



PSJC Newsletter

Fall 2017 – 5777/5778

From Rabbi Carie Carter



For me, and for so many of us, it is with great relief that we allow the year 5777 to pass into history. It was an incredibly challenging year for us as a community, as a people, as a nation, and as a world.

5777 was a year when we as a nation felt the intense anger, frustration and even hate that comes as we recognize that which divides us. It has become a year of uncertainty as we learn that the assumptions which have guided us until now are no longer reliable predictors of the future.

5777 was year in which we witnessed divisiveness and a lack of compassion and understanding among the Jewish people as a whole—as some of us were treated as far less than equal or even as irrelevant in the eyes of others.

5777 was a year when we heard words of hate and acts of violence, antisemitism, racism and xenophobia that we hoped would never again be expressed on these shores. . .or anywhere across the globe.

These last few weeks of 5777 saw the wild ravages of nature take a huge toll on so many we know and love, through hurricanes, flooding, earthquake and fire.

But even in the midst of this challenging year that has finally drawn to a close, we have seen moments of great goodness and generosity, like the people who came out in Houston with their private boats, rescuing neighbors trapped on their rooftops, or the storeowner who opened his furniture store to allow those who had been flooded from their homes to have a dry bed to sleep on.

These acts of generosity, of coming together to simply help one another, is at the heart of what it means to be

human and to be a part of a community. On a smaller scale, I want to make sure you know that we are joining with people around the States, sending gift cards to those whose homes were destroyed, as they struggle to clean and prepare to re-enter their flood-damaged homes. We will continue to collect these throughout the Days of Awe. Please leave them outside of Aileen's office, and we will make sure they are distributed to people who need them in Houston and Florida. It will make life just a little bit easier for people who have had their lives turned upside down.

We, as a city, know something about having our lives turned upside down in a moment. I am writing this on September 11, 2017, and I remember vividly the shock and daze and fear of the days after the attack of 9/11. But I also remember the amazing kindness and unity that was seen in New York and across the country on September 12th. It was a day of solidarity and connection in the midst of a world gone mad—a day that continues to inspire me to this day.

It was a day that restored my hope that no matter what the world holds for us, even in the face of great devastation from the natural world or at the hands of our fellow human beings, we can indeed TURN towards one another and face the future with a sense of connection, mutual responsibility, and even the first sparks of hope.

It was a day that reminded me that in our everyday lives, through our actions of mutual love and support, we have it within us to create a life of goodness and community – not of hatred nor of violence – for us and for all we encounter.

As we come together during these Days of Awe, this season of Turning and Return, of the Renewal of the World, may we continue to find the courage and the generosity within us to see across differences, and open our hands to those in need. For when we do this,

(Continued on next page)



we begin to create the world of connection and mutual support that we envision for ourselves and for all who come after us.

And in this way, perhaps we can bring into reality the words of the *Mizrachi Piyut Ashot Ketanah* (liturgical poem of the Little Sister): “Let the year and its curses be over...Let the year [5778] and its blessings begin!”

From Ellen Brickman, Board President



Over the past few months, PSJC members, guests, and random others have told me how much they like the exposed brick in the balcony, and even the visual of the walls over the arched windows, with half the wall retaining its normal paint job, and half stripped to reveal the brick wall underneath. Some have suggested we keep it exactly as is; others think we should expose the whole north wall brick face.

Our “new look” comes from a series of probes done by our engineers to determine just how deep the cracking runs on the outside wall (answer: very) and whether it has penetrated all three layers of brick to go straight through to the inside (answer: yes). While the exposed brick regularly reminds me of The Great Headache that is our building repair project, it also strikes me as an apt metaphor for one of the most important lessons of my term as president: There is so much unrecognized beauty, not just in our building but in our community. No matter how well I thought I knew PSJC, there is much that I hadn’t seen – not just looked at, but really seen – until, as president, I had the opportunity to look more deeply beneath the surface.

