

This past year we adorned the back of our Fiterman Chapel with a beautiful Agam tapestry that had been hidden away in our collection. Though traditionally Jews face eastward toward Jerusalem when they pray, we are well aware that God can be found everywhere—and likewise, even behind us there should be a reminder of our strong sense of identity. This beautiful piece almost anticipates the details of our Chapel paneling, as it organically blends into the background. We are grateful to Sheldon and Lois Vermes who donated this piece years ago after connecting directly with Agam while it was in production.

New Members

In the spirit of welcoming families to the congregation—so everyone can put names with faces—we are now offering new families the opportunity to place their photo in the Shofar. If you have joined Beth El in the past year, please email goldberg@bethelsynagogue.org with a family picture. It is our goal to feature as many photos of new families as possible.

PLEASE WELCOME

Heather & Jerry Goldman
with Jocelyn, Spencer and Lucas

Andrea & Alan Binder
with Sarah and Matthew

Kelly & Vincent Castiglione
with Adrianna and Vincent

Elana & Neil Goldsmith
with Dalia

Amanda Schwartz & Bryan Savage
with Noah

Rabbi Jeffrey & Deb Schein



The Schein Family



Detail Oriented

By Bonnie Bongard Goldish, Beth El President

To say that I am detailed oriented is to put it mildly. Friends and family know I obsess over the minutiae, and it drives them crazy!

But over the years, I have learned there are positive attributes to being detail oriented, especially when it comes to my professional life. As an ophthalmologist, when I repeatedly ask patients “better 1 or better 2” until we get the prescription exactly right, my patients appreciate this attention to detail. They also forgive me for double-checking the work the technicians have done, “just to make sure everything is correct.”

So what does this have to do with Beth El? As president, we have tried to identify areas where extra details count, such as safety and security. I am not highlighting this because there is an increased threat at this time. Rather, safety and security is an ongoing area in which our diligence to details counts.



Yoni Bundt giving a security briefing to the synagogue board.

Because we operate under the principle, “see something say something,” our board set up a Safety and Security Committee. Under their guidance, we added additional lights in our parking lot, and will install bollards at our front doors. We are improving our surveillance systems both inside and outside the building, along with other initiatives the committee supports.

But security is not just about our physical plant. To protect our home, we need to know about the people inside. And so while we want everyone to feel warmly welcomed, if you are asked at the building doors about the purpose of your visit, we hope that you will be patient and understanding, whether this is your first or thousandth time at Beth El. Our intent is to create a safe place for everyone and find opportunities to connect.

You might have noticed that all of our staff now wear identifying name badges so they can be easily recognized. Our board members wear them when they greet on Shabbat. This has not only added an additional piece of security, but fits within our effort to be warm and welcoming.

One of my favorite aspects of being president has been the honor of sitting on the bimah every Shabbat. From this vantage point, it amazes me the way our staff and clergy juggle so many details. During the course of a Shabbat service, at various times one or more of our clergy may be out teaching a class, leading a TaRBuT discussion, or participating in another service in the building. But everything comes together so seamlessly, that most congregants would have no idea there is so much activity in the building. At the end of the morning, we are then all able to join together in a beautiful Shabbat congregational lunch, which is all set up and ready to go, whether we are done at 11:30 or 12:00 p.m.

None of this happens in a vacuum, and as president, I am grateful for the dedication of our wonderful staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to focus on every detail of our synagogue. I invite you to let me know of details we could improve upon at Beth El. We can all learn from each other and I look forward to hearing from you.

“One of my favorite aspects of being president has been the honor of sitting on the bimah every Shabbat. From this vantage point, it amazes me the way our staff and clergy juggle so many details.”

THE DETAILS OF DAILY LIVING

By Rabbi Alexander Davis



"Take a look at the lamp posts. What do you notice? Those on the left are modern. Those on the right are old. That's how you know if you are in the old city or the new city. You see, it's all about little details."

With this observation, our tour guide not only introduced us to the history of Montreal, she taught us a lesson about paying attention to details and seeing a larger picture.

In October, I accompanied a group of 30 Beth El congregants, members of my study groups, on a trip to Canada. We travelled to Quebec City and to Montreal to explore these cities' Jewish communities, to learn about Canada's history, to enjoy the beautiful fall colors and, of course, to sample delicious baked goods. It was a wonderful trip with good friends and fascinating sites.

In Montreal, our guide pointed to the ground. "You see those pavers? Look closely. They are a different color than the others. They indicate that the park was originally a cemetery; they mark where graves once stood." Later, walking in the old Jewish neighborhood: "Look up at the building, what do you notice about the windows? The rounded, tablet-like shape tells us that the building was once a shul. And if you look carefully, you can see a Jewish star in the bricks laid out sideways."

