they could not live up to these expectations? Did I provide enough support to the Rabbi and other members of the Board? Was I a good role model? Did I mentor younger members of the Board? Did I have a broad vision for the future of the shul? Did I achieve all that I set out to do? Can I lead the Board to do better?

As individuals reflect, so too does the Board. Earlier this year the Board held a strategy meeting to answer questions such as: What is Kehilat Nitzan? What do we stand for? Where are we at present? What will Kehilat Nitzan look like in five years? With the help of our expert facilitator Ernie Schwarz, broad focus areas for Kehilat Nitzan were identified:

We provide a Masorti option for Melbourne Jewry, so we need to ensure others know what Masorti means. To continue to be able to offer this option, we need to make our congregation financially viable.

We occupy a unique niche in the Melbourne Jewish community; we are neither Orthodox nor Progressive but Masorti; we are not just a synagogue, but a community that is warm and inclusive, committed to Jewish law and where men and women participate equally. We need to promote 'who we are' more to the broader community.

In order to make our congregation more of a community, the Board has planned – and will continue to plan – events, such as communal Shabbat dinners with guest speakers. Most of the food will be prepared by a group of volunteers in the shul's well-equipped kitchen. If every person attending the dinner could bring one non-member, the Masorti message could be spread to the wider Melbourne Jewish community.

Finally, we focused on how we can make Kehilat Nitzan financially viable and future-proof in a city that boasts more than thirty Jewish houses of worship. As we prepare for the High Holidays I ask that we all reflect on our current involvement in our shul and try next year to help Kehilat Nitzan become a stronger community.

I wish you and your families Shana Tovah and I look forward to seeing you in shul.

## Farewell to the newsletter

This edition of the Kehilat Nitzan biannual newsletter will be the last in this format, as the Board has decided to replace it with an annual journal. The journal will be published next year before Rosh Hashanah.

Ruth Mushin, our current newsletter editor, has agreed to stay on as editor of the journal, with the support of an Editorial Committee.

On behalf of the kehilah I would like to acknowledge and thank Ruth Mushin and Andrew Freeman for all their help over the years in planning, editing and printing the newsletter. Thank you too to the volunteers who 'stuffed' the envelopes so the newsletter could be mailed out.

# Finding my fit at Kehilat Nitzan

Adele Stowe-Lindner



I was asked if I would share why my family and I joined Kehilat Nitzan last year. There are a number of different reasons the community seemed a good fit for us, and we have enjoyed a very warm welcome in the past 18 months.

Every family has its idioms and ideas that are repeated in one way or another, throughout different generations. In my own extended Australian family, like many Jewish migrant families, I was always instructed by my grandparents and parents that learning anything at all is worthwhile because the two things no-one can ever take away from you are your knowledge and your skills.

On that basis, my own family – my husband and children – have always participated in synagogue, and indeed,

non-synagogue Jewish contexts and communities which share an interest in learning and in throwing around challenging ideas, together, as one of the key expressions of our Judaism.

Many families, however, comprise diverse backgrounds and, whereas mine was very secular and rooted deep in the Holocaust, my husband's family is from a traditional community in Leeds, UK. In that community, there were nuances that enabled people to balance their culture with their everyday lives, embracing all of the mosaic of consistencies and hypocrisies that make Jewish communities vibrant, sustainable, inclusive and interesting.

We learnt to value the consistencies which provide our family with membership to our culture – repeated experiences to embed our history and practice, as well as boundaries for our choices. We also developed a hunger for nuance and diversity in our communities which do not seek to judge, but rather, seek to embrace.

Over the last 15 years, my family has been a member of modern Orthodox, Reform and Conservative shuls, and non-religious learning and chag communities, many of them simultaneously, and all of them enabled us to express different parts of our family values. We loved each community for different reasons. At

the end of every second year, we join a gathering of thousands at Limmud UK, to learn in a pluralist context from Jewish people with different lenses and Jewish expressions.