I think some of that had to do with our (okay, my) tendency to stay in our own bubbles, cozy in our own silos. In my several decades at PSJC, I’ve been a “Shabbat regular,” a mini-minyan parent and then a Junior Congregation and Hebrew School parent. Much of my time was spent with the people in my own cohort, my own silo. Now, one of my greatest joys is wandering around the building on Shabbat morning, joining in with *Shabbat Kulanu*, the all-ages family-friendly musical Shabbat service, popping into Tot Shabbat, and sharing experiences with *Sha’arei*

Mitzvah families, those preparing for the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* experience. Everywhere, there is beauty that I missed when I only stayed upstairs. Beyond the sheer wonder of seeing our next generation engaged in prayer, programming and joyous (and occasionally rowdy) learning, there are new people to meet and new ideas to share. There is new energy that revitalizes me when my own is flagging.

And when I look beyond our programs and activities and get to know the volunteers who run them, I’ve met the unsung heroes of PSJC -- the people who have spent hundreds of hours this year working on our Capital Campaign, or managing the building project by coordinating with our hired engineers and contractors. Some have long been involved in other projects at the shul while others have stepped up for the first time – but stepped up in the most incredible way. This is the beauty of our community that runs just below our surface, if we know where and when and how to look.

Perhaps most valuable of all for me, I’ve been learning how to look below the surface of people whose perspectives differ from mine, and to see the beauty of their passion for PSJC and for making it the shul of their dreams and their visions, even if those dreams and visions look a little different than mine. Even where there is surface tension, when we disagree with each other or find each other challenging, I am reminded to look beyond the veneer, beyond that first layer of paint, to find stores of beauty in the exposed brick and in the genuine good intentions that we share.

May this be a year in which we all experience and appreciate the beauty of our community, and a year of health, peace and happiness for all. *Shana Tova!*

<p>The PSJC Newsletter was published for Fall, 2017/5778 by Park Slope Jewish Center (PSJC)</p>	
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Rabbi	Carie Carter
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Park Slope Jewish Center Urgently Needs Your Help!

The Park Slope Jewish Center's historic building is facing a serious crisis. Whether you are a current member of the congregation, a former member, or someone who cares about Jewish life and cultural heritage -- **we urgently need your help!** Our building's walls have been damaged by water infiltration and exposure to the elements. **They must be repaired now to preserve the integrity of the building, and this work will cost \$750,000.**

We've been busy raising funds and this is what's available so far:

- \$171,000 in donations received (of \$233,000 pledged) from 86 PSJC Donor Families - **29%** of the congregation.
- \$100,000 from the PSJC Building Reserve Fund.
- *Pending* \$25,000 - 50,000 Jewish Heritage Grant from NY Landmarks Conservancy. We will be notified in October whether we've been awarded the grant.

Funds that will allow us to do the work now, but must be repaid:

- \$100,000 short-term interest free loan from Hebrew Free Loan Society.
- \$450,000 line of credit from Capital One - in process. The community voted to approve this in early September.

Challenge Match! We are about to announce an exciting time-limited opportunity to help raise the funds that we so desperately need with a **challenge match!** A small number of generous community members have donated funds (\$75,000+) that will match every dollar raised between **October 17th & October 31st**. This means that your donation will double the funds we receive during that period. Please look for more details after the High Holy Days. We need to hear from the 70% of the community that has not yet given to the campaign! We hope that all will participate generously in this exciting challenge.

This building is our home. PSJC has built a special community within these historic masonry walls, one infused with a love of Jewish life and spirituality. PSJC is home to an extended family of Jews who learn, daven, and celebrate together, rely on one another for comfort and inspiration and regularly engage beyond these walls with *Tikkun Olam* (work to repair the world). We are a community in the truest sense of the word. Membership Dues and Annual *Kol Nidre* contributions are critical for essential day-to-day operations and all of the programs we provide throughout the year and we ask you to be as generous as you can in your annual giving. But we need the community to make a special effort to respond to our building crisis. **Your donation to this Capital Campaign will go directly to preserving our beautiful building.** Your Capital Campaign donation will ensure that we have a physical space where we may continue to provide so much for so many.

