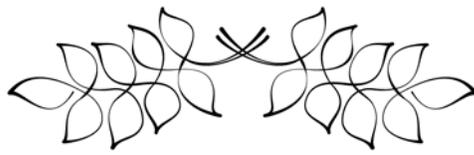


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CONGREGATION
SUKKAT SHALOM
Bulletin

Rabbi's Message

by Rabbi Sam Gordon

The prophet Jeremiah, writing from exile in Babylon, stated: "Seek the peace and well-being of the city to which you have been carried into exile, for in its peace, you shall have peace." (Jeremiah, 29:7)

For 2,500 years, we have been urged to engage in the life of our communities. Today, this is truer than it has ever been. It does not matter what any person's political ideology may be. Each of us must be involved with the welfare of our nation, state, city and municipality. America depends on a vibrant civil society that requires civic activism from all of us.

"No matter our personal political views, it is vital that each of us becomes active and involved."

Members of the Sukkat Shalom family have often been in the forefront of communal leadership. We represent various parties and ideologies. Republicans, Democrats and Independents should all feel at home within our sanctuary. Today, when there is an atmosphere of political divisiveness that often serves to alienate us from each other, we must maintain a level of respect and support for the sincerity of each other's beliefs.

Most importantly, we must be fully engaged in the social fabric of the greater community. It is heartening to see the increased level of activism in our community. People are energized by local elections for village trustees and school, park district and library boards. There will soon be elections for county, state and federal positions. No matter our personal political views, it is vital that each of us becomes active and involved.

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My Journey by Judy Buckman



Twenty years ago, I walked into the Starbucks on Skokie Boulevard to meet with Rabbi Sam Gordon. As I ordered my drink at the counter, I scanned the coffee shop until my eyes landed on Rabbi Gordon. I walked towards him, introduced myself and sat down at the table. His smile was warm and his eyes were welcoming, immediately putting me at ease.

As he told me about how Sukkat Shalom began and his vision for its future, I was struck by the sincerity and passion that came through as he spoke. I knew that he was someone I wanted to work with, but I had no idea that my life was about to change.

I had been working for a number of years as the business manager at an upscale women's boutique in Highland Park. When my friend Mimi Dunitz, of blessed memory, found out the store was closing, she told me of a relatively new congregation that needed an executive director.

At that time, Mimi was the outreach director for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now the Union for Reform Judaism), and she knew Rabbi Gordon well. She spoke highly of him and informed me that he had always been a strong proponent of inclusivity and

diversity. My interest piqued, and she arranged for us to meet.

"I have always felt that the most important aspect of my job as executive director was to make people feel part of the Sukkat Shalom family."

Soon after our initial meeting, I got together with some of the founding members as well as the board of directors. I felt inspired and excited to take on this new position.

At the first board meeting I attended, I learned that there was no formal listing of members and no newsletter of any type. As we discussed this lack of information, I enthusiastically responded, "Don't worry, I'll take care of it!" And that became my mantra for the next 20 years.

My first event was our Hanukkah celebration at the Wilmette Community Recreation Center. After the service, we served potato pancakes that I heated up in the ovens. I had purchased disposable utensils and plates and, at the end of the evening, I began washing the plastic forks for reuse. Sam came into the kitchen and asked, "Why are you washing disposable forks? Doesn't disposable mean that you dispose of them?" I responded, "But why would we throw them away when we can use them again?" Some things never change!

I have always felt that the most important aspect of my job as executive director was to make people feel part

please turn to page 2

Journey, cont'd

of the Sukkat Shalom family. I wanted to create an atmosphere where everyone felt welcomed, cared for and included. Over the years, my greatest joy has been seeing our members enjoy meals together, form friendships and find a true sense of community.

I could fill every newsletter for the next 20 years with all of the wonderful memories I have from my time at Sukkat Shalom. Since that is not feasible, I will share a few that stand out:

On one of our Purim days at Family School, a young girl dressed up in a very fashionable outfit, wore trendy glasses and sported a clipboard that had JUDY printed on it.