Discovering bits of trivia about a building or a city can be interesting. But when those details are stitched together, they tell an even more fascinating and compelling story. We need both, the details and the larger picture. One without the other is deficient.

This reminds me of a teaching. Rabbi Yishmael was a sage from the 2nd century CE who introduced 13 rules for interpreting the Torah into law. (If you want to read them, they appear at the end of Birkat Hashachar, the siddur's early morning blessings.)

Rule #4 is *klal u'frat*: a generalization is limited by specifications.

Rule #5: *prat u'khlal*: specifications are broadened by a generalization.

Here is an example of Rule #4. The Torah tells us "when you sacrifice a domestic animal from your cattle, sheep and goats..." Cattle, sheep and goats are specific kinds of domestic animals. The Torah includes the general term, "domestic animals," to teach that only these specified animals (cattle, sheep and goats) may be offered. If the Torah had only listed the specific animals without the general principle, one might be tempted to apply Rabbi Yishmael's other principles to broaden the number of permitted animals.

Rule #5 is the reverse of #4. The Torah teaches, "his donkey, his garment, any lost object, he must return." First, specifics are presented (donkey and garment), followed by a general term (lost object). In this case, we follow the general rule (one must return lost objects) and are not limited to detailed specifications (donkeys and garments).

If it sounds complicated, it is! And these are the easy ones!! But like our tour guide, these principles point to a larger lesson beyond Torah law. Our lives are built on a mountain of everyday details: a baker must not add too much salt or too little baking powder; an airline pilot must go through a precise check list before take-off; a voter must fill in the bubble completely, and on and on. It's the little details of life that add up to a big picture. If we only see them as minutiae and fail to attend to them, we run the risk of our cake falling, our plane crashing, our ballot not counted, etc. On the other hand, if we get stuck in the details, we might fail to see the proverbial forest from the trees. Thus, Rabbi Yishmael taught, "the details need the generalities and the generalities need the details" (Rule #7).

May the details of daily life always lead to blessings and the specifics reveal the sacred.

Exploring Jewish Canada



Touring the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of Montreal



Visit to Jewish Cemetery of St. Sophie



Walking tour of Montreal



Visiting the Quebec City's small synagogue

“Ch” as in Clearing One’s Throat

By Rabbi Avi S. Olitzky



At Beth El, for many years we’ve transliterated the Hebrew letter Chet (ח) as Het. This was for two main reasons: (1) If someone did not know how to pronounce the guttural “h” correctly, at least the soft “h” was not as incorrect as pronouncing a “ch” as in cheese; (2) the scientific and academic

world transliterates using a subline/underline or an underdot.

A major goal of Beth El is to be warm and welcoming, and most people from other faith backgrounds really have no idea what this format means. Further, what we now realize is that we have grown apart from the majority of the Jewish community who tends to transliterate using a “ch.” Words (and spellings) like challah and chai are now quite commonplace, even in the secular world. No longer are people as confused as they once were generations ago. In addition, when it comes to production and editing, such stylizations (underlines, italics, etc.) can get overlooked and can lead to error and inconsistency.

The challenge regarding transliteration is there are really two theories and thereby two methods. One system tries to capture the sound of the word as closely as possible in the transliterated alphabet, helping the reader phonetically pronounce with accuracy. The other uses the transliterated alphabet’s characters as symbols to represent the word’s correct spelling in the original alphabet, helping the reader to reverse transcribe accurately.

And yet, there are about 16 ways in English to transliterate the Hebrew name for the Jewish Festival of Lights. Though there is no definitive way – and each is correct in its own right – our primary goal is to help people pronounce correctly more than to decode correctly. Chanukah (which is about proper pronunciation) and Hanukkah (which is about proper reverse transcription) are the most common variant spellings, but as we move forward, we will use Chanukah.

This may seem like “no big deal” to the general public, but we are deeply entrenched in the age of information. Rarely an hour passes when a person does not look up a question, a lyric, a random datum, using Google, or better, Wikipedia. Though we can rely on the auto-corrections of our phones and internet browsers, we better serve the broader community if we spell in accord with the populace.

But back to Chanukah: as we pay further attention to detail, the way we choose to transliterate not only makes the Hebrew more accessible for those who may have difficulty reading and pronouncing it, but even deeper, there are often coded lessons within transliteration.

Why, for example, is Chanukah a compelling transliteration? Eight letters, eight nights! The same is true for Challah, which is consumed on Shabbat, the seventh day—seven letters.

It is our hope that even the letters we choose remind our community that there is to be *kavanah* (intention) in everything we do, each and every detail.





THE PRECISE WAY TO Honor the Torah

By Cantor Audrey Abrams

"At."

"No, eit."

"Et."

"Not exactly. Not 'et,' rather eit."

"Eat."

"No, look at the vowels. It's more like "aaate."

"I got it, eit."

"Exactly, great job!"