With your help, our beautiful historic synagogue will continue to stand strong and house our community for generations to come. L'Dor VaDor.



Keep Park Slope Jewish Center Standing Strong!



From Aileen Heiman, Director of Youth Education and Family Programming



We're off to an exciting start at PSJC Hebrew School this year! With almost 130 students enrolled, from pre-K through 9th grade, our classrooms are filled with the buzz of Jewish learning

four days a week! Our faculty is comprised of diverse educators, passionate about Jewish education, as well as following other paths in their personal lives, such as being music educators, artists, writers, musicians, students, teachers, and more. Each of these teachers brings a personal lens to our curriculum, helping guide our students in appreciating the depth of what Jewish identity has to offer them.

Our *Gesher* program for 8th – 10th grade is entering its second year with 18 students. This year, I will be teaching the class, focusing on what we call a “Jewish values matrix,” integrating these values with Jewish text, news articles, and analysis of social responsibility. We will explore what Judaism has to say about activism in our world, and as the year progresses, the students will guide the learning as we delve into the topics that they are passionate about. Students will learn how to engage in debate and discussion and develop a vocabulary for sharing their personal beliefs on topics.

We love to have visitors at Hebrew School, so if you have something to share with our students or would like to schedule an opportunity to visit a class, please just ask. Plus, join the Hebrew School on December 12th and 13th to light the *Chanukkah* candles and sing together, and mark your calendars now for February 4th, when we hope the community will join us for the annual *Tzedakah* Fair.

Beyond Hebrew School, there is also PSJC Family Programming! We offer a range of programs on the calendar for this year! Even before the new year begins, we have “It’s *Rosh Hashanah*,” a music and story class in the park, followed by our annual High Holy Day services in the tent, and then the *sukkah* decorating party on October 1st. We’re excited that *Shabbat Kulanu* and *Kabbalat Shabbat Kulanu* will be back this year, for more opportunities for families to

join with the whole PSJC community to sing and celebrate *Shabbat*. From *havdallah* movie nights to celebrating *Tu Bishvat* at Whole Foods to painting *seder* plates, there will be something for everyone.



Scenes from the first day of Hebrew School, 2017

Welcoming New Staff to PSJC

ברכות הבאות (*B'ruchot habaot* - welcome) to Elana Alyon, new Director of Administration, and Rabbinic Intern, Leora Kling Perkins.



Elana Alyon comes to us from Central Synagogue, where most recently she was Adult Engagement Department Coordinator, having previously worked for a number of Jewish organizations and synagogues. Elana attended *Yeshiva* of Flatbush until her family moved to New Jersey, and graduated from Long Island University, where she majored in criminal law. Elana lives in Manhattan and is happy to commute since she is an avid reader. She has always owned dogs, and her current pet is a rescue dog named Chief Brody (after the *Jaws* character!). A Yankee fan (blame her brothers!), she gets away to her family house on Candlewood Lake as often as possible.

Elana's motto is משנה מקום משנה מזל (*meshane makom meshane mazal* - change your place, change your luck), and she is already seeing this bear out in



the sense of community and caring that she has experienced at PSJC, contrasting with the larger and more impersonal places she worked before. Elana finds PSJC membership and staff, “even nicer than I had been told to expect,” with an “unusual level of thoughtfulness.” She looks forward to getting to know the PSJC community better, and is committed to helping us achieve our aspirations to embrace and meet the needs of all of our community.



Pursuing her passion for Jewish community, Leora Kling Perkins, a 4th year rabbinical student at JTS, is delighted to be PSJC's new rabbinic intern. Prior to enrolling at JTS, Leora spent many years working as both a lay-leader and a professional with her local Jewish community organizations. After graduating from Brandeis University, she studied at the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem and, upon her return to the Boston area, served as a fellow with JOIN For Justice, a Jewish organizing fellowship. Prior to enrolling at JTS, she spent three years working at the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston, training and connecting nearly 400 tutors each year to public school students in the Boston area. Two years ago, during her JTS year in Israel, she was a Rabbinical Student Fellow in Israel for *T'ruah: A Rabbinic Call for Human Rights*. She worked for two summers at Ramah in the Rockies as *Rosh Chugim* (Activities Director), and spent last summer completing a unit of CPE (clinical pastoral education) through JTS at MJHS Hospice in the Bronx. Leora enjoys listening to podcasts, hiking, and cooking local vegetarian food. She lives in Washington Heights with her spouse, Matthew.

