

Hi everyone. It is my great honor to serve as the President of Temple Sinai for the next two years. I know it will go very quickly and be full of rewarding experiences.

First, I would like to give you some background about myself for those of you who don't know me. I grew up in West Haven, Connecticut. My Jewish roots were at Congregation Sinai in West Haven, which served as a center of my parents' social life. Our shul was conservative. I attended Hebrew school three times a week and let's put it this way, it was nothing like our wonderful religious school at Temple Sinai. Since my parents were from Boston, many of our Jewish holidays were spent with my grandparents in Boston where my brother and I would attend services at my grandparents' temple, Temple B'nai Moshe. I remember seeing my grandfather's name listed as one of the founders of the temple in the temple lobby. My grandfather's rabbi was known as a great orator. As a kid growing up, I thought he was a little scary (similar to my feelings about my rabbi in West Haven) and again nothing like our wonderful rabbi at Temple Sinai.

Fast forward: Roberta and I moved to Stamford in 1989 and had our daughter, Claire, in 1996. When Claire was in first grade, we decided we needed to start giving her a Jewish education and that is when we joined Temple Sinai. We enrolled her in Sunday School and, four years later we had our son, Andrew, and later enrolled him as well. We were living life as busy parents and our involvement with Temple Sinai, beyond our children's Jewish education, was nominal. Then I received a call one evening and was asked to join the board. The next year there was a mid-term vacancy for a VP position and Arlene Rosen asked if I would take on that role. As they say, the rest is history.

While this background is important, I think more important is the story of how I became part of the Temple Sinai family. Like many things, it happened little by little until I found myself in a very different place than when I began. However, I think it truly started when Rabbi Jay showed up unexpectedly at my mother's funeral in West Haven almost six years ago and participated in the service with my mother's rabbi. What did that mean to me? Even though I had spent most Jewish holidays with my mother in West Haven and my "Jewish heart" had strong connections there, a new family was waiting for me back in Stamford. I began to embrace this new family by deciding to attend Friday night services at Temple Sinai to say kaddish for my mother. From there, growth happened (and continues to happen) for both me and my relationship with Temple Sinai (even though "Growth Happens Here" hadn't yet been invented!).

I think my experience was both individual and common. We all create our own relationship to this K'hellah Kedoshah that is Temple Sinai. I can't tell you exactly what I hope we will be able to accomplish together during the next two years that I'm President. However, having the opportunity to become a part of this family at Temple Sinai has impacted my life in important and meaningful ways. I hope we can continue to work together to make Temple Sinai a place where each of us has the chance to grow as part of the Temple Sinai family, each in our own special way.

I would like nothing more than to hear what's on your mind regarding Temple Sinai. I can be reached at acohen1996@gmail.com.

Alan Cohen
President