After all, what makes a community? It is rare for any individual or family to find a perfect fit of a Jewish community in all criteria, even if one builds one's own. Maureen Kendler (z"l), a Jewish colleague and talented teacher in my life in London, once berated me that our family membership of multiple shuls at the one time meant we were similar to 'jacks of all trade, masters of none'. She queried if we were fully invested in any of our multiple communities, and how our children would grow to find a home. She emphasised that no community can be perfect for every member, and asked what would eventually make us settle down. She was accurate in this – knowing that no community ticks every box, families look for a best-fit amongst the expression of ritual, inclusion, *hashkafa* (guiding philosophy), Tikkun Olam, politics, vibe, tunes, and nostalgia. If Maureen was still with us, I would share with her that the first bar mitzvah in our family was the event that finally propelled us towards Kehilat Nitzan.

We value the learning interests which are clear in Kehilat Nitzan, and the warmth of the community, many of whom have spoken to us of their different experiences and outlooks. We look forward to continuing on our own Jewish journey in the coming new Jewish year. We are excited to grow with Kehilat Nitzan as our children move towards their own life milestones, as it develops and changes, as all communities do.



## MITZVAH DAY

MAKE A DIFFERENCE | 17 NOVEMBER 2019

### 3 EASY STEPS TO BE INVOLVED:

1. Create a project
2. Register your project at [www.mitzvahday.org.au](http://www.mitzvahday.org.au)
3. Invite your friends, family, colleagues and community to join you.

Join in. Step Up. Think Global. Act Local.

  [www.mitzvahday.org.au](http://www.mitzvahday.org.au)



# Education at Kehilat Nitzan

Rabbi Yonatan Sadoff and Zvi Civins



mitzvah students. This year we launched a program to bridge these two age groups, namely, 'Keshet', for children in years 4–6.

Keshet meets at the same time as our b'nei mitzvah program, and Wednesday afternoons are now very lively, as our two groups – Keshet led by teachers Zvi and Marcie Civins, and the b'nei mitzvah kids by Rabbi Sadoff – learn both separately and together. Rabbi Sadoff has been providing expert teaching in all facets of the synagogue and the Shabbat service for our older students. They have learned how to lay tefillin, to chant and sing prayers such as Ashrei, and they have become more proficient in their overall knowledge of davening as they approach their big days.

Education has been a core value of Judaism, and it continues to be a priority for all ages at Kehilat Nitzan. Our goal is to provide educational opportunities and serious learning for all ages, in an informal, friendly and social setting. Importantly, whether for early childhood or adults and seniors, our programs reflect our unique Masorti practices and values. A growing team of teachers and new programs is making this a reality at Kehilat Nitzan.

Two years ago saw the introduction of 'Zehoo', a wonderful program of engaging, creative Jewish learning for our young school-age children led by teacher Marcie Civins. Rabbi Sadoff and his wife Merav have brought 'Kruv Nitzanim' for pre-school children, and Merav, Michelle Perl and Miriam Faine continue to run it with guest appearances by Rabbi Yonatan. And for years, we have provided a stimulating educational program for our pre-b'nei

The Keshet kids have learned and improved their knowledge of Hebrew, using texts such as *Adon Olam*, as well as *The Cat in the Hat* (in Hebrew, of course) to hone their skills. And together the two groups have had some very serious and meaningful discussions about such topics as the creation of the world, comparing the Torah to other cultures' creation myths, rites of passage, and much more. Our sessions are planned, but often take spontaneous and exciting paths of Jewish learning that all the kids have enjoyed.

Most recently the combined group observed their own Tisha B'av program. This culminated in Rabbi Sadoff chanting some of *Eicha* for the kids as they shared their thoughts about the meaning of the solemn day.

Adult education is also offering opportunities for stimulating Jewish learning. Most notably, this year

has seen the introduction of '929', a fantastic text study available to everyone. '929' refers to the number of chapters in the entire Tanach, and the course includes individual reading of a chapter a day. The goal is to read the entire Tanach, a chapter a day, over two and a half years! The program is supported by a wealth of on-line resources and insights in text, audio and video through an excellent app. Once a week the learners meet in a congregant's home, and Rabbi Sadoff leads a discussion of the past week's chapters. We are currently studying the Second Book of Samuel and the dramas, passions and intrigue in King David's reign. (You'll never believe one of the reasons the rabbis offer as to why Amnon hated his half-sister Tamar!) This program provides the opportunity to 'go beyond' the weekly parasha in the Torah and read the rest – eventually – of the entire Tanach, thus deepening understanding of our sacred texts.