Return of the Shinshinim

In addition to new staff, PSJC gets to welcome new *Shinshinim* to our community. *Shinshinim* are Israeli teens who opt to do a year of community service between finishing high school and entering the army. *Shinshinim* who work internationally are the highly select “*crème de la crème*” of the many Israeli applicants to the program. PSJC is fortunate to welcome two young women (*Shinshinit*) this year, Lihi Ben Ari and Alona Danilof. We look forward to getting to know Lihi and Alona as they become part of our

community and work with children, teens and college students to deepen understanding of the beauty, challenges and complexity of contemporary life in Israel. Here is a brief intro to Lihi and Alona:



Lihi is 18 years old and lives in *Rosh Ha'ayin*, a beautiful small town in the center of Israel. Lihi has been in the Israeli Scouts since she was in 5th grade, has been an instructor of 5th and 8th grade girls, and most recently a scout director, responsible for all the leaders in her group. In 2016 Lihi took part in the Israeli Scouts friendship caravan delegation to the USA, where she and her friends performed in many Jewish communities all over America. For many years Lihi has participated in the Maccabi *Tel Aviv* running athletic team, specializing in running two to five kilometers. Her high school majors were pre-med and biology. Lihi is very excited to be a *Shinshin* and looking forward to meeting and getting to know the community.

Alona is 18 and hails from Tiberias in the north of Israel, near the Sea of Galilee. A biology and social sciences major in high school, she acted and danced in the official performance group of her city, and also served as a counselor to the youth acting group. Alona had also been a counselor in an Israeli movement called “Krembo Kings.” Alona is more than excited to meet the community in Brooklyn, create personal connections and to share a sense of what Israel is for her.



Maintaining our Commitment to Inclusion

The PSJC Inclusion Committee continues to assist those within our community in need of accommodations or customized support. For the High Holy Days and throughout the year, please reach out to inclusion@psjc.org if you have unmet inclusion needs or questions about reserved seating, using the chair lift, accessing large-print materials, requesting a sign-language interpreter, or any other inclusion issues. If you are interested in becoming a member of our inclusion team to be on call to help as needs arise, please email inclusion@psjc.org to let us know.



Rodfei Tzedek Committee

The PSJC Social Justice Working Group has been focusing on issues of race in our community and issues related to immigrants and refugees. As a member of the Brooklyn Synagogue Coalition for Refugees, PSJC members have participated in events around the city including the Community Vigil to Commemorate SS St Louis in early June 6 (organized by HIAS) and recent rallies in support of DACA sponsored by the NY Immigration Coalition. In addition members have actively helped to support the settlement of refugee families and asylum seekers in the area.

If you would like to learn about opportunities to help with these issues, please call the PSJC office and ask to join the Rodfei Tzedek email list.

-Rachel Danzing

More for Teens

We have some great *Kadima* and teen programs coming up, led by Tsivya Miller, now in her second year as the Youth Group advisor for PSJC. *Kadima* programs are for 6th-8th graders and USY/teen programs are for 8th-12th graders. We will have our first *Kadima* program on Sunday September 17th from 12:30 pm-2:00 pm, and we're going to get ice cream at Ample Hills! Upcoming programs include tie dying challah covers on October 15th from 12:30 pm-2:00 pm, and a program at *Masbia* soup kitchen November 12th, from 12:30 pm-3:30 pm.