In our 10th Anniversary book, another child wrote that she thought I was the "Judy" in "Judaism."

Parents have told me that their children come to Family School just to hear me say, "Boker Tov."

Every time I hear, "You are the face of Sukkat Shalom," my heart fills with pride. I have been blessed to work with so many wonderful people over the years -- rabbis, educators, cantors, soloists, incredible lay leaders -- and I have enjoyed meaningful relationships with all of them. Every president of Sukkat Shalom has a special place in my heart. Cathe Barnabee, our bookkeeper for more than 20 years, as well as caretakers Gisela and Toni, have become personal friends.

From the early days of sharing space with our wonderful friends at First Congregational Church of Wilmette, Wilmette Community Church and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints to the purchase and renovation of our beautiful building, I have always been most proud of the interfaith aspect of Sukkat Shalom. It is a community and a spiritual space that welcomes all people -- just as I have tried to do.

It is hard to put into words my gratitude to Sam. I have learned so much from him about Judaism, history, Israel, literature and even Leonard Cohen! He gave me the opportunity to be who I am and respected my judgment. Who do you think finally got him to get new glasses? Sam and I have formed a deep and meaningful connection based on mutual admiration and respect, and he is part of my family as I am part of his. Over the years, Patty has also become a close friend.

"I have been blessed that my job has been so much more than work."

We often get stuck on the idea that we must seek out happiness as our goal in life, but I have learned that happiness (like every emotion) is fleeting. I think our true desire is to find meaning and a sense of purpose in our lives. I have worked with so many incredible people and families and have had the honor of watching their children grow up, go off to college and get married. I have been able to share in their joys and their sorrows.

I have been blessed that my job has been so much more than work. It has been my home away from home, overflowing with rewarding and meaningful experiences. It has fulfilled me in ways I never could have imagined 20 years ago. Sukkat Shalom is my community.

While my relationship with the congregation will change, I know that the friendships I have formed with all of you will endure. I've been truly blessed in my life to have a wonderful husband and family and to have had a job that has allowed me to grow, utilize my strengths and fill my days with meaning and purpose.

I cannot thank you enough for giving me the opportunity and honor to be your executive director for these past 20 years.

Rabbi's Message, cont'd

There have been times and places in Jewish history when we lacked political power and access. Our voices were not heard. When I think of my own ancestors from Europe, I know that the political events of their times occurred outside of their control. They had no impact on the course of history in their time.

That is not true of our lives in America. We are a generation blessed to live in a democracy in which we can have a say in the policies and laws that define our society. It is up to each of us to use that opportunity to shape a society built on equality, justice and peace.

"We must continue to follow the command of Jeremiah -- to seek the welfare and peace of our nation."

For some, engagement in electoral politics is most important, but there are many other opportunities to have a voice and an impact. Sukkat Shalom, in coalition with First Presbyterian Church and First Congregational Church, is now supporting two refugee families in Chicago. We will be sending out a separate message about the numerous ways we can help support these families.

The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism will be having its national Consultation on Conscience meeting in Washington, D.C., from April 30th to May 2nd. It is a remarkable gathering of synagogue activists and leaders. Please consider attending.

There are numerous organizations dealing with immigration, racism, the environment, civil rights, anti-Semitism, LGBTQ rights, women's equality and choice, and so many others. It is for times like this that we have been granted the gifts that we have. We must continue to follow the command of Jeremiah -- to seek the welfare and peace of our nation.

Restoring German Citizenship Prompts Reflection and Soul-Searching

by Arlene Haas

"That's crazy! Why would we want German citizenship?"

That was my response to my son Noah's suggestion that we apply for German citizenship. A high school German exchange trip prompted him to research the possibility. Noah learned that we could apply to have our family's German citizenship restored as the direct descendants of Jews whose citizenship was revoked by the Nazis.

