

14 Av, 5778, August 14, 2019

Members, Supporters and Friends,

I hope this finds you all well. With Tisha B'Av behind us, it is hard to imagine that in less than seven weeks we will be entering the High Holidays. As they approach, I am writing to share some of our accomplishments from the past year and to ask for your support to keep us moving forward.

We are delighted to announce that the board of directors unanimously approved a 5 year contract extension for Rabbi Ari Hart. The new term will run through June 30, 2024. Under Rav Ari's leadership, Skokie Valley is thriving, and this new contract will ensure that Rav Ari and his family will remain part of our family for many years to come.

We continue to be a warm & welcoming synagogue with growing membership. Our programming, tefillot, classes, and speakers just keep getting more robust, interesting and inspiring. Our building on Shabbat is full of energy, home to multiple prayer groups and place where people of varying ages, backgrounds, educations and paths all play an important role. Here is just a partial listing of what we have been doing: Jewish Thinkers in the Modern Ages Sunday night series, featuring community and member scholars; Free and Open Community Seder; Free and Open Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur services; Traditional and Orthodox options for High Holiday services; guest speakers -Rabbi Avi Baumol, Jeff Aeder, Dov Linzer, Yeshivat Maharat students, Gil Hoffman, Rabbi Jason Weiner; Cookie Bake for First Responders; Name Tag Shabbat; Security committee Shabbat Greeter system; JUF Disability Grant for new signs; JUF Security grant for outside lighting; Scientists and Synagogues Grant for speakers/programming; composting; Healthy and plant-based kiddushes and so much more.

As you know, the **Yom Kippur Appeal** is a vital and necessary part of our synagogue's operating budget that help to support security, programming, staff salaries, and facility maintenance.

Despite substantial increases in our security costs and repairs needed for our aging building, we have not increased our membership dues from last year. We continue to make necessary improvements in the building with an eye toward our future needs. We extend hakarat hatov, appreciation, to our volunteers who have successfully applied for small grant awards that we have used for programming and to defray a portion of the security costs; to our financial team who are mindful of our costs and expenses; and our ways and means committee who ensure that we raise the needed funds each year.

We encourage you to make your pledge and payment in advance of Yom Kippur by going to [SVAJ.org](http://SVAJ.org) , including your pledge on your seating request form, or by sending a check to the office.

We are blessed that so many of you share generously of your time and talent. On behalf of the shul's leadership team, thank you for your support and best wishes for a very happy and healthy new year.

Debbie Eisenstein

President