Upcoming teen programs include a Brooklyn Sukkot Sleepover/Shul-In with several other Brooklyn Shuls on Sunday October 8th - Monday October 9th at PSJC starting at 7:30 pm. Our first teen Shabbat dinner is October 20th, Please reach out to Lisa Albin at lisa.albin@verizon.net to join the Youth and Teen Programming Committee, where we develop Stay tuned for details and RSVP information, and ideas, and determine how we can best engage and meet the needs of our tweens and teens.



PSJC Story Project 2.0

The PSJC Story Project is back! We're gathering stories of how community members made their way to PSJC for a web and print project. We are seeking stories from members and friends, old and new, people on the periphery of the community and people deeply embedded. Stories from teens and young adults warmly welcomed! Our goal is to streamline the story-gathering process: for a set of writing "prompts" to inspire your reflections, drop a note to PSJCstories@gmail.com -- or send us your essay, of 1500 words or less, for review. We'll have editing workshops this winter, and a story slam/open mic event in the springtime. Want to get involved? If you are a **web developer** or **website builder**, please be in touch: We seek someone nimble and efficient to help us build a simple website and create a template for story submissions.



MLK Day of Service

Save-the-Date: MLK Day of Service, January 14, 2018, 11 am-2 pm!! For the sixth year running, PSJC invites EVERYONE to roll up their sleeves and work to benefit people within and beyond our community, at the annual MLK Day of Service. With activities for age three to 103, we'll cook up dozens of meals for our shul freezer – supporting members in need – and for a local shelter; make hundreds of PB&J sandwiches and baggies of gorp; prep thousands of our signature "soup kits" for the local food bank CHIPS; gather donations of gently-used clothing; knit caps and a community blanket for donation; make snack kits for families who take shelter at the Brooklyn Family Justice Center; gather gently-used kids' books for Brooklyn Legal Aid; participate in a social-action project (DACA support, immigrant rights), and more.



MLK planners cordially welcome new hands on this project: **We are actively seeking new leaders** who can take up part (or all) of this work and carry it forward. And we can tell you how we've done it, so far, so no one has to reinvent the wheel – only make it better! For info and details, contact Helen Zelon, hzelon@gmail.com.

Community-Building at PSJC: Come Talk, Work, Schmooze, Dance, Play and Nosh

With the support of the PSJC Board and the *Etz Chaim* working group, a clutch of eager community-builders here at PSJC has developed a calendar of “fun-raising” events designed to create easy, no-stress opportunities to participate in community life. Come to one event, come to them all: All are welcome and warmly encouraged to attend.

Social/social-action events:

- BBQ, October 15th
- PSJC Dance Party, December 2nd
- MLK Day of Service, January 14th, 11 am - 2 pm
- Purim Carnival and BBQ, March 4th
- Back-to-the-Garden Party, May 6th

We've also planned some “community conversations,” on subjects ranging from PSJC culture, programming, ritual life and more. These, are timed to offer the greatest opportunity to the most people.

Community Conversations:

- Weds October 18th, 7:30 pm
- Sun December 10th, 3 pm
- Weds February 7th, 7:30 pm
- Sun April 15th, 1 pm

Fall and Winter PSJC Book Discussions

Join PSJC members for monthly book discussions after Shabbat Services. The Brooklyn Public Library usually has multiple copies of the books we read, and many are available as e-books and audiobook editions. Inexpensive copies also may be available from on-line vendors. Future highlights include:

On Nov 11th, PSJCe and literature professor David Mikics will lead a discussion about Florence Gordon by Brian Morton. The title character is a 75 year old Jewish-American Women's Studies professor who becomes an overnight celebrity when her latest book unexpectedly becomes a best seller; unfortunately she doesn't get to enjoy her new fame for long as the lives of her family members begin to unravel.



On Jan 13, 2018 PSJCe, clinical psychologist, and professor Warren Spielberg and David Cooper will co-lead a discussion about Two She-B Bears (Shetayim Dubim) by Meir Shalev, a multi-generational historical novel set in a rural Israeli village. -David Cooper



Knitting Together Community – Literally!

