



Beth El Bulletin

Beth El Hebrew Congregation

December 2017
Kislev/Tevet 5778

Worship Services

Friday, December 1

Family Service, 6 pm
Soul Shabbat Evening Service, 7:30 pm

Saturday, December 2

Shabbat Morning Service
10:30 am

Friday, December 8

Shabbat Evening Service
7:30 pm

Saturday, December 9

Shabbat Morning Service
10:30 am
Hanukkah Tot Shabbat
11 am

Friday, December 15

Shabbat Evening Service
7:30 pm

Saturday, December 16

Shabbat Morning Service
10:30 am

Friday, December 22

Shabbat Evening Service
7:30 pm

Saturday, December 23

Shabbat Morning Service
10:30 am
Tot Shabbat, 11 am

Friday, December 29

Shabbat Evening Service
6:30 pm

Saturday, December 30

Shabbat Morning Service
10:30 am

Hanukkah Boutique

Sunday, Dec. 3, 2017 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

Latkes and
sufganiyot for
sale!



Get all your gifts
wrapped for a
stress-free holiday!

Come shop with us! We have unique items hand-picked by the Judaica Shop staff to fill all your Hanukkah needs! There's something for everyone! Proceeds from the shop benefit many projects at Beth El and in our community.



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Rabbi's Remarks

IN THE FACE OF so many instances of irresponsibility that we see around us at this time, I thought it only fitting that we continue to stress the idea of accountability and put it to work in practical terms for us as a congregation as well as individually.

Over the 15 years that I have been at Beth El, many of you have contributed to the Rabbi's Good Deed Fund and because of the guarantee of confidentiality, what happens to those funds has been largely unknown. However, I feel that it is important for you to know how the fund is administered and, in a general way, how the funds are distributed.

Apart from Beth El's constitutional rules, the fund itself is also subject to comprehensive guidelines issued by the Central Conference of American Rabbis and those are strictly adhered to without exception.

Although the fund is called the Rabbi's Good Deed Fund, it is a Beth El congregational fund and so I insisted that the accounting be done by our Comptroller and that the fund be subject to audit with the rest of Beth El's funds. That said, confidentiality is still the priority and only the Comptroller and I know who is helped by the fund.

The fund is drawn upon for many purposes; here are the most common and substantial.

It is used to help members of our Congregation through minor financial crises that they may face. For the most part this consists of bridging loans or gifts which assist in the payment of rent or food, etc., and these are usually only temporary in nature. Sometimes these funds are repaid, but in many cases this is not an expectation.

Fairly regularly, the Fund supplements scholarship funds for Beth El children who want to attend NFTY summer camps and, more often, to help those who wish

to deepen their Jewish identity by participating in leadership trips to Israel organized by the URJ and NFTY. These are usually need-based, but on occasion scholarships have been offered as incentives to participate in these programs. The Congregation does offer other scholarships through Brotherhood and the Ina Lerner Israel Fund, but there are certainly cases where additional help is warranted.

Beth El partners with other congregations in a number of very worthy causes including ALIVE!, Carpenter's Shelter, Bailey's Crossroads Shelter, and more. We also support organizations within the Jewish Community like the JCC, JSSA, JCRC, The Jewish Council for the Aged, Hillel, and others. While members contribute both time and money individually, there is no provision within our annual budget to support these organizations and the Good Deed Fund fills this gap.

There are also occasions when the fund is used to help initiate a new program at Beth El or to help cover the cost of a visiting scholar either for the Religious School or for Lifelong Learning. In most of these cases, it is used to supplement rather than cover the whole cost.

More recently we have also used funds to increase the assistance that we are able to give to our adopted Afghan family.

Though this is but a brief outline of how the Good Deed Fund is used I hope that it sheds some welcome light and most of all you should know how deeply grateful I am that we are able to significantly help those in need in this most tangible way. It could not happen without your thoughtful generosity.

L'shalom
— **Brett**

Advocacy: What It Is And How To Do It

THE WOMEN of Reform Judaism District 4 of the Mid-Atlantic Region are sponsoring an Advocacy Day, Sunday, Dec. 3 at Beth El Hebrew Congregation in the Seminar Room from 1:30 — 3 pm. The speakers include Amy Hjerstedt from the National League of Women Voters with a focus on voting rights, Monica Sarmiento from the Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights with a focus on immigrant rights and particularly DACA, and Lindsay Morris from the National Council of Jewish Women with a focus on reproductive rights. Please RSVP to this no cost event to **Patricia Collins** at collinspmaria@gmail.com.

Democracy is not a spectator sport!



Cantor's Corner

ONE OF THE PARTS of our community that you may imagine I'm most proud of is our Bar/Bat Mitzvah program.

We have not only crafted a program that is geared towards addressing the individual educational needs of each student, but also we are constantly evaluating our process so that we can make adjustments when needed.

Because of this, our students not only consistently achieve a high level of excellence in their prayers and Torah and Haftarah portions, but they leave their service with an immense sense of pride. Their speeches are mature beyond their years and always insightful. I must admit that our students are much more comfortable with liturgy and service-leading than I ever was at their age.

Our students work hard on mastering each prayer, each word, and indeed, each individual note that they sing. Every student works to their highest individual ability because they are partnered with an extraordinary tutor who knows how to guide the process specifically to that student's needs. After months of preparation — which is often preceded by years of preparation — our students present their finished product for our entire community to see, amazing us by their work — and often hiding the inevitable challenges that may have been experienced along the way.

I think it's important to shine a light not just on how hard each student works and the quality of what they achieve, but how, always, there is a struggle or two along the way that needs to be addressed and overcome.

The downside of seeing an extraordinarily well prepared Bat/Bar Mitzvah student is that sometimes younger students can get the impression that this came easy to them, causing the younger people to think that they'll never be able to do what they are witnessing. But it's never that easy!

Having prepared hundreds of Bat/Bar Mitzvah stu-

dents at this point, I can honestly tell you that every single student I have ever worked with has had a struggle or challenge along the way, which they have needed to overcome.

Sometimes the sheer amount of Hebrew needing to be learned, offset against a school/life balance, can be a great challenge to be overcome. I strongly support our students being involved in extra-curricular activities, such as athletics, music, dance, art, etc. For many, learning how to navigate a complex schedule, while still making time for serious Hebrew studies, is a life lesson that will serve them quite well in years to come. Nerves and stage fright are often other issues to be discussed and worked through. Sometimes getting students to feel comfortable singing, regardless of the fact that they all have beautiful voices, can take weeks of conversations and encouraging.

When educational needs present themselves, so do opportunities for us to evaluate how we can shape the process to be one that is relevant and meaningful for our students. Each child is deserving of a beautiful Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience, and I'm most grateful when educational experts assist me in creating an experience that is unique, allowing every student to shine and be celebrated.

I mention these struggles not because they diminish the achievements of our students, but rather, because they *highlight* them. We are all works in progress — myself included. It's important to recognize not just the finished product that our students present, but the steps they took along the way.

— Cantor Kaufman



Liberty vs. Security



PRIOR TO THE founding of our country, the debate between the proper level of freedom afforded to citizens versus the level of security necessary to keep us safe was already raging.

