



Celebrating Leadership – OKC Presidents Rise Ain and Lizbeth Waggoner



Rise Ain (Outgoing President)

I have been a member of Ohr Kodesh Congregation since 2006. About a year after joining, I began my journey of volunteer involvement by learning how to read Torah with Cantor Emeritus Ed Gerber. Ever the hands-on volunteer, I joined the CE21 Task Force soon after, chaired by Susan Finkelstein and Kim Price, and the rest is history.

I have been able to use the skills I learned from many years of volunteering and leadership positions at the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and affiliated community agencies (Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, Capital Camps, Board of Jewish Education, Bender Jewish Community Center, Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse, among others) as a fundraiser and a manager of programming and visionary community efforts. In 1989, the “Jewish” part of my involvement was greatly increased when I was selected as one of the 20 members of the inaugural class of the Wexner Heritage Foundation 2-year study program. Since then, my commitment has been greatly enhanced by my love of learning of Jewish text and ritual. I have been privileged to participate in many Ohr Kodesh

learning opportunities, including daily minyan, and to attend programs at Pardes and the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem.

In addition to being a board member and officer since 2011, my Ohr Kodesh volunteer positions and commitments have included, but have not been limited to, membership on the CE21 Task Force, first chair of Rosh Chodesh programming, initiator of community-wide Learners’ Lunches, building on Pledge 25 as chair of Pledge 30 where members continued to learn, do acts of loving kindness and tzedakah for

30 minutes each week, co-chair of the 2017 70th anniversary celebration, membership on the Budget Committee, RAC, and Chevra Kadisha, co-chair of Development Committee, member of the Education Task Force, member of the EnVision OKC effort, and ex officio status on the Rabbinic Search Committee. One of the highlights of my involvement has been participation in our daily morning and evening minyanim, particularly on zoom, during the height of pandemic.

I am ever grateful for being the first OKC president to work with Rabbi Corey Helfand. I have appreciated the warmth and meaningful guidance that he has offered throughout these past two years. I am hopeful that our close relationship was helpful to him and to the Congregation in navigating the transition, especially during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Relationship-building and relationships, themselves, have been critical to my involvement in Ohr Kodesh as a member, leader, and President. I cherish these relationships and look forward to creating and building more with each of you.

I am looking forward to the future. As my time as President was coming to an end and we started counting *up* for the Omer, I decided that I would also count up, not down. I am looking forward to using my legal skills (professionally, I have been trained as both an educator and as an attorney) to serve victims of domestic abuse as a volunteer with DC Volunteer Lawyers Project, to Co-Chair the Development Committee, and, most important, to spend more time with my family.

Mazel Tov to all of those recognized today! Thank you for making Ohr Kodesh the vibrant synagogue that it is! **KOL HAKOVOD!**



Lizbeth Waggoner (Incoming President)

Liz is originally from New Jersey, and moved to the Washington, DC area in the mid-1990s. Liz’s first career was in business development for a public relations firm. After that, she transitioned to personal financial consulting and financial literacy. She currently works in financial education and volunteer engagement at Junior Achievement of Greater Washington, recruiting corporate partners for in support of the financial literacy programs JA provides to students across the DMV, including here in Montgomery County.

Liz has always volunteered in support of the causes she loves. Starting in college, Liz was involved in leadership at Hillel at the University of Virginia. Organizations in the DC area for which she has volunteered include the Washington, DC Film Society, the DC International Film Festival, the Washington DC Jewish Film Festival, and, of course, Ohr

Kodesh.

Liz and David, and their sons Marc, Andrew and Eric, have enjoyed being a part of the OKC community since 2005.