I recently saw a poster on Pinterest that read, “Knitting, the original fidget spinner.” The only difference is that with knitting (and other handicrafts) you not only relax but also create something useful, warm and beautiful. Knitting together in a group is even more satisfying -- you can make new friends, enjoy companionship, and have the satisfaction of working together on a beautiful new creation.

PSJC's knitting group, *S'rigah B'Sifriyah*, meets on the first Monday of the month in the lobby of the Brooklyn Central Library (except during the summer months). Our group project is making a blanket based on a template from Warm Up America, composed of knitted/ crocheted squares. To date, our blankets have been given to the Bowery Mission and the Linus Project.



When PSJC's annual MLK Day comes around, everyone is invited to crochet the squares together to create the blanket. It is especially heartwarming to watch everybody working together, as parents teach children, and siblings help siblings.

Everyone is welcome to join us at our next meeting on Monday, October 2nd at the Brooklyn Central Library (meet in the lobby at 7:30 pm). You can knit/crochet a square, or bring any item that you are working on. Worried you don't know how to knit or that you haven't picked up those needles in a while? No problem! There are friends here to help you. Something special happens when individuals come together to create in harmony. Come to knit, stay for the camaraderie. For more information email marjorie.rothenberg@gmail.com.

- Marjorie Rothenberg

Membership Committee Update

PSJC's Membership Committee is excited to welcome current members back after the summer hiatus as well as new families to our community! Here is an overview of some of our plans for the coming year:

High Holy Days We'll reprise Operation Honeycake on *Rosh Hashana*. If you're not sure what this is, don't miss Rabbi Carie's D'var Torah on the first day of *Rosh Hashana*.

High Holy Day tickets double as name tags, so don't forget to wear yours and take the opportunity to meet someone new during these Days of Awe. It's so nice to be able to greet each other by name!

BBQ On Sunday, October 15th, after all the holidays end, reconnect with old friends and meet new ones. Invite potential new members too! Check psjc.org for details. Sign up early for discounted prices.

Shabbat Schmooze Hosted monthly in the homes of members of our community after *Shabbat* services and *kiddush*, these vegetarian/dairy pot-luck lunches are open to the entire community and visitors. They are a wonderful opportunity to get to know other PSJC members in a warm, casual and social environment. Contact Gavrielle Levine at ShabbatSchmooze@psjc.org if you live walking

distance from PSJC and would like to host a Schmooze.

Our mission is to welcome new members and ensure that our programs meet the needs and expectations of all our existing members. Please reach out to us with your ideas to attract new members and if there are membership/outreach programs you would like to help make happen at PSJC. Have an idea for a fun program and want to run with it? Talk to us! Are you welcoming and friendly? Please join our team!

- Sharon Tepper and Ruth Kaufman, co-chairs

Avodah Update

The High Holy Days are a very interesting time for the Avodah Committee. In some ways, it's our busiest time, but in others, it is easy. After all, *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* don't change much from year to year; even though we spend a lot of time finding people to bring their *kavanah* forward as *daveners*, *leyners*, readers, and even coordinators, we know what we're looking for. And yet the holidays feel different every year, and we're always trying to find new ways to make them meaningful. As you settle into the familiar this year, Avodah also challenges you to look for what's different, to experience whatever comes your way in the spirit of renewal that the Holy Days bring.

One of the differences you'll be seeing after the holidays is our new Transliteration book. Spearheaded by Elizabeth Schnur from conception to printing, this volume has the Hebrew and English texts along with the transliteration, includes all the weekday, Shabbat, and Holiday services, is keyed to the page numbers of *Sim Shalom*, and offers a far more user-friendly experience than the old handout. I think all members of the congregation, no matter how fluent their Hebrew, will find this a vital addition to our davening, and I hope everyone will pick it up and see how much it offers. I would like to thank Rabbi Carie and Elizabeth and their team of proofreaders for all their hard work; I can't wait for everyone to see it and enjoy it.

May this New Year bring you the comfort of familiarity and the challenge of difference. *L'Shanah Tovah Tikatevu*.