After further consideration, it became clear to me that dual citizenship offered my sons an opportunity. Noah made the case that if he ever wanted to live or work abroad, German citizenship would give him the advantage of being a European Union citizen.

We completed the citizenship application following the German embassy's online instructions and gathered the supporting documents. I had already done some research on my family's past largely through correspondence with archivists in my parents' hometowns of Bad Homburg and Nuremberg. We had also visited the Bad Homburg archives, where we were able to trace through old address books my family's presence in the town back to the 19th Century.

"Gaining German citizenship has forced me to think deeply about my children's relationship with that country."

The citizenship application also forced me to dig through some of my parents' files I had inherited. I uncovered some very moving documents I didn't realize I had in my possession.

My mother escaped Germany by finding work as an au pair in England. I discovered a small book entitled "Aliens Order 1920 Certificate of Registration." Up-to-date registrations were required of all German-Jewish refugees because the British regarded them as enemy aliens. The book completely documents my mother's movement and employment in England beginning with her arrival on March 2, 1939, until June 5, 1946 -- the date she left to join relatives in the United States.

The most poignant document I uncovered was a facsimile of my grandfather's message to my mother sent via the German Red Cross in 1942. Handwritten in German, it reads: "Must unfortunately leave today, destination unknown, will write as soon as possible." We believe this was my grandfather's last communication before he was transported to Majdanek, the extermination camp in Poland where he died.

In July 2014, we met with the Vice Consul at the German consulate in Chicago and submitted all our paperwork. She could not have been more encouraging and helpful. We learned that the German government takes responsibility for locating any necessary documents, such as German birth certificates. In less than six months, we received notice that our applications had been granted. We returned to the consulate to receive our citizenship certificates and now are dual citizens.

Gaining German citizenship has forced me to think deeply about my children's relationship with that country. Both of my children studied German at Evanston Township High School and participated in the school's German exchange program. They have traveled to Germany on a number of occasions and have German friends.

I came to realize that my children's sensibilities about Germany are different from my own. This is as it should be. If the world is to move forward, my children should get to know Germans and feel comfortable in Germany. It is also important for their German friends to know Jews -- particularly Jews who have a link to Germany.

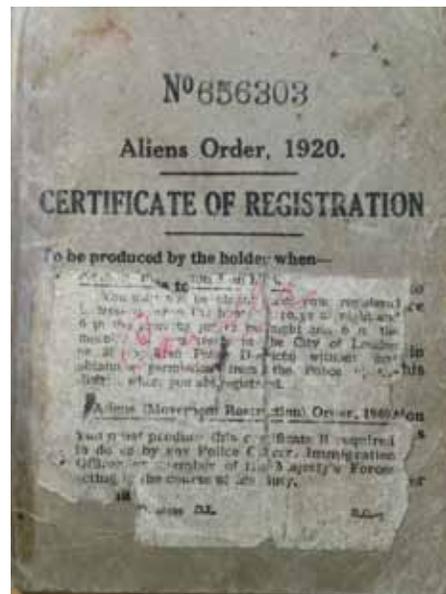
The experience also forced me to do my own soul-searching. Yes, I will always have some level of discomfort with Germany.

However, I also believe that country has worked very hard to confront its history. As part of that process, Germany has granted my children and myself citizenship. I believe it is important for me to re-engage with the country where my family has such a long history.

An experience this past fall confirmed the importance of this re-engagement. We arranged for the German students participating in the exchange program to visit our synagogue. Rabbi Gordon met with the students and answered their questions about Judaism and Jewish life in the United States. One of the students' greatest concerns was how Jews view Germans.

At the end of their visit, Rabbi Gordon took out a Torah belonging to Sukkat Shalom that may have been desecrated on Kristallnacht. He unwound the scroll and showed the boot marks left on a number of its pages.

Rabbi Gordon paused and looked at all the German students circling the open Torah. He told them he thought it was appropriate they were visiting with us and a positive step for world dialogue. Rabbi Gordon thanked the students for allowing him to share the historic Torah scroll with them. I am still moved when I think back to that profound moment.