After Sep. 11, 2001, the debate became fierce. Since the terror attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, we have seen an increase in domestic terror events. So, while the context has changed in modern times, the debate continues. How open and welcoming can we have our campus, while trying to protect congregants and property?

It is the goal of Beth El Hebrew Congregation to ensure that all people, members and non-members, feel

welcomed here. We come together to pray, to learn Torah, to socialize, and to work to help others in need. We are very fortunate to have a robust security system. It is also important to remember the amount of community resources we have that includes a strong partnership with the Alexandria Police Department. The interfaith presence that we have helps keep Beth El safe too.

If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to come see me.

Adam Wallach
Executive Director



President's Point of View

AS THE PULPIT SEARCH Committee has begun narrowing the field of candidates, with the intention of bringing a candidate before you for a vote in January, a number of themes have emerged. All the candidates have a strong interest in supporting Jewish values through social action. All the candidates have strong scholarship and educational interests. And all the candidates recognize the importance of the relationship in synagogue life.

Many of you may recognize the phrase “relational Judaism.” This is not a new concept to us at Beth El. To me, the concept means that instead of looking to the synagogue and clergy on a transactional basis, we instead value our relationships with clergy and each other. Put another way, we transform the question from “Are my dues worth the services I’m getting?” to “Is my life more meaningful because of the relationships I have with the clergy and my fellow congregants?”

My parents joined the synagogue in my town partly out of the need to find a community of Jews. They moved from New York City to Mahopac in the early 70s and the culture shock was no less than if they had moved thousands of miles. Whereas before their neighbors and friends had formed a loose Jewish cohort, that

did not exist in Mahopac. Couple that with the fact that they wanted their daughters to have a Jewish education and make Jewish friends, membership in Temple Beth Shalom became essential. Once my sister and I had our bat mitzvahs and left for college, though, their needs changed. Several years ago, at my insistence we observed Shabbat at Beth Shalom. It was the first time any of us had been in that shul in more than thirty years.

Glenn and I didn’t immediately seek out affiliation when we first moved to Virginia; we waited until the girls were ready to go to religious school. But while we may have joined for them, we stayed for me, and what I found here. Temple membership was no longer about the transaction of getting the girls a religious education, but about the bonds that I had, and the spiritual education that taught me how to live Jewish values everyday.

One of our applicants expressed it quite eloquently; you can be an autonomous Jew, but that’s not the same as being a Jew in a community of Jews. We complete each other. We are a very special community. I’ve said it before, but we are a *family*; we celebrate our joys together, we mourn our losses together, and sometimes we disagree. I hope your affiliation with Beth El matters to you — it certainly matters to me.

— Julie Bramesco

Caring Community Committee

THE GOAL OF the Caring Community Committee is to “be there” for Beth El members when an extra pair of hands, eyes or ears would be helpful.

Recently there have been quite a number of members dealing with illnesses or treatments that make it difficult for them to do their usual activities, and they have been so grateful to have one or several meals prepared for them and their household. The CCC has an on-call list of people who are willing to prepare a meal for such families on occasion, and many of these caring people have responded to recent requests.

More volunteers would be most welcome, so that no one is asked to do too much. If you would like the opportunity to help someone in this way, please let CCC Chair **Ruth Perlstein** know at 703-978-9341 or rperl8607@gmail.com and she will be happy to add you to the on call list. You would truly be performing a mitzvah.

This is but one of many services provided by CCC volunteers, but the committee is always looking for more ways to be helpful. If you have a suggestion, please contact Ruth to discuss it with her.

Beth El is Part of Alexandria History

TAKE A BREAK from the fast pace of the holiday season and enjoy the unique charm and history of Old Town at Alexandria’s most popular holiday event on Saturday, Dec. 9. Tour Gadsby’s Tavern Museum, Carlyle House, and Lee-Fendall House. Tours will be ongoing from 4 pm to 9 pm.

This year, Lloyd House joins the tour hosting our very own Beth El Hebrew Congregation as we share traditions of Hanukkah and the history of our synagogue. More information about how to volunteer is coming soon.

The Archives Committee is looking for any photographs, documents, or objects related to Beth El history to share during the event. Please contact **Catherine Weinraub** at cats2w@yahoo.com.

A Different Paradigm

OUR MODEL FOR congregants' participation in temple life, as it is for most congregations, is to implement tasks or projects via standing committees. This process has worked well in the past, but it may or not be the best use of people's time in our accelerating world.

Our Religious School and Youth Committee (RSY) is composed of very dedicated, energetic, and busy people. They devote many hours reviewing proposed budgets, policies, and plans. Their thoughts and opinions help make the Beth El Religious School a place where innovation is supported and self-evaluation is a part of an ongoing process.

The work our RSY Committee members do is critical to creating a successful Jewish learning environment. However, the energy and time of this group of individuals is not inexhaustible. For this reason, the RSY Committee has successfully experimented with using "working groups" to address specific issues. The members of the working group are not necessarily from the RSY Committee and their commitment to the working group is for a limited period of time with a specific end goal.

The working group paradigm has successfully worked for two recent projects. The first is the Post B'Nei Mitzvah Working Group. The results of its work was the creation of an invaluable report based on surveys, evaluations of existing programs, and a set of excellent recommendations. The working group took approximately four months and approximately five meetings to complete its report. An additional benefit was that the members created relationships with congregants that they didn't know

prior to sitting on the committee, and some members went on to work on other projects for Beth El.

A second effort using the working group paradigm was the creation of the Religious School Inclusion Working Group. This working group was created to address issues that had been identified relating to allocation of resources for students who require special attention. Under the leadership of Debbi Katz, RSY co-chair, the group met approximately three times and used email to comment on proposed language. The result is the creation of a Draft Religious School Inclusion Policy and the first Participant Plan, i.e., a specific student plan. The draft policy now under review by our clergy, lay leaders, and the Religious School parents.

The drafting of the policy and the creating of a report is very important. Perhaps even more important, is that the working group was composed of congregants with an interest in the subject, but who did not have children currently in the Religious School.

My plan is to continue to use this working group paradigm for future tasks. This approach benefits the Religious School and provides an opportunity for a cross section of our congregants to participate in the continuous process of creating a meaningful Jewish learning environment for our youth.

L'Shalom,

Barry Smith, Director of Education

bsmith@bethelhebrew.org



Readers of Beth El

The Readers of Beth El will meet on Monday, Dec. 11, 2017 (please note change of date) at 7:30 pm to discuss *The Bridal Chair* by Gloria Goldreich. The story is called a work of biofiction by the author. It is based on the life of Ida Chagall, the only daughter of artist Marc Chagall, during the Nazi occupation of Paris. We hope you will join us. If you would like to read ahead, we will read *The Devil in Jerusalem* by Naomi Ragen for our our Jan. 22 meeting.

Lynne Orens

Lorens750@aol.com

703-569-5168

Lifelong Learning: The Israeli Intelligence Community

LIFELONG LEARNING is proud to welcome Liat Lisha, JCCNV *shlichah*, to Beth El on Dec. 6 at 7 pm. Liat will present on the Israeli Intelligence Community, which has gained respect and recognition all over the world. Who is the intelligence community? What are its areas of activity, how was it established, and what were the defining events in its history? How does it work and how is it organized? Who were its leaders? Find out when you join us for this engaging and thought-provoking program.

