

Our men's club, the Brotherhood of Kol Ami, is an active, energetic, and vital part of our synagogue. Our mission is **to serve, support, and provide spirit** (ruach) to Congregation Kol Ami. As a chapter member of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs (FJMC), we are also active within the Florida region, partnering with other local men's clubs, to involve Jewish men in Jewish life.

We serve our kehillah in a variety of ways. For example, every year the Brotherhood prepares for the High Holy Days by adding several hundred chairs to the sanctuary, distributing the machzorim, and providing ushers for all of the services. Our *Sukkah Builders* put up our beautiful congregational sukkah, where we celebrate Sukkot with fun programs like our *Steaks & Spirits in the Sukkah* night and the Social Committee's *Rock the Sukkah* program. Our *Chai Guys* get together every month or two to maintain the beauty and safety of our grounds and buildings. We also help to co-sponsor Kol Ami's annual *End of Year Picnic* and help by setting up fun games for our kids to play, grilling the kosher hot dogs, and offering refreshments and other treats. The opportunities for service to the synagogue, and to our surrounding community, are many, and Brotherhood is always ready, willing, and able to serve.

The Brotherhood also supports the congregation by providing opportunities for learning, growth, and fellowship. Our *Brunch & Lecture series* brings in experts, community leaders, and other compelling speakers to share their knowledge, experiences, and insights, while our *Chefs of Brotherhood* prepare a delicious hot brunch before the presentation. We also help to plan, sponsor, and execute Kol Ami's annual *Scholar-in-Residence* program and our *Brotherhood & Sisterhood Shabbat* weekend. Our commitment to involving Jewish men in Jewish life is reflected in our annual *World Wide Wrap*, a signature FJMC program in which we, along with other men's clubs, religious schools, synagogues, and Jewish communities around the globe, partner with our Kol Yeladim religious school to teach our children and adults how to wrap tefillin, and share in the celebration of this wonderful mitzvah. We have also rededicated ourselves to the FJMC's Yom HaShoah Yellow Candle™ project, in which we distribute special yahrzeit candles to all of our member families and encourage them to light the candles on erev Yom HaShoah. By observing this solemn and powerful mitzvah, we help to ensure that the millions who perished in the Holocaust are honored and never forgotten and that we, as an intergenerational Jewish community, continue to shine a light on the darkness of antisemitism that still surrounds us today.

Last but not least, the Brotherhood provides a spark of spirit to Kol Ami by offering a number of great opportunities to develop new friendships and strengthen old ones, to foster fellowship and camaraderie, and to have some fun! If you like sports, we've got you covered with our annual outings to watch the Tampa Bay Rays, the Lightning, and the Buccaneers for their respective

Jewish Community Days; our **Kol Amigos** tournament softball team; and our fantasy football league. If you enjoy a good scotch (or bourbon), you won't want to miss our hugely popular Cigars & Spirits night at Davidoff of Geneva in May. If you prefer craft beer and good food, then you'll want to come to our annual *Craft Beer Tasting & Brewery Tour* at one of Tampa Bay's many local craft breweries. For something completely different, our *Firearm Safety Training Day* at Shooter's World is an educational and fun way to spend a Sunday morning with your friends and family. This program is for adults and anyone age 13 or above with parental supervision.

By joining and actively participating in Brotherhood, you will have the opportunity to develop strong friendships, enjoy the camaraderie and fellowship that binds us as Jewish men, and find meaning and purpose in the service, support, and spirit that Brotherhood provides to our kehillah (and have a lot of fun in the process). If you are already a member of Brotherhood, I thank you and encourage you to increase your involvement by participating in one or more of our many social events, service projects, and congregational support programs. Maybe you'll even consider serving on one of our committees. If you are not yet a member, I invite you to join us and be a part of something special.

L'shalom, in brotherhood,

Mario Rodriguez

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