

# Skokie Valley Agudath Jacob

8825 East Prairie Road, Skokie, IL 60076



12 Av, 5778

July 24, 2018

Friends,

I hope this finds you all well. With Tisha B'Av behind us, it is hard to imagine that in just about seven weeks we will be entering the High Holidays. As the holidays approach, I am writing to share some brief reflections on the past year at Skokie Valley and to ask your support to keep us moving forward.

## ***The Year Past***

This has been one of the most remarkable and transformational years in the shul's 60+ year history—a year of tremendous growth and progress toward realizing our vision and strategy for the rebirth of the shul set in motion five years ago. During this year we have welcomed over 70 new households to the shul, making us among the fastest growing shuls in Chicago, if not the United States. We serve over 220 households comprising almost 650 people who see our shul as a vital focal point in their Jewish lives—day in and day out.

Our achievements reflect the incredible hard work and dedication of our members and the inspiring leadership of Rabbi Ari Hart, who joined us just over a year ago. With Rav Ari's guidance we have brought the shul back to a position of prominence and leadership within the Skokie and greater Chicago Jewish community. We are a pillar of Jewish inclusion and outreach, intellectual challenge, spiritual fulfillment, and love and support for the State of Israel. All of this rests on Skokie Valley's legacy of warmth, open arms, and joy in Jewish observance.

## ***The Road Ahead and How You Can Help***

Our achievements in the past year have been impressive but our plans for the future are even more ambitious. While building on our current foundation, our aim is to deliver more high quality programming at every level including expanded adult education and learning options and a robust youth program. We will expand our outreach to the community with such efforts as our Open Seder. We have a multi-year plan to upgrade our physical infrastructure to make our building more energy efficient, safe, and attractive. All of this to keep moving Skokie Valley forward.

There is no question that we have the human capital, in our members and in Rav Ari's leadership, to accomplish all of our goals. But we need financial capital as well. We are of course blessed that our members and friends share generously of both their time and treasure. But now, more than ever, we have the opportunity to build on our momentum and progress to take the shul to the next level.

And that's why we ask you for your help as the High Holidays approach. As you know, the Yom Kippur appeal is a key element in our annual fundraising activity. It provides us with important funding for the

general operations of the shul as well as to cover new initiatives. Our goal for this year's appeal is \$100,000. One of our members has already stepped forward and made a kickoff gift of \$10,000 to get things going, and we need all of your help at whatever level you can manage. The shul is on a remarkable path and now is the time to reach down and ensure its success.

Friends, it has been my great privilege to be part of the remarkable rebirth of Skokie Valley over the past five years. I have witnessed the amazing impact that people who share a common vision can have. In Rav Ari, we are led by a person of extraordinary learning, insight, and compassion. This is truly a momentous time for our shul and our community. I know you'll all be generous in stepping up to help us continuing building.

On behalf of the shul's leadership team I thank all of you in advance and wish you and your families many blessings in the year to come.

In deepest friendship,

David Rubin

***Here's how you can give:***

- On Line—Go to [SVAJ.org](http://SVAJ.org) and click Donate
- By Check—Checks can be made out to SVAJ and mailed to us at 8825 East Prairie Road, Skokie, IL 60076
- Call us to discuss other gifting options