- Angela Weisl, Chair, Avodah Committee

Our *Etz Chaim* Tree Grows in Brooklyn



PSJC has engaged in a visioning process for much of the past year, looking at issues of leadership, community, financial sustainability, and transparency. We named this initiative “*Etz Chaim*” (tree of life) to

reflect not only the deep roots of our community, but also the broad living canopy we create and nurture. The process included three open community conversations, with over 70 participants; meetings with specific individuals and groups, including the Hebrew School committee and families, teens, staff, and former presidents; and a digital survey with over 150 responses.

The *Etz Chaim* team shared recommendations with the community in an open meeting, addressing eight main categories: organizational culture, lay leadership, staff and clergy, fiscal sustainability, programming, communications/marketing, in-reach/outreach, services and ritual.

One unifying recommendation “roots” our collective effort: As a community, we must commit ourselves to “row in one direction” – whenever possible, to consider the greater good alongside individual concerns. It’s a little like family life: You may not love every person’s actions all the time, but we’re in this life together, as a community.

The working group identified three emergent themes which inform our goals for the future:

Theme 1: Commit more deeply to embracing and celebrating the PSJC community’s diversity as a strength. This reflects our community’s essential vitality, security and capacity for tolerance.

Theme 2: As a community, make an intentional, conscious effort to evolve from a “start-up” culture to one that is more “grown up,” inclusive of diversity in every form, and capable of more nimble responses to the needs and desires of the community.

Theme 3: Contribute to the vibrancy of the 21st century Brooklyn Jewish community, as an increasingly active player in the broader world that our community inhabits.

This past July, the PSJC Board held an *Etz Chaim* retreat with Rabbi Carter, members of the *Etz Chaim* team, and the team’s coach, Lianna Levine Reisner. The group developed an action plan for next steps in three of the areas addressed by the visioning

process, and established working groups to explore the following three action areas:

1. Community-building -- enhance in-reach to new and existing members:

- Help established and new members feel connected and nurtured, reduce attrition, and bring people on the periphery closer to the core.
- Create new member protocols, calendar of community meetings and low-bar social/social action events; build engagement by identifying hosts/congregants to own various tasks, reviewing member skills in database, assessing data tracking in Shulcloud, and tapping new retirees for volunteer roles.

2. Develop structure for roles and processes:

- Make a list of structures that need to be developed: clarification of roles/job descriptions for staff and board, committees, processes.
- Working with staff and lay members, create written manuals with roles and procedures for various roles, committees, events, and areas, as well as policy recommendations.
- Demonstrate how different pieces fit into the whole and work together.

3. Analyze finances and model future scenarios:

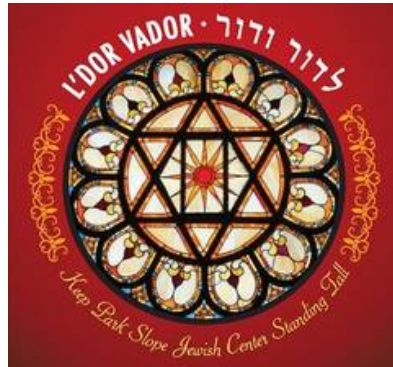
- Create different scenarios of what a more sustainable budget would look like, looking at both income and expense sides.
- Explore strategies toward income generation that could sustain the future we want, such as growing the membership, enhancing fundraising efforts, maximizing the value of PSJC’s assets.
- Offer options to the Board for making longer-term financial choices.
- **Goal:** Offer some initial models by November, with more substantial information available by the annual meeting in January.

This is an open, long-term project that will benefit from extensive community participation. Please feel free to join any of the three working groups: contact Florence Hutner (Florence.hutner@gmail.com) or Helen Zelon (hzelon@gmail.com) to learn more. And if your passions are not addressed by these three areas, never fear – we plan to take up other *Etz Chaim* recommendations once we’ve made sufficient progress in these first areas.

- *Florence Hutner, reporting for the Etz Chaim Working Group (Florence Hutner, Josh Klainberg, Rachel Levine, Andres Spokoyny, Helen Zelon)*



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