Rabbi Sadoff has also started a weekly Talmud session, following Wednesday morning minyan, studying the first tractate of the Talmud *Berachot* (Blessings). Learning Talmud in general is not only Jewish learning at a high level, but helps one understand the essence of Jewish thought – the *yiddishe kopf!*

'Mussar shiurim' have been ongoing after Kiddush on Shabbat twice a month and have generated very interesting discussions about refining our own character and how one should ethically interact with others.

And of course, 'Pondering the Parasha', our weekly opportunity to delve deeply into the week's parasha, continues on Thursday night.

Our actions reflect our commitment to Jewish education for all ages. Our philosophy is that regardless of one's current knowledge or background, regardless of where one is currently a student, be it a state school or a Jewish day school, our unique, Masorti approach is there for everyone.

We look forward to continuing all these initiatives and increasing our educational programs in the coming year. Stay tuned!

# Celebrating my bat mitzvah at Kehilat Nitzan

Rosa Pastor



On 13 July I celebrated my bat mitzvah at Kehilat Nitzan. For me this involved leining Torah portions including *Maftir*, reading my haftorah, leading the congregation in the Torah service and delivering my *Dvar Torah*. I also chose to lead the Maariv service on the Friday night before my bat mitzvah. It was an amazing experience and I'd like to share how I prepared for it and how I felt.

One of my favourite parts about preparing for my bat mitzvah was the excellent b'nai mitzvah program that I attended each Wednesday. Each week Zvi Civins or Rabbi Yonatan Sadoff would teach us about an upcoming *chag*, some part of the b'nai mitzvah ritual like prayers or tefillin, or even about the weekly parasha. It was a great time to hang out with my friends from lots of different schools and the programs were delivered in a really fun way.

In addition to these classes I also had a class at school where I was taught my Torah portion and haftorah. The classes were 45 minutes once a week and started a year before my bat mitzvah. I also learnt the Torah service and the Maariv for Friday night with Rabbi Sadoff every Monday

after school. This involved having recordings of the different prayers to practise at home, as well as going over them during the lesson. We also did a rehearsal and practised carrying the Torah, which was pretty heavy for a pipsqueak like me!

On the day of your bat or bar mitzvah you give a *Dvar Torah* to the whole congregation about your parasha. I chose to focus on Miriam and her well, and link it to the importance of preparation and the environment. I loved that there was an opportunity

to give this a personalised aspect and talk about something I'm passionate about.

The great thing about Kehilat Nitzan is that the rabbi will help you and your family work out and decide how much or how little of the service you would like to do, and to choose what sort of focus you would like your bat or bar mitzvah to have.

Leading up to my big day there were definitely butterflies in my tummy, but I was also excited to wear my new dress and fabulous boots, as well as my beautiful talit that my parents ordered from Israel. I felt proud because on the day, a whole year's work came together and I was able to share with everyone all the melodies, prayers and leining I'd been working on. I also felt privileged to have the opportunity to celebrate at Kehilat Nitzan in particular, because in some other shuls only males read from the Torah. The highlights of the day were having all my family and friends in one place, the delicious kiddush food and, best of all, the lolly throw at the end of my haftorah. I can guarantee that I did not suffer any injuries from stray lollies, though I would advise ducking behind the bimah.

# Shabbat meditation

Joshua Arzt

The modern definition of meditation is all-encompassing. It ranges from just thinking about something, to guided projection, mindfulness, or traditional meditation, which can involve years of preparation. Suffice to say that what we are doing on Shabbat morning at 9:00am is none of the above.

The 30-minute session which precedes the service is a *kavana*, which translates to a 'direction' or an 'intent'. No preparation or previous knowledge is necessary. We are not studying or learning anything formally. The aim is direct experience, with the goal of enhancing your own personal praying that takes place immediately after the session.

So how do we do this?

The vehicle is through breathing and chanting. Sitting comfortably, instruction is given as to the breathing technique and all that is required is to relax, release the mind from thinking and follow the direction. Next, we begin to chant different Hebrew phrases in rhythm. Many of these will be familiar, as they are taken from prayers that most of us know. The melodies – *nigunim* – are uncomplicated and will resonate after a couple of rounds. To end, the breathing just returns to normal, and then the interesting part begins.