Maryn Simon

happyduke8@gmail.com

WRJ News

WE ARE LOOKING forward to celebrating Hanukkah a little early this year on Wednesday, Dec. 6 with a luncheon at noon and the latke social at 6:30 pm. The cost is \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members. Please bring a \$10 wrapped gift for our Dreidel with a Twist gift exchange. Also in support of the families at Beth El House and the Alexandria Domestic Violence Program, please consider a gift card and/or a new unwrapped toy to help make their holidays a little brighter. You can RSVP to wrijhospitality@gmail.com or call **Jeanette Astrow** at 703-451-7007. We hope to see you there.

I can't say enough about the fantastic and successful Book and Author Event organized by **Michele Milden** and **Jo Ann Allen** and their wonderful committee. Thank you to everyone who helped make the event a success. We were especially thrilled to have some of our Israel teen trip kids volunteer at this event. This event helped to fund the 2018 Beth El Israel trip along with other Beth El youth initiatives.

Dec. 3 is a very busy day for us. Don't miss out on the Judaica Shop Hanukkah Boutique for all of your Hanukkah needs from 10:00 am — 3:30 pm. Thank you to **Sara Deshong** and all of her dedicated volunteers for all of their hard work. Also, we will be hosting the WRJ Mid Atlantic Area 4 Day at BEHC beginning at 1:30

pm. Come hear about social justice issues including DACA. Details are located elsewhere in this newsletter. Thank you to **Pat Collins** for putting together a thought provoking panel of speakers.

Please join the WRJ Book Club on Dec. 12 when we will discuss *Judas* by Amos Oz. All WRJ members are welcome to attend. Please contact **Rita Ditrani**.

Don't forget to sign up to help support the MAJYK event being held here at BEHC by hosting participants or helping out in a myriad of ways. You can find the online sign up located under Youth on the BEHC website. WRJ will provide Shabbat lunch and will need volunteers to help set-up, serve, and clean-up.

Looking for something easy to do? We need a volunteer to sort silverware after the Brotherhood catering events. This can be done any day during the week after one of the catering events. This will make the set-up for the next event much easier. Please call **Jeanette Astrow** at 703-451-7007 or e-mail her at jlasterow@verizon.net if you are interested or have any questions.

Happy Hanukkah,
Jeanette Astrow
WRJ President

WRJ/Brandeis Book and Author Event Was a Huge Success!



Brotherhood News

LOOKING BACK, it certainly was a busy period for your Beth El Brotherhood. Our new sukkah hosted several Beth El activities and then was disassembled and stored for next year. A big thank-you to the volunteers who helped in that effort: **Bob Shaver, Joel Augen, Todd Bolick, Jeremy Flachs, Josh Folb, Lilia and Max Gerberg, Greg Harding, Steve Kalin, Matt Mutterperl, Jeffrey Sachs, Roger Smith, and Ron Sturman.**

And thank-you to the families of **Estee Marcus, Ethan Mutterperl, and Rory Stankow-Mercer** who entrusted Brotherhood catering with their b'nei mitzvah receptions. Appreciation is extended to our catering chefs, **Joel Bernstein and Jake Gallun;** event coordinator, **Bob Shaver;** buyer, **Judy Jankowski;** and event volunteers (several of whom helped multiple times): **Stuart Feldstein, Bobbie and Simon Gershman, Debbie Katz, Sue Rabin, Roberto and Susan Mosse, Alan and David Rubinstein, Virginia Ruiz, Bill, Kate and Sally Schneider, Glenn Siegel, Donna Sachs, Jeffrey Sachs, Ron Sturman, and Rhubarb Woodmansee.** To learn more about Brotherhood catering, please contact us at catering@bethelhebrew.org.

It's not too early to mark your calendar for our Jan. 21 Chili Tailgate Party. Football fans can watch AFC and NFC championship games. In addition, there will be games for adults and children, great chili, and goodies for all. And on Feb. 27 Brotherhood will host at Beth El its 60th Annual Interfaith Dinner with Fairlington United Methodist Church. The keynote speaker will be Rabbi Gerry Serotta, Executive Director of the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington.

As part of our monthly introduction to the Brotherhood Board, meet **Roberto Mosse**, Brotherhood Treasurer and extremely active member of Brotherhood's

catering team, who writes: "Susan and I joined Beth El in 1976. Both of our children, Claudio and Jennifer, had their B'nei Mitzvah and confirmation at Beth El. They are married, and have two children each, and live in Nashville and in Brooklyn, respectively. Susan and I were born in Santiago de Chile, both of us children from German Jewish parents. I am a retiree of The World Bank Group where I worked for 41 years in country development activities mainly in transport, industry, and banking projects aiming to reduce poverty. Prior to my joining The Bank in 1972, we lived two years in Melbourne, Australia, where I worked for an international accounting partnership. I am a past member of the Beth El Board of Directors (2012-2016); served two years as a Trustee of the Endowment Fund; and was actively involved with fund-raising to reduce BEHC's mortgage. I also co-chaired the task force on Reimagining Beth El's Financial Future, which proposed a revision to the fair share dues program now in its second year of operation. 'Why do I want to help Brotherhood?' I am a believer that there comes a time in your life to give back to your community. Brotherhood's main objective is to assist in the strengthening of Beth El, and working with Brotherhood provides me that opportunity."

It's not too late to send in your Brotherhood membership gift of \$36 or \$54 (your choice) to: Beth El Brotherhood, 3830 Seminary Road, Alexandria Virginia 22304.

John Jankowski

Brotherhood President

brotherhood@bethelhebrew.org



Remembering the last time the annual interfaith dinner was held at Beth El



Learn More about Our New Social Action Partners



On Yom Kippur a speaker from the Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights (VACIR) and two young people affected by DACA spoke with us about the outlook for immigrants in our local community. At the advocacy session on Dec, 3 (see page 2), VACIR will again participate, this time in helping Beth El members understand how they can get more involved in *tikkun olam* “through proper channels.” VACIR is not an organization — it has only one paid staffer — but rather an organization of organizations, a true coalition.

From the website at www.virginiaimmigrantrights.org:

“The Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights (VACIR) is grassroots movement focused on the advancement of civil rights for the immigrant community. We are dedicated to assisting community organizations provide quality information and legal services for President Obama’s immigration Executive Orders, better known as the deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA). VACIR seeks to increase the civic involvement, community advocacy, and partnerships among immigration outreach community groups.”



Global Center for Refugee Education and Science

If you’ve looked at the Beth El calendar online lately, you have seen this group using our facility to further their cause. The Rabbi wrote about them in a recent column. Who are they and what do they do?

From the website at gcrs.org:

“The Global Center for Refugee Education and Science (GCRES) is devoted to breaking down barriers to refugee integration through intensive language training. Importantly, we measure our effectiveness with advanced data analytics.

We envision a world where every refugee will have the language skills needed to thrive and give back to their new home. In this world, refugees both love their new home and are loved by their neighbors.”

And speaking of values, what does our website Vision and Values page look like graphically? Very cool!!



Three New Species for the Chapel in the Woods

ON NOV. 12, the Religious School's seventh-graders and adult volunteers planted three new species of Virginia native shrubs and trees in the Chapel in the Woods. These plants are among those purchased from the city of Alexandria's fall sale, with funds contributed by the Beth El Brotherhood. Still other native trees and shrubs were donated to Beth El by the city for the purpose of adding to the local tree canopy, and planted at the Nov. 12 workday.