The cover of my mother's Alien Registration book, in which she documented her movements and activities in England while a refugee from Nazi Germany.

Finding Meaning and Inspiration in the Civil Rights Movement

by Annelise Goldman

What was the connection between Judaism and the U.S. Civil Rights movement? What does that history mean to us as Jews today?

To help answer these important questions, I was one of approximately 20 high school students from local congregations to participate in a four-day Civil Rights trip through Georgia and Alabama. Rabbi Carlie Daniels and her husband, who's also a rabbi, were among the adults who accompanied us.

Before we left on February 2nd, we held a dinner meeting to discuss the goals for our trip: to better understand Civil Rights history by hearing stories of people who actually lived through the movement, and to connect the Civil Rights movement to Judaism, whether through prayers, teachings or something else.

We flew into Atlanta and met up with our tour guides Billy and Josh from Etgar 36, a Jewish organization dedicated to raising the consciousness of Jewish teens by organizing trips across America and teaching the history of social change. When we arrived at

the hotel, we learned about Leo Frank -- a Jewish man who was wrongly convicted of murder and lynched because of anti-Semitism in the South. It reminded us that the story of Jews in America is interwoven with the fight for Civil Rights.

The next day, we took a bus from Atlanta to Montgomery, Alabama. Our first stop was the Rosa Parks Museum. My biggest take-away was that a social revolution does not have to start with a major action. A small act, like refusing to give up a seat on a bus, can lead to a change in

society. I also learned about the exercise of economic power. The Montgomery Bus Boycott was effective because the bus companies were losing money, not because they truly believed in equal rights.

Later, we ate at a Southern restaurant complete with delicious sweet tea, fried okra and black-eyed peas. We visited with Martha, the owner of the restaurant, who told us how she struggled with depression for many years and opened her restaurant with no money. Her immense faith in God was striking to me. The visit was completed with a hug from Martha for each of us.

We then visited the Equal Justice Initiative, home of an amazing lawyer named Brian Stevenson. The organization works to free wrongly convicted death row prisoners and juveniles who have received

piece of original concrete, where everyone gathered before the marches.



Annelise Goldman (left) and Rabbi Carlie Daniels at the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, AL.

Joanne told each of us to pick up a rock from the ground, saying, "Social change is a jigsaw puzzle, and YOU are the most important piece. Think about how YOU can contribute." I took my small rock home. Every time I look at it on my bookshelf, I remember that the fight for justice, freedom and equality is not over, and that I have to continue to be an advocate.

We then crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the site of Bloody Sunday and the first stretch of the Selma-to-Montgomery march. We walked in silence, which was a very moving experience. Afterwards, we learned about Viola Gregg Liuzzo -- a white woman from Michigan who came to Alabama to help transport marchers and was murdered by the KKK.

Next, we drove to Birmingham, Alabama, where we visited the fantastic Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. Afterwards, we met Bishop Calvin Woods, who served as Martin Luther King Jr.'s right-hand man in Birmingham. He taught us songs that the protesters sang, which I loved because the music was so powerful. When he was singing, his emotions and faith really shone through.

Just as with Martha, I was struck by what a great role faith played in Bishop Woods' life and actions. It was difficult for me to comprehend everything he went through. I'm not sure I'll ever fully under-

