PHO SURE

Pho Nam Bac brings traditional Vietnamese cuisine to Highwood, Page 37

Singing loud and proud

Cantor Adam Kahan begins full-time at Temple Beth-El, Page 29

Cantor Adam Kahan recently took on a full-time position at Northbrook's Temple Beth-El.
PHOTO COURTESY OF JANICE HADESMAN

Q&A COVER STORY

Kahan encouraging sense of community

ZOE ENGELS, Editorial Intern

Since July 2018, Cantor Adam Kahan has played King Achashverosh at Temple Beth-El's Purim celebration, attended most B'nai Mitzvahs and helped lead Friday night Shabbat services twice a month – all while serving as a limited-service, or part-time, cantor.

Kahan began his limited-service position when Temple Beth El's previous cantor, Cantor Faryn Kates Rudnick, took a position on the East Coast where many of her family members reside. Kahan was selected among approximately eight candidates after Temple Beth-El commenced a search process through the American Conference of Cantors.

"I was looking for a new congregation to join for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was that (my family) was going through a period where my father was quite ill, and I wanted to make sure that I was available to be present while he went through his illness," Kahan said. "Temple Beth-El and I … were able to join together in a limited-service position for the year where I was able to be part of the community and interact with the community, but I wasn't serving full-time as a Cantor for the community."

Kahan is now bringing his voice and energy to the community as Temple Beth-El's first full-time, male cantor, having transitioned into the position on July 1.

Rabbi Sidney M. Helbraun said Kahan is a smart, thoughtful and talented individual with a beautiful voice and a knack for the guitar who has had the chance to "learn the flow of the community, (meet and) get accustomed to the temple, share some of his talents and create connections" during his time at Temple Beth-El.

"We have an incredibly talented keyboardist who (Kahan) has been collaborating with over the course of this year," Helbraun said. "And, we have a great many temple members who are (vocally and instrumentally) talented. So, (Kahan) has had a chance to start to meld with all of them."

Kahan brings a bevy of experience to the position as well. Growing up in Chicago, Kahan said he attended Am Shalom Temple in Glencoe and sang in its choir, allowing "Temple to feel like an extension of home."

During the summers of his pre-teen years, Kahan attended Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute, or OSRUI, a reform Jewish overnight camp in Wisconsin. There, he discovered a sense of community and harmony, facilitated in part by music.

"I loved the experience of people singing together, and I loved the melodies," Kahan said. "So, I picked up a guitar and learned how to play those songs. And that began the journey that led to (becoming) a song leader and then a soloist at Temple, and then eventually to going to the Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion to be certified as a cantor."

Prior to attaining his cantorial certification, Kahan served as a

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Now full-time Cantor Adam Kahan leads local children in song at Northbrook's Temple Beth El . PHOTO COURTESY OF JANICE HADESMAN

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Pinstripes
(1150 Willow Road, (847) 480-2323)
- From open until close all week: bowling and bocce

Village Green Park
(Downtown Northbrook — Shermer and Meadow Roads)
- July 31-Aug. 4: Northbrook Days

GLENVIEW

Johnny's Kitchen
(1740 Milwaukee Ave. (847) 699-9999)
- 7:30 p.m. every Friday and Saturday: Live Music

Oil Lamp Theater
(1723 Glenview Road)
- Performance times through Aug. 24: "A Kind of Love Story"

SS. Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church
(1401 Wagner Road)
- 1-11 p.m. July 27/28: Glenview Greek Fest

Ten Ninety Brewing Co.
(1025 N. Waukegan Road, (224) 432-5472)
- 7-9 p.m. every Thursday: Trivia Night
- 7 p.m. Saturday, July 27: Stand-up comedy show

Potato Creek Johnny's
(1850 Waukegan Road)
- 9 p.m. Saturday, July 27: Croozin' The Loop

Jackman Park
(1930 Prairie Street)
- 7 p.m. Wednesday nights: Bearfoot in the Park Concerts

LAKE FOREST

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KAHAN

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soloist and guest musician at synagogues throughout the Chicagoland area, particularly Am Shalom and Lakeside Congregation, for 15 years. Kahan later served as a cantorial soloist at Temple Jeremiah in Northfield while he pursued his cantorial certification, which he attained in May 2018.

Helbraun said Kahan's unique and wonderful musical talents were of immense value when Temple Beth-El began its search for a Cantor to take the position after Cantor Rudnick had left.

"One of the things that I looked for when we were looking for another cantor was somebody who would be able to stand on their own and not be limited in being compared to (Cantor Rudnick) because everyone still loves her," Helbraun said. "That was one of the things, honestly, that attracted me to him as well.

"There'd be nobody who'd compare them to each other. They'd both have the opportunity to stand on their own. They're both incredibly talented. … Nobody felt like they were being disloyal to our previous cantor (by) having a relationship with him. Everybody just connected together and has related very well."

Kahan said he felt this sense of community early-on in his time at Temple Beth-El. During the first family service that he had the opportunity to co-officiate with Helbraun last year, Kahan was amazed as congregation members joined him in song.

"You always hope you'll … truly be the one who sets off the chain reaction of energy, of everybody's voices joining together and of a soulful moment being created," Kahan said. "And it happened instantly. It was just the most beautiful, embracing experience of people's voices coming together."

Helbraun said he looks forward to having Kahan as a full-time cantor and to further sharing Kahan's talents with the community.

"If people are interested in learning more or experiencing, they're more than welcome to come and join and be with us," Helbraun said. "We'd love for them to experience the richness and beauty of Shabbat with us. … We feel very fortunate to have this very special man with us."

Kahan said he, too, is excited to continue to be immersed in the family-like environment of the Temple Beth-El community.

"For me, (there is a) joy (in) sharing with others what has moved and inspired me in the past, … especially if I can move and inspire them, (so) that people leave with those moments going, 'I just feel so fulfilled having been together in this moment." Kahan said. "That's the game. That's the whole game – leaving people complete where there may be an incompletion in their lives."