The new varieties are:

Allegheny Serviceberry, *Amelanchier laevis*. Growing to 25 feet tall, this understory tree remains popular with birds, small mammals — and humans — because its lovely white flowers are followed in summer by edible berries. Easy to grow, these trees offer year-round woodland color. Their leaves feed several native butterflies and moths.



Elderberry, *Sambucus canadensis*. This 6- to 12-foot shrub offers food and nesting for 48 species of birds. White flowers bloom in summer and create dark purple berries.



Staghorn sumac, *Rhus typhina*. The staghorn sumac is a 15- to 30-foot shrub or small tree with graceful branches that turn bright red in fall. Female plants yield yellow flowers and red berries that last through winter and feed game and songbirds.



At the November Chapel in the Woods workday, more than 40 people — adults and students — planted 21 trees and shrubs including oaks, black gum, and dogwoods. Please join other congregation members in clearing more of the forest floor of invasive species to make room for plants in the spring. The next workdays will be held from 10 to noon Dec. 10, Jan. 7, and Feb. 4, weather permitting. A light lunch will follow. Please bring gloves, clippers and trowels if you have them, other equipment will be provided. For more information, please contact **Nancy or Stuart Davis**, 703-671-5906.

THANK YOU to the Book and Author Fundraiser Volunteers!

MANY THANKS to everyone who helped make the WRJ/Brandeis Book and Author Event on Oct. 29 such a wonderful and successful time. Our gratitude to **Robert Siegel** for moderating, and to authors **Michael Kalb**, **Paula Tarnapol Whitacre**, and **Michael Takiff**. The event raised \$4,020 for the two organizations to share. A special thank you to the dedicated Planning Committee Members: **Atara Aharonovitz, Jane Kraft Burstein, Lynne Dubin, Ruth Folkman, Reva Fox, Linda Goldberg, Francie Fox Schweber, Marilyn Silver, Virginia Sorokin, Debbie Spitzer, and Judy Yavner**. In addition to the committee, we had extra support from: **Jeanette Astrow, Elissa Baum, Patricia Collins, Janet Garber, Kaiya Levine, Anne Levy, Annette Paley, Sally Schneider, Susan Wartel**, the Beth El Maintenance Staff, and the following Beth El Teens **Alexis Colton, Danielle Sassin, Kate Schneider**, and **Michael Weinraub**. Thank you to all who brought such delicious food!

— **Michele Milden** and **Jo Ann Allen**, Co-Chairs

2018 Used Book Sale

It's that time again! Our 16th Annual Used Book Sale Fundraiser is January 14 and 15, 2018.

We're down to the wire! We need your books, CDs, DVDs, and records NOW. Clear out clutter AND support one of our biggest fundraisers of the year!

Please take your donations to Beth El during office hours.

Need Help? Have Questions! Contact Rhoda Goldman 703-992-9370 or e-mail lennieg@cox.net.

NOTE: We need help with book sorting. A little dust and a lot of fun... and you just might have a chance to set aside your perfect find! Contact Rhoda Goldman to volunteer.

Book Sorting Opportunities: Dec. 19, 20, 21; Jan. 9, 10, 11; 10 am Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday morning, and 6 pm Wednesday evening.



WRJ Social Action

WE HAVE RECENTLY received a request from the Alexandria Domestic Violence Program for winter blankets! They are looking for new full -sized blankets and fleece throws for their residents. Since the cold weather is now upon us -- this need is truly critical! Any donations can be placed in the lobby social action bins. Thanks in advance for helping with this very important requirement!!!!

And, as a reminder, we are collecting holiday donations through Dec. 10 for Beth El House (BEH) and the Alexandria Domestic Violence program (ADVP). We are collecting gift cards for BEH. And we are collecting 2018 calendars, unwrapped new toys, and gift cards (in denominations of \$25 or less, please) for ADVP. All gift cards should be left in the WRJ mailbox in the temple front office. Other donations can be placed in the collection bins in the lobby.

And a heads up — we are planning a program with the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (JCADA) on Feb. 21, 2018. More to follow...

And don't miss the upcoming Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) events:

If you are interested in our local politics, plan to attend the Northern Virginia Legislative Reception sponsored by the JCRC of Northern Virginia. The reception is Tuesday, Dec. 12 from 7 - 9 pm at the JCC of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax, VA 22031. Come meet and mingle with our state senators and delegates over drinks and dinner! Discuss the issues that matter to you as JCRC unveils its 2018 Virginia Legislative Priorities, including maintaining the separation of church and state and fighting for a welcoming and safe Commonwealth. For more information and to register, please follow this link: <http://www.jccouncil.org/site/Calendar?id=111142&view=Detail>

If you want to have a say in critical issues facing the Virginia legislation next year, plan to attend Jewish Advocacy Day in Richmond, Virginia, Jan. 30, with JCRC. In preparation for Advocacy Day, JCRC will sponsor an Insider's Briefing on Jan. 24 at 7 pm, at the JCC of Northern Virginia.

— Janet Garber, garberj123@gmail.com, 703-256-7988

Member News

Mazal Tov to:

Dr. Bertram Snyder on his 90th birthday

Lennie Goldman on receiving the Volunteer of the Year Award from the Auxiliary of Inova Fairfax Hospital; Lennie has contributed more than 5000 hours of volunteer service since 2002

Condolences to:

Jeffrey and Laura Marin, and David Marin and Stacey Marin Goldaris, on the death of father and grandfather William Marin

Barbara and Jim Freund, and Amy Freund, on the death of mother and grandmother Geraldine



The Congregation extends sincere condolences to family and friends of former member, recently taken from us:

Helen Miller



The Congregation extends sincere condolences to family and friends of former member, recently taken from us:

Jeffrey Levitt

May the memory of the dear departed always be a blessing and inspiration to all who knew and loved them.

May our synagogue community bring comfort to those who mourn them.

May the families know of no more sorrow.

Amen.



MAJYK

DO YOU HAVE the MAJYK in you, because NFTY's MAJYK is here! Beth El is excited to welcome over 175, 6-8th graders from NFTY-MAR (Mid-Atlantic Region) to our home for the weekend of Dec. 15-17. We are ready to share the MAJYK in all of us and see how these teens are able to give back to the community and find a little MAJYK in themselves all while celebrating Hannukah and Shabbat together.

We want to thank **Rabbi Isserow, Cantor Jason, Barry Smith, Jolene Shif, Dina Backer, Rachel Wolman, and Adam Wallach** as well as Beth El Brotherhood, Sisterhood, and the custodial staff of Beth El because, without all of the support, this weekend event would not be possible.

Our teen leaders and Magicians for the weekend, **Josh Mutterperl** (BEFTY President) and **Dolly Lebow** (BEFTY Social Action VP) have done an incredible job planning for this weekend.

It is amazing to see so many members of Beth El open their homes to welcome teens from other congregations and to the volunteers who are offering their time to help make this weekend a success! It's not too late to become a host family (you do not need to have a teen attending or any children in the home for that matter) or to help out with volunteering throughout the weekend.

