

Finance Report: Amy Scully

2021-2022 dues collections are strong. As of 5/1/2022, we have collected \$277,860 and anticipate collecting at 20,000 - 22,000 before the end of the fiscal year. Statements were sent in April, personals-contacts have been made and final statements for the year will go out again in June.

House & Grounds Report: Gregg Helman

Gregg Helman – Chair

David Potter

Ed Hertz*

Lew Lapine

Erica Pfister

Paul Westfall

In addition to the above committee members, the Tree of Life House and Grounds committee would like to thank all the TOL members who have helped to maintain and modernize our facilities this year. It truly requires an organization-wide effort to maintain our building and grounds and doing so provides many opportunities to build a strong community as we look to the future.

Our committee accomplished much over the past year and estimated we saved TOL thousands of dollars by using TOL membership to plan and execute projects. Below is a sample of jobs and work completed:

- Held several workdays and successfully engaged TOL membership to participate
- Upfitted the Sukkah and installed tarps for outdoor gatherings
- Cleaned up playground area and repaired playground fence to benefit the Religious School
- Repaired Rain Garden Boardwalk and restored it to service
- Replaced wall on garage and painted the entire building
- Replaced and refitted ceiling tiles in the Social Hall and Sanctuary
- Repaired broken Bimah menorah and installed toggle switches on the outdoor Hanukkah
- Repaired door molding under the stage
- Maintained and repaired lawn equipment

Of course, major renovation projects have been completed and are in progress. These include the renovations of the Foyer, Social Hall, hallways, and adult bathrooms. These major projects were overseen by other groups at TOL, and we are so appreciative of this leadership to modernize our facilities. Additional projects will be announced in the near future.

*I would be remiss to not recognize our beloved Ed Hertz who passed away this year. Ed was a pillar of our organization and a mentor to many of us. He will be sadly missed but his memory will live on in so many aspects of our lives.

We achieved a great deal this year and there's much still to be accomplished. The House and Grounds committee would welcome additional members to share their talents and skills. If you'd like to get involved with the committee, feel welcome to reach out to me.

Social Action Report: Rena Neiger

The Tree of Life Social Action Committee is committed to endeavors of *mercy* and *justice* in our community, both of which are central tenets of Reform Judaism. To those ends, we have established several ongoing volunteering activities, and have enjoyed great participation from members of the Columbia Jewish community. Please consider joining us, either once or on an ongoing basis. We'd love to have you!

Acts of Mercy

Mitzvah Thursdays take place on the third Thursday of every month at the Harvest Hope Food Bank, 2220 Shop Road, Columbia, from 10:00 to noon, where all are invited to come and help sort and package foodstuffs for the needy, including schoolchildren. We are often assigned to assemble bags of instant meals for children to take home in their backpacks on Fridays to ensure they have food for the weekend. We welcome all members of the community to join us. All you have to do is show up at Harvest Hope by 10:00 on those Thursday mornings and pitch in! We've had an average of 8-9 TOL volunteer participants per session.

Service Sundays take place on the first Sunday of each month at Transitions Homeless Center, 2025 Main Street, Columbia, from 11:20 to about 12:45. The volunteer activity consists of helping to assemble a hot meal in styrofoam boxes and setting them out on tables for clients who come for lunch at the Center. This is an especially good activity for professionals who aren't available on weekdays, as well as families with children 12 and older who want to perform a mitzvah together. If you are looking for something fun to do on a Sunday, please consider joining us! The Transitions kitchen can only accommodate 6-7 volunteers for this activity, and I'm happy to report that we have successfully staffed the kitchen since we started three months ago.

Seeds of Hope Farmers Market

Starting in mid June until around mid-August, Tree of Life hosts a Farmers Market in our parking lot on Thursday mornings from 8:30 to 11:30. One or two volunteers are needed for weighing and bagging fruits and vegetables for shoppers during those hours. If you would like to help, whether on a one-time or ongoing basis, please contact David Potter at davidpotter1@mac.com. David is almost always on hand to help out, and we have had other volunteers manning the scale and shmoozing with the customers from time to time. It's always fun!

Acts of Justice

MORE Justice - Over 600 Midlands community members, including Tree of Life congregants, came together as part of **MORE Justice** on April 4 to advocate for an affordable housing trust fund in Richland County and for an in-depth evaluation of gun violence in Richland County and the City of Columbia. Richland County council members Alison Terracio and Paul Livingston both agreed to support the housing trust fund, and Columbia Mayor Daniel Rickenman agreed to an outside audit of gun violence in the city. We are grateful for their leadership and support, and look forward to future collaboration. For more information on how to get involved, please contact Amanda Hamilton at razmanda@gmail.com.

For more information or to join any of the activities described above, please contact me at rneiger@gmail.com. I'd love to hear from you!

Adult Education Report: Marc Rapport

The loss of Rabbi Marcus hit the committee hard but we're confident that Rabbi Uriarte will help us move forward with renewed energy and commitment to lifelong learning that was a big part of Rabbi Marcus' legacy here. The groundwork is now being laid.

The committee met with Rabbi Erik on May 17 and was encouraged to learn of his vision and plans for adult learning at Tree of Life.

We will be working with him on a series of sessions on "Shaarei Teshuvah," the "Gates of Repentance," in the month of Elul leading up to the High Holidays.

We plan to follow up then with other text-based sessions to be determined, with the initial focus on "Why be a Reform Jew?" – discussions on the meaning and relevance of our movement and timeless Jewish principles in today's world.

We also will be exploring other sessions to be led by USC faculty members and others in their areas of expertise. These would be one-off sessions, most likely, rather than a series.

Rabbi Erik also has plans for Saturday morning Torah study and weekday/evening basic Judaism classes, and the committee will assist in whatever ways we can.

(The committee currently comprises Steven Langer, Steven Grosby, and Marc Rapport, joined regularly by our program committee chair and TOL vice president Patty Tucker. If you have an interest in joining us, please don't hesitate to let me know.)