

## NESSA LIBEN

### Candidate for Director

#### How have you been involved in the shul past and present?

- Chesed Committee Co-Chair – 4+ years
- Tot Shabbat Co-Coordinator – 3+ years
- Shul Dinner – Co-Chaired for two years, and then served as liaison to honoree couples for three years
- Sisterhood – Past member for two years

#### How will you be an asset for the Board?

Having grown up in Teaneck, I really appreciate the unique niche our shul fills as a warm and down-to-earth congregation that celebrates diversity as well as builds camaraderie and community.

Professionally, I'm the Chief of Advancement at a Jewish nonprofit organization where I direct a fundraising and marketing team. As a Board member, I'd be pleased to bring my experience to the shul to help enhance our fundraising efforts. As the economy and philanthropic landscape evolve, it's an opportunity to take stock of our shul's priorities and ensure we have the resources to support them.

As a small shul, we rely heavily on our members to be active and engaged participants. Three years ago, Heather Kagedan, my husband Noah, and I created a monthly Tot Shabbat program to offer time and space for parents with young kids to gather on Shabbos mornings. Similarly, four years ago, Chana Schneck and I built upon the inspiring chesed already happening in our community to create a series of annual programs, including nursing home visits, toy drives, and clothing packing activities.

Last, I think it's vital for our shul to be viewed positively in our local community. In the wake of the rise of anti-Semitism last year, Noah and I helped coordinate a New Year's Project focused on "Getting to Know Our Neighbors." With members of the shul, we assembled gift baskets and hand-written notes that we delivered to neighbors surrounding the shul. This year, we're exploring ways to do a similar project that spreads light in dark times in a Covid-safe way.

As a Board member, I'd love to continue bringing my creative thinking to the Shaare Tefillah community so that we can expand our programming for families and adults of all ages in meaningful ways.

#### What challenges do you see ahead for the shul and how will you help face them?

The considerable growth of our shul presents new challenges in helping everyone feel welcome and valuable, especially while we remain socially distanced during Covid. In order to build relationships between older and newer families, we should continue building on the strong work the shul is already doing to weave the community together. While Covid continues, programs can include virtual events or game nights for adults, pairing new families with veteran families to serve as their "buddies," and, when Covid, G-d willing, abates, more in-person activities in shul.

Also, as our shul continues to grow, space is an issue we need to address. We need to explore creative solutions to enable us to continue accepting new families while ensuring all current families feel safe and welcomed in our physical space.



The Shaare Tefillah community has been such a warm and vibrant presence in my family's life since the day we moved to the neighborhood. I'd be honored to serve as a Board member as a symbol of my appreciation for all the shul does and to help the shul continue to flourish in the years ahead.