Please contact **Nori (White) Plunkett** or **Marissa Smolinsky** at beftyadvisors@gmail.com with any questions or how to get involved.

Thanksgiving in June! Rabbi Isserow's Retirement Gala

DID YOU HAVE a great Thanksgiving? Did you go around the holiday table with family and friends stating what you are grateful for?

Save the date to show **Rabbi Isserow** how grateful you are for everything he has done for our congregation and each of us individually. The gala to honor **Rabbi Isserow** on the occasion of his retirement is Saturday, June 16, so mark your calendars and plan to be there!

Watch for more details.

Rhoda Goldman and Meryl Goldhammer, Chairs

~ December 2017 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
			
<p>3 Be Happy You Have a Roof Over Your Head Day 9a-3:30p WRJ Hanukkah Boutique 10-11a Adult Hebrew Classes 10a-12p Religious School 12:30-2p Kol Nova Rehearsal 1-4p Bridge 1:30-3p WRJ Mid-Atlantic Area 4</p>	<p>4 World Wildlife Conservation Day</p>	<p>5 Repeal Day (Prohibition Ended XXX) 1:30-3p WRJ Mah Jongg 7-9p EC Meeting</p>	<p>6 Microwave Oven Day 12-2p WRJ Hanukkah Luncheon 5:30p Religious School Canteen 6:15-8p Religious School 6:30-8p WRJ Hanukkah Latke Social 7-8p Introduction to Judaism 7p Lifelong Learning: The Israeli Intelligence Community</p>
<p>10 Human Rights Day/International Children's Day Tzedakah Tzunday 10-11a Adult Hebrew Classes 10a-12p Religious School 10a-12p Chapel in the Woods Workday 12-2p Club 45 Hanukkah Party 1-4p Bridge</p>	<p>11 UNICEF's Birthday</p>	<p>12 Hanukkah Begins/Light the First Candle 11a-12:30p WRJ Book Club 1:30-3:30 WRJ Mah Jongg</p>	<p>13 Hanukkah (Cont.) 5:30p Religious School Canteen 6:15-8p Religious School 7-8p Introduction to Judaism</p>
<p>17 Hanukkah (Cont.) MAJYK 9:30a-12p Leadership Development Program 10-11a Adult Hebrew Classes 10-11a Brotherhood Board Meeting 10a-12p Religious School 1-4p Bridge 2-4p Beth El in Your Neighborhood in Falls Church</p>	<p>18 Hanukkah (Cont.) 7:30p Readers of Beth El</p>	<p>19 Hanukkah (Cont.) 10a-3p Book Sorting 1:30-3:30 WRJ Mah Jongg 6:30-7:30p RSSC Beth El House 7-9p Board of Directors Meeting</p>	<p>20 Hanukkah (Cont.) NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL 10a-3p Book Sorting 10:30a-12:30p JCCNV 55+ Event: Film <i>Theodore Bikel: In the Shoes of Sholom Aleichem</i> 7-8p Introduction to Judaism</p>
<p>24 Christmas Eve NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL 10a-1p Carpenter's Shelter Food Prep</p>	<p>25 Christmas Day OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>26 National Whiner's Day 1:30-3:30 WRJ Mah Jongg</p>	<p>27 Visit the Zoo Day NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL 7-8p Introduction to Judaism</p>
<p>31 New Year's Eve NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL</p>	<p>Hanukkah Fun Facts: The average 100-gram sufganiyah (doughnut) packs 400-600 calories and contains 85 calories each. *** Israelis devour some 24 million sufganiyot during the holiday. In 1951, the White House recognized the holiday publicly by speaking at a candle-lighting event hosted by the President, an event referenced in the Bible. This is because the events of the holiday took place after the Temple was destroyed from left to right. *** The last night of Hanukkah in Germany was once very special as the festivities often lasted until the wee hours of the morning.</p>		

Kislev/Tevet 5778 ~

Thu	Fri	Sat	Torah
	1 World AIDS Day 6-6:30p Pre K to Third Grade Family Service 6:30-7:30p Communal Dinner 6:30-7:30p Pre-Service Wine and Cheese Oneg 7:30p Soul Shabbat Service with Fourth Grade Candle lighting 4:28p	2 National Mutt Day 9-10a Torah Study 10:30a Shabbat Morning Service 2-5p WRJ Hanukkah Boutique Set-up 7p Cantor Kaufman in Concert Havdallah 5:36p	Vayishlach Genesis 32:3-36:43 Hosea 11:7-12:12, Obadiah 1:1-21
7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day 10:30a-3p Beth El/JCCNV 55+ Event: Private Tour of Torpedo Factory 6:30-7:30 Beth El House Meeting 6:30-8p WRJ Mah Jongg	8 National Brownie Day 12-1p Mussar 6:30-7:30p Pre-Service Wine and Cheese Oneg 7:30p Erev Shabbat Service Candle lighting 4:27p	9 International Day of Veterinary Medicine 9-10a Torah Study 10:30a Shabbat Morning Service 11a-12p Hanukkah Tot Shabbat with Potluck Lunch 5:30-7p Third Grade Family Havdallah Havdallah 5:36p	Vayeshev Genesis 37:1-40:23 Amos 2:6-3:8
14 Hanukkah (Cont.) MAJYK 10a-1:30p Board of Lady Managers 6:30-8p WRJ Mah Jongg 7-8p Mussar	15 Hanukkah (Cont.) MAJYK 11a-12p Life after Loss 11a-1p Hanukkah Sing-Along 6:30-7:30p Pre-Service Wine and Cheese Oneg 7:30p Erev Shabbat Service Candle lighting 4:29	16 Hanukkah (Cont.) MAJYK 9-10a Torah Study 10:30a Shabbat Morning Service 9a-1p Global Center for Refugee Education and Science Havdallah 5:37p	Miketz Genesis 41:1-44:17 Zechariah 2:14-4:7
21 Winter Solstice 10a-3p Book Sorting 6:30-8p WRJ Mah Jongg 7-11p Bridge 7:30-9p Interfaith Bible Study	22 Date Nut Bread Day 6:30-7:30p Pre-Service Wine and Cheese Oneg 7:30p Erev Shabbat Service Candle lighting 4:32p	23 Festivus 9-10a Torah Study 10:30a Shabbat Morning Service 11a-12p Tot Shabbat Havdallah 5:40p	Vayigash Genesis 44:18-47:27 Ezekiel 37:15-28
28 Card Playing Day 6:30-8p WRJ Mah Jongg 7-8p Mussar	29 Pepper Pot Day 5:30-6:30p Pre-Service Wine and Cheese Oneg 6:30p Erev Shabbat Service Candle lighting 4:36p	30 Bicarbonate of Soda Day 9-10a Torah Study 10:30a Shabbat Morning Service Havdallah 5:45p	Vavechi Genesis 47:28-50:26 1 Kings 2:1-12

500 calories. One potato latke has about 150 calories, svinge (a Moroccan cruller) 350-442 calories, and during the eight-day holiday – adding up to 10.8 billion calories. *** Hanukkah made its first appearance at the White House in 1947 when the President gave Harry Truman a menorah as a gift. In 1979, Jimmy Carter became the first American president to light the menorah. *** Hanukkah is unique among the Jewish holidays, because it is the only one not directly mentioned in the Old Testament was compiled. *** The candles are placed in the Menorah from right to left. They are lit from right to left. Great bonfires were lit from the leftover oil and wicks, and people danced and sang around the fire. The

The Northern Virginia Latke Fest, powered by the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, is a regional celebration of food and community. Local restaurants will offer their version of the latke on their menus during the eight nights of Hanukkah 2017 (December 12-20). Participating restaurants will be eligible to win a Juror's Choice Award, selected by local food celebrities. Diners will have the ability to rank each latke they try online and the winning latke will be crowned with the Diner's Choice Award.