The service commences immediately after, allowing congregants to observe for themselves whether the *kavana* has been effective. *Kavana* can be effective in many different ways that are all personal and vary from individual to individual. So far, when asked, participants have noticed a positive effect in enhancing their prayer.

Please join us at Kehilat Nitzan at 9:00am on Shabbat mornings. For further information, please phone Joshua Arzt on 0487 408 464.

# Masorti in the Amazon



Iquitos, a city of nearly half a million people, is buried deep in the Amazon rainforest in eastern Peru. Iquitos has the unique distinction of being the largest city in the world to be entirely cut off from the road network—accessible only by air or by river boat. It is also unique in its Jewish history and its Masorti connection.

The Sociedad de Beneficencia Israelita de Iquitos was founded in 1909 by Moroccan Jews who arrived in Peru's Loreto region during the rubber boom from 1905 to 1912. They came from Tetuan, Casablanca and Tangier and arrived in Iquitos via the Amazon River from the Brazilian cities of Belem and Manaus.

The immigrants were Sephardic Jews and the Jewish community was established by its first president, Victor Israel. Most of its members, however, were focused exclusively on

trade, and Yom Kippur was the only activity celebrated in the Jewish community. Also, as the vast majority of the Jews who came to Loreto were men, most married local women not of Jewish descent. The families, however, maintained their Jewish identity by passing it on to their children.

When the rubber boom ended many of the Jews returned to their native countries. Those who remained with families managed to keep the community alive. However, the community fell dormant for many years until it was reactivated by Victor Edey, with the help of Rabbi Guillermo Bronstein of Lima, Peru.

In recent years the community has seen four rounds of conversions performed by Conservative rabbis. In 2002 the community numbered 99 people, in 2004 there were 250 people, in 2011 there were 300 people and in 2018 there were only 94 people. The primary reason for the decrease is that a large part of those who have converted have made Aliyah and are now living in Jerusalem, Beersheva, Ramleh, Kiryat Arba, Ashdod and Eilat.

In 2009 the synagogue received a reconstructed 100-year-old Torah scroll rescued from Nazi Germany that was donated by the Igdaloff family of the Asociacion Israelita de la Pampas. The community was advised of this donation by Rabbi Fabian Zaidenberg when they were invited to participate

in the third meeting of Latin American Masorti Communities which was held in Lima.

The community, which currently has 130 members, has no rabbi, so its Jewish education relies on having those who are more knowledgeable teach those who are less so. The community celebrates the holidays of Hanukkah, Purim, Pesach, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. They hold regular Kabbalat Shabbat services, and when they are able to have a visiting rabbi, they also hold Shabbat morning services with a Torah reading.

Several Conservative rabbis assist the community, including Rabbi Ruben Saferstein, who has made multiple visits since 2004 and whose teaching has been instrumental in helping the community in Iquitos to grow in its Jewish practice. Rabbis Fabian Zaidenberg and Rabbi Guillermo Bronstein have also visited and played a central role in the community's development, and Masorti Olami continues to provide support, including training and leadership.

In addition to the synagogue, the community also maintains a Jewish cemetery whose land was acquired by the Society for Public Benefit of Iquitos in 1895, and has graves of the first Jews who arrived in Amazonian Peru.

You can find more information on the community in Iquitos in the book *Jews of the Amazon* written by a Venezuelan Jew named Ariel Segal. There is also a film titled *El Fuego Eterno (The Fire Within)* made by Larry Salcedo.

*This article was first published in the Masorti Olami monthly newsletter.*

## Tikkun Olam at Kehilat Nitzan

### Fran Feldman

Kehilat Nitzan now has a new entity responsible for the Tikkun Olam program: Kehilat Nitzan Tikkun Olam PBI LTD. The need to create a new entity arose in 2012 when registration of charities transferred from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to the ACNC (Australian Charities and

Not for Profit Commission). There was confusion surrounding the Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) status of Tikkun Olam as a part of Kehilat Nitzan, resulting in the loss of Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) eligibility. Legal advice was sought and concluded that in order to regain tax deductible status, Kehilat

Nitzan needed to apply for registration of a new entity: a separate legal organisation, a public company limited by guarantee. The new company is known as Kehilat Nitzan Tikkun Olam PBI LTD. It has one member, Kehilat Nitzan.