continued



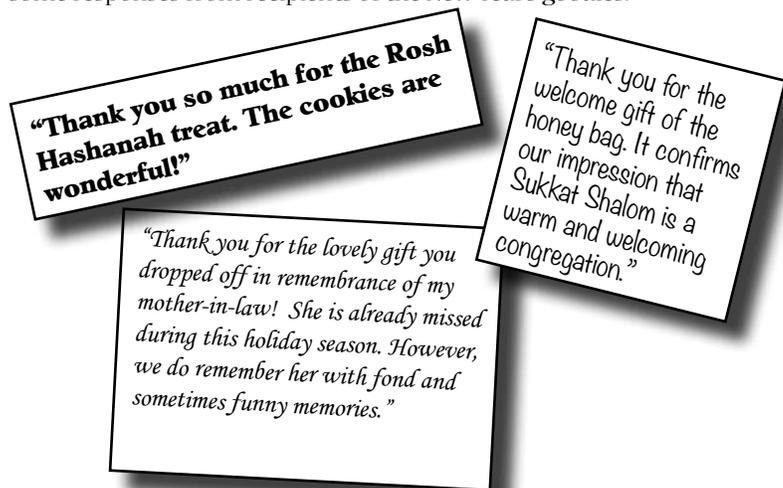
Students from local North Shore congregations with civil rights pioneer Bishop Calvin Woods in Birmingham, AL.

unreasonable life sentences. I loved learning about their work, as the mass incarceration issue is very important to me. That night, we went to Shabbat services at one of the oldest synagogues in the area.

The next day we drove to Selma, Alabama, to meet with Joanne, a woman who participated in the Selma-to-Montgomery marches when she was just 11 years-old. I was completely in awe of her bravery. She took us to the old playground at Brown Chapel AME Church, where the marches began. We stood on the last remaining

Sweet Responses to Rosh Hashanah "Honey Bag" Deliveries

Under the direction of the Hineinu (We Are Here) Committee, 11 volunteer drivers delivered Rosh Hashanah "Honey Bags" to new member families of Sukkat Shalom and those who had recently suffered a loss. Following are some responses from recipients of the New Year's goodies:



The Hineinu Committee is seeking new co-chairs, beginning June 1, 2017. The phrase, "It takes a village" is very much applicable to synagogue life. For our moments of joy and sorrow, loss, illness and loneliness, Sukkat Shalom can be a place that offers celebration and healing.

As a congregation, we can do so much to offer hope, strength and comfort. Please contact Judy Buckman if you are interested in helping to lead this caring community.

Civil Rights Movement, cont'd

stand his experiences, but I am so grateful to have heard his story.

On our last day we were back in Atlanta, where we visited the original Ebenezer Baptist Church – the site of Martin Luther King's grave and memorial. It was a solemn experience visiting the spot that was so instrumental in the life of Dr. King and his family. We finished the day with some amazing gospel music during a service at the newly-built Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Overall, it was an absolutely fantastic trip. I learned about the Civil Rights movement in a way that I never had before. It really came to life for me. I am so grateful to have heard the stories of so many people involved in the movement. I know their stories and their messages will always stay with me.

Women Wage Peace Through Friendship and Understanding

by Marily Shonthal, Anne Ryan and Beth Gomberg-Hirsch

In light of our world's current troubles and divisions, what can we do? This is the moral challenge facing every one of us today. Many people of faith are searching for answers.

Almost a year ago, three of us from Sukkat Shalom attended an informational meeting about a new group that was forming in Chicago. It was a new chapter of Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom (SOSS), a national organization with a small but mighty goal of having women wage peace by creating relationships.

“In our current political climate, toxic with fear of the ‘other,’ waging peace is a vital task.”

Through this model, a small group of Muslim and Jewish women meet in each other's homes every four-to-six weeks and come to know each other's lives, religion and culture. Currently, there are three SOSS

groups across the Chicago region with several more in formation. The goal is to establish 18 groups by year's end.

In our current political climate, toxic with fear of the “other,” waging peace is a vital task. A quote from the 2017 SOSS Unity Vigil says it best:

“We gather together... because ignorance of each other's traditions leads to divisiveness, while knowledge of the other encourages understanding.”

Meeting in a controlled and safe environment, where every woman is guaranteed time to talk and share, seems the best possible way for Muslim and Jewish women to get to know each other. We have found that we have so much in common. Sharing rituals, foods and stories that substantiate our similarity has been enriching.

“We concluded with a silent circle, 500 women strong, walking together as one.”