ZEMER CHAI
THE JEWISH CHORALE OF THE NATION'S CAPITAL

SAVE-THE-DATE

Chanukah with Zemer Chai!
Sunday, December 17, 4:30 pm

An inspiring holiday concert
with
Zemer Chai, The Jewish Chorale of the Nation's Capital
Cantor Josh C. Perlman and Joshana Erenberg, soloists
and
Symphony of the Potomac, Joel Lazar, conductor

Featuring
Excerpts from Handel's oratorio,
Judas Maccabaeus
Plus a scintillating sampling of Chanukah music
from around the world!

Tickets: \$10, free for ages 13 and under
B'nai Israel Congregation, 6301 Montrose Road, Rockville, MD

Tickets on sale soon! Watch for the announcement.



Celebrate Hanukkah with WRJ

Wednesday, Dec. 6

12 noon — 2 pm: Hanukkah Luncheon

6:30 — 8 pm: Latke Social

Please join WRJ for our annual Hanukkah Luncheon and/or Latke Social.
The cost for each event is \$20 for WRJ members, \$25 for non-members.

The menu for the luncheon will be chicken, salmon, latkes, and salad, with sufganiyot (jelly donuts) and brownies for dessert. The main course for the evening may be different.

Bring a \$10 wrapped gift for a gift exchange with our own "spin" on the dreidel game.

Feel free to bring your own Hanukkiah to light as we celebrate the Festival of Lights.

RSVP and questions: e-mail (preferred) WRJHospitality@gmail.com or call **Jeanette Astrow** at 703-451-7007.

WRJ Memberships Sold at All WRJ Events

Social Action Support: We will be collecting gift cards for the families at Beth El House and gift cards of \$25 or less and new unwrapped gifts for the Alexandria Domestic Violence Program to help make their holiday seasons a bit brighter.

Inclusion News

**SAVE THE DATE: REELABILITIES FILM FESTIVAL SNEAK PEEK:
The Finishers on Sunday, Feb. 25, 4 pm.**

THE INCLUSION Committee had a wonderfully productive October meeting. We discussed plans for two upcoming events — a ReelAbilities Film Festival Preview Event and a Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month (JDAIM) Shabbat service — as well as other ideas for improving accessibility and awareness of issues related to disability and inclusion.

Please mark your calendars and save these dates:

Friday, Feb. 9 — Beth El is hosting a special Shabbat Service on the theme “Disability and Inclusion is About Us.” The service is being held in recognition of Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month (JDAIM), which occurs each February. In addition, this service is a Soul Shabbat, which is being led by the Religious School’s sixth grade. This service is sure to be a spirited event that people will be talking about.

Sunday, Feb. 25 — ReelAbilities Film Festival “Sneak Peek” In advance of the local 2018 ReelAbilities Film Festival, which is powered by the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, Beth El is hosting a “sneak peek” film event. Join us to watch the acclaimed film, *The Finishers*, on Sunday, Feb. 25 at 4 pm in the BEHC Social Hall. Co-sponsored by Beth El’s Inclusion Committee, Women of Reform Judaism, and Brotherhood, *The Finishers* was a top choice of viewers in recent festival events across the nation.

The Finishers is the story of Julian, a teenager with cerebral palsy whose family is gradually falling apart under the strain of his disability. Julien challenges his estranged father to a nearly impossible feat — to participate together in the Ironman race in Nice, France — a triathlon in which his father has previously competed. Loosely based on a real story, the film presents one family’s extraordinary journey, and a moving portrait of the bond between a father and his son.

The ReelAbilities Festival is the largest US film festival dedicated to promoting an appreciation of people with disabilities.

For more information, or if you have any questions, ideas or suggestions, please contact me at jeanneholden@yahoo.com.

Jeanne Holden

Inclusion Committee Chair

Do You Have Difficulty Reading Our Prayer Book?

FOR SOME PEOPLE, the font or text size used in our prayer book is just too small to see comfortably. If that describes you or someone you know, there is a solution that could be very helpful. Amazon has a Kindle version of *Mishkan T’filah* that, for a small price (currently \$9.99), can be downloaded to an iPad or other device where the user can adjust the print size to suit their needs.

It’s easy. First, download the free Amazon Kindle app to whatever device you use. Next, purchase the digital prayer book. That’s all there is to it. This could be a blessing for a congregant with limited vision. A Kindle edition of *Mishkan HaNefesh* is also available from Amazon and could be very helpful during the High Holidays.

Beth El also has some larger-print prayer books. If you would like to use one during services, please ask the usher.



2018 WRJ Hamantaschen

SISTERHOOD will be putting on our aprons in January as we begin the process of making hamantaschen for Purim. We make approximately 3,000 (250 dozen) hamantaschen each year. We provide hamantaschen for the religious school students and teachers, Tot Shabbat and the Purim Schpiel refreshments.

Please help with this endeavor by joining us for a baking session or by preparing dough. No experience needed; training provided.

Dough-nations kneaded:

We need over 50 packets of dough (*recipe below*) to complete this project. You can bring a batch when you come to bake or bring to the temple any time and place it in the public freezer.

Please contact **Karen Aftergut** at WRJHospitality@gmail.com to let her know how much dough you will prepare. Baking dates will be publicized soon.

Beth El WRJ Hamantaschen Dough Recipe

3 large eggs 1 cup sugar	1 teaspoon vanilla 1/4 cup Canola oil	4 cups flour 1/4 teaspoon salt	1 tablespoon baking powder 1/3 cup orange juice
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We ask that you follow this recipe exactly even if the dough is very soft. We can easily add flour as we prepare the cookies, but can't remove it if you have added too much.

With an electric beater (easier) or by hand, beat eggs, adding sugar gradually. Add vanilla and oil and beat well. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, salt and baking powder; add to egg mixture alternating with the orange juice, starting and ending with the flour mixture. Mix well after each addition. Dough will be sticky; we will add flour when cookies are rolled. Divide dough into 3 portions and wrap each in Saran Wrap, then place in a quart sized zip-locked bag. Keep dough refrigerated. It must be refrigerated 4 hours before we can use it. Dough can be frozen if you are not dropping it off at Beth El within 2 - 3 days of making it.



ALIVE!

Dec. 10: Tzedakah Tzunday: The sixth night of Hanukkah (12/17) is called Ner shel Tzedakah — Candle of Righteousness. This year we celebrate this night of giving a week early on Dec. 10. We call it Tzedakah Tzunday. This is a call for all Religious School families and other congregants to give generously to ALIVE! in support of their programs which do so much for Alexandrians in need.