The creation of this new entity required changes to the structure and responsibilities of the Tikkun Olam committee of volunteers. In practical terms, Tikkun Olam is now governed by its own constitution and not the Kehilat Nitzan constitution. It is required to have a board of directors with four

executive positions, hold at least four meetings and an AGM per annum, keep formal minutes and have a plan and annual budget. All decisions, plans, transactions, appointments, budget and expenditure must gain Kehilat Nitzan Board approval.

In October 2018 our submission for the reinstatement of DGR status with the ACNC was approved, so that all donations to Kehilat Nitzan Tikkun Olam are now tax deductible.

Four new volunteers joined Tikkun Olam in the past year, bringing the total to nine. I thank them, as well as the eighty volunteers who work tirelessly on the Food Van for their commitment and efforts in the service of our mission. Our mission remains unchanged: providing benevolent relief to people who are homeless, ill, experiencing family violence, isolation, dependence, bereavement or disability, people with



food insecurity, those suffering material loss through natural disasters, and residents in hospices, nursing homes and hostels.

I would like to share with you some of the activities undertaken in the past year, as well as plans for the coming year:

#### **Food Van**

Volunteers provide weekly high-standard delicious hot meals to the disadvantaged of Port Melbourne, which has the highest density of public housing in Victoria. Clients, including a growing number of children, have the opportunity to chat, socialise and feel part of the community in a safe and welcoming environment. This gathering also provides a fantastic opportunity, under the mentorship of Jake Arzt and Greg Sachs, to engage the young people in the setting up and serving of meals.

#### **Nitzanim Singers**

Under the dedicated leadership of Moshe Perl, the group performs at various local nursing homes, singing in Hebrew, English, Yiddish and Russian to the accompaniment of Moshe and his guitar. Rehearsals take place at the home of Moshe and Sharon and repertoires are designed to suit residents of the facility to be visited. The singers give seven or eight performances a year. Facility donations are directed to the Food Van.

It is heart-warming to hear the residents sing along and to see their faces light up in response to familiar melodies from their past.

Following performances, it is customary for the minstrels to regroup at a café for coffee and a chat.

#### **Cancer Council Afternoon Tea**

Last May we raised \$421.00 at a self-catered afternoon tea at Kehilat Nitzan



while Segal and Glass, well known musicians, provided participatory entertainment for around forty people. We were assisted on the day by our b'nei mitzvah students.

#### **Jewish Care**

In the past twelve months we have purchased, assembled and packed forty boxes of kitchen and bathroom essentials for distribution by Jewish Care to singles who have previously been homeless, and families who have fled domestic violence or other life-changing circumstances. My young grandchildren, along with their friends, delighted in assisting with the packing as they were 'doing something for less fortunate people'.

We have donated cash to be used expressly for the provision of fresh fruit and vegetables to needy families, and purchased dry foods to be distributed at the discretion of Jewish Care.

#### **Flying Fox- Camp Sabbaba**

Flying Fox is a youth-led organisation that provides recreational social inclusion experiences for young people with intellectual disability or autism. We sponsored two shabbatons known as 'Shortz' – weekend getaways.

#### **Food for Mourners**

Frozen meals are stored at the shul so that when Kehilat Nitzan is advised of the passing of a member, or relative of a member, a frozen meal is delivered by a volunteer to the home of the shiva. Meals approaching expiry date are donated to the Food Van so that there is no waste.

#### **Kosher Meals on Wheels**

Kosher Meals on Wheels is a not-for-profit organisation providing meals to the Jewish community. Every year on Pesach and Rosh Hashanah we assist by donating grape juice and compote.

#### **Soup on Shavuot**

Last Shavuot ten litres of soup was donated to TBI for distribution. It is intended that in the future, in conjunction with MAZON, those in the community suffering from food insecurity will receive donations of food three times a year, at Pesach, Shavuot and Succot.

#### **Avalon Centre**

Avalon Centre is an organisation that assists the most disadvantaged in our community: homeless people with mental and physical disabilities who have 'fallen through the cracks'. Every winter we appeal for, and deliver men's winter clothing to Avalon Centre for distribution to the homeless.