From the concept of B'Sherit or Kismet to learning about fasting rituals, life-cycle events, studying the sacred language of our texts and sharing family stories, we have slowly bonded and melded into a true sisterhood. As our “founding mother,” Sheryl Olitsky, says, “We have each other's backs.”

This past December, nearly 500 Muslim and Jewish women met in New Jersey for the organization's third annual conference. U.S. Senator Corey Booker was one of our inspiring and energizing speakers. We also participated in workshops that broadened our knowledge and mutual engagement.

We concluded with a silent circle, 500 women strong, walking together as one. This SOSS circle was a powerful statement that we do, indeed, have much more in common than we ever knew, and there is strength in being together.

Musical Notes: Composing a Soundtrack for Sukkat Shalom

by Kenny Lyons, Cantorial Soloist

It is almost exactly one year since I first walked into our building to meet with Judy and Rabbi Gordon. In one month, it will have been a year since I knew that

I was moving to the Chicago area to join this congregation. I cannot possibly convey what a blessing this year has been—to be welcomed so completely by such a wonderful community.



In approaching this anniversary, I have had a chance to reflect on the things that make this congregation so special. You may not be surprised to hear that I consider music to be one of the things that can truly bind a community together. How wonderful, then, to find myself entrenched in a congregation that really values good music!

At Family School T'filah, everyone is always ready to sing out and clap or stomp along to our favorite tunes. It is wonderful to look out over Shabbat services and see everyone singing together in harmony.

This summer, I will be embarking on a new project to bring our community together in the context of song. Over the course of this past year, I have been composing and editing songs that have been inspired by my time here at Sukkat Shalom. Some melodies are born of the sounds of chant; others try to mimic the robust energy of a Family School service. Some seek the plaintive beauty of a more inward-looking prayer found in our Friday night or Saturday morning Shabbat services.

I am lucky to be able to record these songs this summer. I will also be recording a few of our favorite tunes from Shabbat and Family School services by other composers, in the style of performance we are used to here at Sukkat Shalom. It is my hope that, upon hearing the songs I have recorded, you will think of them not as MY music, but as OUR music. After all, you inspired them!

I truly cannot wait to share with you the music that has resulted from our first year together. So keep your eyes (or should I say ears) peeled!

*The members, staff and friends of
Congregation Sukkat Shalom salute
Executive Director Judy Buckman for nearly
20 years of exemplary service to our faith
community. Thank you for your warmth,
friendship and dedication.
May this community that you helped build
always remain your home.*

Our Daughter's Bat Mitzvah in Jerusalem: Deeply Meaningful and Complicated

by Shoshana Buchholz-Miller

My husband Victor and I met in Israel in 1995 on a post-college program where we learned Hebrew and Israel Studies and then worked in Jerusalem. Little did we know that the program, WUJS, was also known for the marriages that it led to. WUJS exists no longer, but Victor and I are among a number of happy couples for which it was responsible.

Our year in Israel fostered in us a connection to that country, its history and

politics. Although I am sometimes ambivalent about my relationship with Israel, particularly as it relates to its ongoing

conflict with the Palestinians, it was a natural place for us to celebrate our oldest daughter Annabel's Bat Mitzvah. This would be our children's first trip to Israel and Victor's first visit since we left more than 20 years ago.

Having celebrated my own Bat Mitzvah in Israel 30 years ago, I knew that it would be a great adventure for our family. We spent a week traveling around the country – hiking Masada, floating in the Dead Sea, learning about the countless

rulers who made their mark on Jerusalem and modern Israel's struggle for independence. But the highlight was the deeply meaningful Bat Mitzvah service we held at the Egalitarian Wall in Jerusalem – part of the Western Wall included in an archeological park where men and women can pray together.

Annabel skillfully led an afternoon service at which she read a Torah portion about the Temple period, when Jews

would bring offerings for sacrifice. There was something incredibly beautiful and resonant in her reading the ancient words

of the Torah, describing an activity that occurred 2,000 years ago steps from where we were standing -- undertaken by people with whom we have a bond that spans millennia.