While the ALIVE! Treasurer was out of town, as Assistant Treasurer, I was tasked with writing checks for the Family Emergency Program. I wrote check after check to help people pay their rent or for utilities. \$69.95 bought a high school student eyeglasses. \$63.40 bought 60 dozen eggs to be included in bags of food delivered to the elderly

and infirm. Check after check I was reminded of how much good ALIVE! does, but only with the support of congregations like ours.

Our donations to ALIVE! help people meet their basic needs for food and shelter. If you have a child in Religious School, please give generously on Sunday, Dec. 10. You can give cash or write checks to ALIVE! If you do not have a child in Religious School, you can leave checks in the ALIVE! mailbox or make contributions online at <https://www.alive-inc.org>.

For more information about ALIVE! and these activities, contact **Deborah Schaffer** at schaffer4@gmail.com or go to alive-inc.org.

Beth El/JCCNV Events

Private Tour and Artist Demonstrations at the Torpedo Factory, Old Town Alexandria

Thursday, Dec. 7, depart Beth El 10:30 am; return 3 pm

The Torpedo Factory Art Center is home to the nation's largest collection of working-artists' open studios under one roof. Founded in 1974 in an old munitions plant, it attracts approximately 500,000 visitors annually. Join us for a private tour of this wonderful building, along with private demonstrations with artists in three to four different media. You will then have a short time to browse through the many other studios, followed by lunch at a nearby restaurant.

Fee: \$18 (bus transportation and private tour); lunch is on your own.

Code: #8733

Submit payment and registration form to the J, Attn: Shelly Rosenstein. Make check payable to JCCNV with "12/7" on memo line. (Check with Shelly before sending in check in case this changes.)

All Beth El/JCCNV events are \$5 for all participants unless noted otherwise. Coffee, tea, and dessert will be provided.

To RSVP or get more information for all Beth El/JCCNV events, please contact Shelly.Rosenstein@jccnv.org, 703-537-3062

2017 Hanukkah Celebration at the J: What's So Special About "The Bronx?"

Thursday, Dec. 14; 1 pm: Boxed Lunch (provided); 1:45 pm: Program

Steve Samtur, editor and publisher of *Back in the Bronx* magazine for 25 years, will give a fun, nostalgic retrospective of "the Bronx of yesteryear." He will explain why "The" is always included when speaking of this NY borough and share the names of famous celebrities from The Bronx.

Steve will speak about the "Home of The Bronx Bombers" Yankee Stadium, The Hall of Fame for Great Americans, the world renowned Bronx Botanical Gardens and Bronx Zoo. This talk is for non-New Yorkers curious about this "infamous" borough and ex-New Yorkers alike. You know the fun is starting when Mr. Samtur enters playing with a yo-yo! Relive the 40s, 50s, and 60s of New York City and learn what is so special about this borough!

Fee: \$28/ \$20 J member (includes talk and Hanukkah lunch – tuna wrap, latkes, salad, Hanukkah dessert, and goodies) Code: #8626

RSVP: Submit payment and registration form to the front desk by Thursday, Dec. 7 or call 703.323.0880 to register with a credit card.

Please let Shelly know if you need a ride at least two weeks prior to the program.

Special Film — *Theodore Bikel: In the Shoes of Sholom Aleichem*

75 Minutes | Documentary | USA | English

Wednesday, Dec. 20 10:30 am–12:30 pm

The story of two beloved icons — Sholom Aleichem and Theodore Bikel — are woven together in this enchanting documentary. Theodore Bikel, the unstoppable performer whose career spanned more than 150 screen roles and countless stage and musical productions, was also the foremost interpreter of Sholom Aleichem's work. Bikel, who passed away in 2015, played Tevye the Milkman on stage more than 2,000 times. Sholom was a pioneer of modern Jewish literature who championed the Yiddish language and created dozens of indelible characters. His Tevye the Milkman, Motl the Cantor's Son, and Menachem Mendl — "shtetl Jews" — remain invaluable insights into pre-war Eastern European Jewish life.

RSVP: Submit payment and registration form to the J, attn.: Shelly Rosenstein. Make check payable to JCCNV with "12/20" on memo line.

Fee: \$7 all participants (includes film and Hanukkah treats!)

Code: #8734

Save the date! Sign up now!

***Becoming Dr. Ruth* at Theater J**

Wednesday, Feb. 28, Depart Beth El 11 am; return 3 pm

"She's America's favorite sex therapist! But before she became Dr. Ruth, Karola Siegel had to flee Germany in the *Kindertransport*, become a sniper in Jerusalem, and survive as a single mother in America... Filled with humor and honesty, *Becoming Dr. Ruth* is a triumphant and life-affirming story of a girl who found her own unique place in the world..." — Theater J website

Fee: \$40 all participants (includes bus transportation, matinee ticket, and our famous "snack bag")

Code: #8731

Submit payment and registration form to the J, Attn: Shelly Rosenstein. Make check payable to JCCNV with "2/28" on memo line.

Looking Ahead: Special Book and Author Event with Stuart Newberger

The Forgotten Flight, Terrorism, Diplomacy and the Pursuit of Justice

Wednesday, Jan. 31, 10:30 am-noon



Jewish Community Center
of Northern Virginia

*Wishes you and yours a
happy Hanukkah!*

The Congregation Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Donations

BETH EL GENERAL FUND

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 and all he does

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SOCIAL ACTION FUND

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 Henry Brooks

Donor

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Thank you for your generous donations. No donation is too small. All donations are acknowledged in The Bulletin two months following their receipt. Acknowledgements are mailed with a minimum of \$18 per person per acknowledgment.



Beth El's 7th Grade Students Raised \$1,800 for the Lone Soldier Program!

The Lone Soldier Center
in memory of Michael Levin



המרכז לחיילים בודדים
ע"ש מייקל לוין

Dear 7th Grade Students,
Beth El Hebrew Congregation

Thank you so much for raising money for our lone soldiers. Your support will help us to continue to provide them with support, meals, housing, and the family that they need throughout their service

With Appreciation,

The Lone Soldier Center in memory of Michael Levin



The Mitzvah of the Gift

AS YOU MULL over to whom to make your charitable contributions at the end of this tax year, please consider the Permanent Endowment Fund. It will truly be the epitome of the gift that keeps on giving as it is the lifeblood of Beth El's future.

Additionally, for those of us over the age of 70 1/2, our Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) may be used to contribute to Beth El. Please consult with your tax advisor to make sure to do this Mitzvah correctly.

Please use the convenience of our new app to make donations any time to all of our funds (RMD cannot be done by app).

Beth El thanks you for your consideration.

For more information about the app, please contact **Adam Wallach**. For more information about the PEF, please contact **Evan Allen**.

Beth El in Your Neighborhood

OUR NEXT Neighborhood Coffee will be in the Falls Church area on Dec. 17 from 2 to 4 pm at the home of Evan and Jo Ann Allen. You can RSVP to me at rmfolk@mac.com. (No children, please.)

February is still open to anyone who would like to host for that month.

— Ruth Folkman
rmfolk@mac.com



ECLC News

EVERY DAY IN OUR ECLC is exciting. The most seemingly mundane activities, seen through the eyes of our very young friends, become a “wow” moment in time. This year, the wow moments are much greater in number as our student body continues to grow. We have hit an all time high with 90 students — a huge jump from last year’s 65!