One Kehilat Nitzan member has taken it upon herself to continue to deliver personal care packs to the Centre. They contain a hair comb and brush, shampoo, razor, deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, washcloth and antibacterial wipes.

#### **Drought Relief Fund**

\$2,000 was donated to this fund.

#### **Asylum Seeker Resource Centre**

A collection of food from Kehilat Nitzan members was delivered to the Centre.

#### **Love Our Streets 3161**

A project to engage young people was initiated by Alison Marcus through the City of Glen Eira. This is an ongoing monthly event where people gather in a pre-determined area to collect, sort, weigh and appropriately dispose of waste and litter from the streets, thus

preventing it being washed into Port Phillip Bay.

### Connectivity

This is a new initiative to encourage community participation of Kehilat Nitzan members and non-members of the community, in a range of activities.

A successful submission was made to the City of Glen Eira for a grant of \$2,828.00 to promote social inclusion. While targeting older members of the community, we encourage and welcome participation by people of

any age in any of the planned activities. Movies will be screened on a monthly basis, followed by discussions over afternoon tea at Kehilat Nitzan. We also hope to start a book club and a knitting circle for the creation of beanies, scarves and mittens for the homeless.

We have applied to Transport Safety Victoria for Bus Operator Registration to permit us to hire a twelve-seat bus from the City of Glen Eira. The bus will be used to transport groups on day trips to places of interest in the metropolitan

area and beyond, to a radius of 200 kilometres.

For further information about any of these programs, please contact Fran Feldman on 0414 822 584. If you need assistance with transport to participate in shul activities and outings, please contact Kehilat Nitzan on (03) 9500 0906.

*Fran Feldman is Chair, Board of Directors KNT0 PBI LTD.*

## Our Blossoming Cabbage Patch Kids

### Merav Sadoff Fima



The Kruv Nitzanim program, literally 'cabbage buds' or 'Brussels sprouts', a title inspired by the Cabbage Patch Kids dolls, was initiated in October 2018 in order to provide programming for the youngest members of our congregation: children aged zero to four. As part of the rabbinic vision of continuity, recognising the importance of continuous synagogue programming for children and adolescents from the moment of their birth until the post-bar or bat mitzvah stage, the Kruv Nitzanim program has contributed immensely to the integration of young children into our community.

The aims of the program are to introduce children to Jewish rituals and practices, such as Kabbalat Shabbat and Holiday celebrations; expose them to the Hebrew language through Hebrew story time and Aleph-Bet Yoga, with the understanding that children of this age can easily absorb

different languages; and give them the opportunity to socialise with other young children and for the parents to meet their peers. Meeting on a weekly basis on Friday mornings, the program consistently brought together 10–15 children and their caregivers – many of them Israelis.

Our own and very talented Moshe Perl always joined us on the guitar as we greeted the children with live music and contemporary Israeli children's songs. The children loved singing the Kruv Nitzanim cheer: 'Heidad (hooray), heidad, Kruv Nitzanim heidad!' Following a story in Hebrew, usually accompanied by a puppet show, the children would proceed to the arts and crafts table for a creative activity inspired by that week's story or an upcoming holiday. Favourite activities included making masks and *ra'ashanim* (noisemakers) for Purim, finger puppets of the Ten Plagues, and building a chocolate-matzah house. The children

also got to bake their own challot and hamentashen.

After some free play, we would always conclude with Kabbalat Shabbat and special treats for the children. The kids loved being Ima or Abba Shabbat and wearing the colourful woven kippot, and their parents beamed as they recited the blessings over the candles, wine and challah.

In July, we moved Kruv Nitzanim to Shabbat mornings at 10:30am, combining it with the wonderful Saturday morning children's activities run for many years by Miriam Faine. This way, we hope to attract more young families with little children to Saturday morning services, knowing that their children will also have an educational and entertaining experience.

### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Rebecca Cohen and Mark Kiven  
Jacqui and Marlon Dubs and Family  
Uriel Ladowski and Family

### MAZAL TOV ON YOUR BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Ruby Krug  
Toby Krug  
Bailey Lewin  
Rosa Pastor

### MAZAL TOV ON YOUR MARRIAGE

Rebecca Cohen and Mark Kiven



Newsletter:  
Edited by Ruth Mushin  
Artwork by Milestones Books