Our small service included 14 people, all gathered around the Torah, having the privilege of watching as Annabel moved the pointer from word to word on the scroll. The otherworldly nature of the service was underscored not only by the birds chirping throughout, but by the

Muslim call to prayer that was issued from the Al-Aqsa Mosque right above us.

I must admit this visit to Israel reinforced some of my feelings of ambivalence. I was troubled by the fortified Orthodox hold on religion in the country, evident at the better-known part of the Western Wall and in other stops throughout the visit. And while I had hoped for signs of a resolution with the Palestinians, it was disturbing to see how entrenched Jewish settlements on the West Bank have become and how large chunks of that land have been made to feel like a permanent part of Israel.

But the visit also reinforced my connection to Israel – the beauty of the land, the link to its history and to members of our family living there, regardless of their religious or political beliefs. I believe the visit also instilled in our children a curiosity and connection to this special place. Without this visit, I don't know that I would have heard them singing *David Melech Yisrael* or other Hebrew songs as we played in the pool, or discussing with interest the difference between the First and Second Temple periods. As with many meaningful things in life, Israel is complicated -- but so very special.

A Sweet Year of Learning and Growing Together

by Rabbi Carlie Daniels, Director of Lifelong Learning

As I drove past the Hungarian Market in Skokie recently, I noticed the boxes of matzah stacked high in the window -- a reminder that Passover is quickly approaching. It's hard to believe that 7 months have passed since the High Holy Days and the start of the Jewish year. What's even more unbelievable is that the school year is coming to an end and we are already planning for next year!

Our families have learned and experienced so much this year. Allow me to share a few highlights:

Tzedakah: *Tzedakah* ("charitable giving") and *tikkun olam* ("repair of the world") are important values that we teach and practice throughout the school year. During each



Family School session, we feature one organization and invite a representative to speak to our community about its mission. Then we donate all of the tzedakah money collected that morning to that specific group. This year, we learned about 12 local and national non-profit organizations.

In addition, our families participated in Tikkun Olam Day, volunteered at local institutions such as Bernie's Book Bank and CJE Senior Life, and made over 150 hygiene bags for the Night Ministry. Our 2nd, 7th and 8th grade classes participated in other projects such as Maot Chitim and Project Lionel. Overall, our parents and students learned about many non-profit organizations and participated in important, hands-on *tikkun olam* projects.

community gathered together for prayer, learning and dinner.

In the weeks leading up to Family School Shabbat, parents were invited into their child's classroom to study Shabbat together. Each class either created special Shabbat-themed art projects or studied the Torah portion for that week, and everyone showcased their offerings during the Shabbat. Next year, we will continue to create fun and meaningful *t'filot* with our Family School community.

As we celebrate Passover, we are reminded of the four children who tradition tells us are present at the *seder*: the wise one, the wicked one, the simple one and the one who does not know how to ask. During the Passover seder, we recognize these different types of learners and acknowledge our responsibility to meet each child at their level of understanding.

I believe this Passover teaching should guide all that we do in Family School. Our approach is multifaceted, so that it appeals to students with diverse interests and learning needs. In this way, we will continue to provide an opportunity for the entire community to learn and grow together.

T'filah: Our regular morning *t'filah* ("prayer service") is another important aspect of Family School. Kenny Lyons, Alan Goodis and the rabbis lead our community in joyful song, share thematic stories and offer time for reflection. In February, we held our first Friday evening Family School Shabbat, when the entire

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SUKKAT SHALOM

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Sukkat Shalom – By the Numbers

Tzedakah raised at Family School to date:.....\$3,541

Number of organizations receiving contributions:.....10

- IsraAid USA
- Family Promise
- American Jewish World Service
- Curt's Café
- Bernie's Book Bank
- Jewish Council on Urban Affairs
- Night Ministry
- Community Activism Law Alliance
- Evanston Scholars
- James B. Moran Center

Amount of average contribution:.....\$354.10