We are filling eight classrooms with Reggio Emilia-inspired hands-on explorations and we are capturing the essence of the philosophy in the way we incorporate nature in our day. More often than not, a class or two are walking the trails out in the back, racing across the front lawn, or exercising their imagination and creativity on the playground.

It is a delight to see the smiles in the hallway and the learning that fills every moment of our day. These kids are happy! They love to see their friends each day and to spend time with a staff who loves them.

This is the time of year when our appointment and tours are abundant, in anticipation of our February registration for new families. As I see our ECLC through the eyes of our visitors, I am so very proud of the program we have created and it is with much joy and anticipation that I look forward to continued growth next year!

As Hanukkah, the holiday of rededication, approaches we too can re-dedicate ourselves to the work we love: helping our children grow and learn in an environment filled with love and kindness!

Chag Hanukkah Sameach!

— **Dina Backer**



*...helping homeless families, with an emphasis on victims of domestic violence,
transition to independent living with dignity through subsidized housing and individualized services...*

Residents Update — Two new families joined the Beth El House (BEH) community in October. They are adjusting well to our program, which means that they are determined to continue the journey to an independent life. We are currently seeking permanent housing for another family who will soon be leaving our program. This month the families and BEH staff and volunteers will be gathering at Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church for our annual holiday party. Please contact **Janet Garber** who is coordinating the effort to have congregational members donate gift cards so our resident families can have a joyful holiday season.

Did You Know — Beth El House was started by visionaries from Beth El Hebrew Congregation. However, in 1992 BEH legally separated from the congregation and formed a separate nonprofit corporation. That means that financial support for BEH comes from your generosity and congregational groups such as the Brotherhood, Women of Reform Judaism and the Rabbi’s Good Deed Fund specifically dedicating funds to BEH since BEH is not part of the congregation’s budget. We are thankful that the congregation continues to support BEH for meetings, year-end appeals and generosity of spirit. And so we can say with confidence that both BEH and Beth El Hebrew Congregation are both committed to saving the world by saving one family at a time.

How Your Financial Generosity Enhances BEH — Your donations mean that we can: hire a part-time executive director and case manager to work directly with our families, determine their needs and provide resources to meet their needs which include mental and physical health (especially stress management and clinical therapy to reduce trauma from domestic violence), employment, financial management, education, nutrition, and parenting skills. Each donation allows us to fund activities for the children in our program through childcare and summer activities. Less than 10% of our funds are spent on administrative and overhead costs. Over 90% of your donations directly fund our resident families. If you have not already responded to our year-end request for funds, please consider a generous donation so that we can all continue to make dreams a reality.

For additional information, or how you can help, please contact **Melinda Selden** (703-569-5443 or melindaselden@verizon.net) or visit our website at www.bethelhouseva.org.

Rabbi Search News

Pulpit Committee News:

Over the past six months, the nine members of the Pulpit Committee have been hard at work reviewing resumes from rabbis across the country and across the globe who are interested in leading Beth El Hebrew Congregation.

One or more members of the committee have interviewed each of the 30 candidates, seeking the best possible match for our community. Their assessment of the potential “match” these candidates offer has been based in large part on the guidance received from the Beth El community via written surveys, congregational meetings, email input, telephonic outreach, and ad hoc conversations with a variety of stakeholders.

The chairs of the committee report that the candidates have been without exception, strong, devoted rabbis who were impressed with Beth El and the passion of its members, as well as excited by the prospect of coming to Alexandria to lead our synagogue.

Of the 30 candidates interviewed, the committee has invited four (4) finalists to join us, for a couple of days each during November-December. These will be brief, individual visits at Beth El, which will give key stakeholders at Beth El an opportunity to get to know the finalists better. And we will help them to get to know our leaders, our members, our history, our community, and

our plans for the future.

After the finalists have all visited, the Pulpit Search Committee will make a final selection, and present the decision to the Board. After the board weighs in, the congregation will vote at a congregational meeting in January or February.

Transition Committee News:

The Transition Committee is continuing to meet monthly. We are concentrating on a number of projects that will become evident as the months go by.

Reiterating what is known so far:

- ◆ The picnic the Religious school has at the end of the school year will be open to the entire congregation as an added celebration of **Rabbi Isserow**.
- ◆ **Cantor Kaufman** will be planning a special Soul Shabbat for Friday, June 15, 2018.
- ◆ On Saturday, June 16, 2018 there is a gala to honor **Rabbi Isserow**.

We hope everyone will participate in all of these events.

— **Pamela Zitron**



IT IS NOT TOO EARLY TO THINK ABOUT PRESCHOOL!

Our Early Childhood Learning Center offers part time and full time options for children who will be 2, 3, or 4 by September 30. Our Full-time Toddler Program accepts students from 16 -23 months.

The ECLC is licensed by the State of Virginia and is open to all members of the community.

For more information or to set up a tour, please contact Director **Dina Backer** at 703-537-3084

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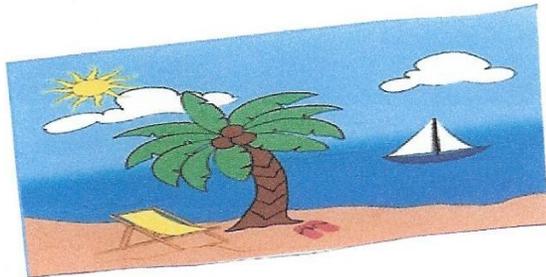
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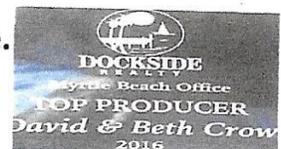


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Office 703-370-9400

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HOLD THE DATE

Chapel in the Woods workdays, Jan. 7, and Feb. 4

Annual Book Sale, Jan. 14 and 15

JCCNV: Trip to Signature Theater to see *Crazy for You*,
Jan. 14, 2018

Brotherhood Annual Chili Tailgate Party, Jan. 21, 2018

Readers of Beth El, Jan. 22, 2018

Virginia Day for All People, Jan. 23, 2018

Holocaust Remembrance Day and Prevention of Crimes
against Humanity Day, Jan. 27, 2018

Jewish Advocacy Day in Richmond, Jan. 30

Beth El/JCCNV Book and Author Event, Jan. 31, 2018

Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month,
Feb. 2018

Jewish Disability Advocacy Day, Feb. 6, 2018

Special Disability/Inclusion Shabbat, Feb. 9, 2018

Beth El/JCCNV: Trip to Theater J to see *Becoming Dr.*
Ruth, Feb. 28, 2018

Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (JCADA)
Event, Feb. 21, 2018

ReelAbilities Film Festival Preview at Beth El: *The Fin-*
ishers, Feb 25, 2018

Annual Interfaith Dinner with Fairlington United
Methodist Church, Feb. 27, 2018

Purim Carnival, Mar. 4, 2018

WRJ Chocolate Seder, Mar. 6, 2018

ReelAbilities Film Festival, Mar. 10-17, 2018

First Seder at Home, No Shabbat Evening Service,
Mar. 30, 2018

Communal Second Seder, Mar. 31, 2018

Oral Rehydration Therapy Program, Apr. 15, 2018

Jewish Federation: Good Deeds Day, Apr. 29, 2018

Religious Action Center Consultation on Conscience,
May 19-20, 2018

Rabbi Isserow's Retirement Gala, June 16, 2018