It's not easy reading the Torah correctly. Getting exactly the right pronunciation, to say nothing of the tune, takes great attention to details, patience, a desire to work hard, and a willingness to be corrected over and over. Even seasoned Torah readers sometimes need help to catch small mistakes like the typical one I described above.

Where does all this come from and what's the point?

Between the 6th and 10th centuries CE, the Masorettes, Jewish scribal scholars, standardized the pronunciation, paragraph and verse divisions of the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible). They devised a system of vowels and symbols for cantillation that we use today. The cantillation symbols - trope (in Hebrew, ta'amei mikra) are notations found under and over the letters of the Chumash, the Megillot (Esther, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Ruth, Lamentations) and the Haftarat (Prophetic readings). They govern how we chant the readings from these books.

By standardizing the vowels, the Masorettes ensured that all Jewish communities would read the Torah the same and read it correctly. Trope offers additional advantages. It helps us sing a word melodically, stress the correct syllable, know where to pause in a verse (think of a comma), and serves as a verse's punctuation. Without the vowels and the trope, what we read might be downright gibberish!

To read correctly, readers take time with their learning and often practice with another reader. They study the meaning of the text in order to understand the reading. And sometimes, they even practice reading from the Torah scroll itself in order to see exactly how the words are laid out. (All bar/bat mitzvah students do this.) Finally, strategically standing beside each reader are two gabbaim. They serve as a support system and in the last resort, correct a reading when necessary. They help if a reader gets lost, can't remember a trope or mispronounces a word. Since no one is perfect, the gabbaim help ensure a high quality reading.

Some may see such attention to "minor" details such as accents and trope as overly demanding or unimportant. But I believe that reading Torah is an honor not to be taken lightly. It is specifically through our attention to every word and every letter that we honor our sacred texts. And it's that desire to show honor which motivates readers to pay attention to the details. Thank you to all of those who do so.

If you would like to learn to read Torah, or brush up on your skills, Adult Torah Reading classes will be offered on Shabbat mornings from January to May, 10:00 am – 11:00 am. Contact me for details at aabrams@bethelsynagogue.org.



JUDY SILVERMAN 5776 Yad Chazakah Awards

Presented annually to those who read the equivalent of seven aliyot at Beth El on at least five different Torah reading occasions during the course of one year (beginning with Sdrat B'reishit through Simchat Torah). With deep appreciation to their dedication and service, we congratulate this year's recipients.

1st Year: Tomer Bundt, Josh Halper, Leo Schlaifer, Eitan Weinstein

2nd Year: Gigi Herman, Dani Orloff, Elaine Sadoff

3rd Year: Danny Levey, Jerry Ribnick, John Simon

4th Year: Shayan Gilbert Burke, Sam Herman, Brianna Johnson, Howard Koolick, Arnie Seltzer, Jenna Simon, Ilana Weinstein, Gary Weinstein, Marilyn Weisberg

5th Year: Deb Deutsch, Jordan Klein

7th Year: Chris Brand, Rabbi Avi Olitzky

8th Year: Louise Ribnick

10th Year: Steve Blehert

11th Year: Jesse Klein, Randi Rose

12th Year: Cantor Audrey Abrams

13th Year: Josh Klein, Joe Rine

14th Year: Rachel Klein, Janet Shanedling

15th Year: Sid Konikoff, Larry Pepper

16th Year: Rabbi Alexander Davis, Beverlee Rockler Fine

17th Year: Steve Rose

20th Year: Jenny Hage

23rd Year: Richard Ozer, Cindy Witkin

24th Year: Ken Goldfarb

25th Year: Ron Plotsker

27th Year: Pennie Shapiro

28th Year: Richard Spiegel

29th Year: Jim Bukstein

30th Year: Michael Blehert, Harriette Burstein

31st Year: Adina Goldstein



Providing the Best Care & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WE CAN

By Adrienne Berman, Early Childhood Professional Growth Specialist

When parents “lend” their children to the Aleph Preschool, they trust us to pay close attention to the details. And we do—very close attention. In fact, as our Early Childhood Professional Growth Specialist, my primary goal is to help keep track of these details!

As an Early Childhood Center, recognition of this close attention to detail comes in the form of our current Parent Aware accreditation process and the implementation of our new communication system, Tadpoles. This additional effort is rooted in our philosophy that quality early childhood education is dependent on the connection between our parents and our school.

Working for our families, we brainstorm solutions for challenging child-transitions and ensure clarity for acclimatizing new parents. The Parent Info night was a perfect example of the school clearly articulating new changes and programs to our parents.

Paying close attention to our teachers is about developing new partnerships and setting short and long term career goals. My monthly mentoring sessions with individual teachers afford us quality time for reflection and rapprochement that few schools provide to their staff.

For our kiddos, nothing is more detailed-oriented than our lesson planning where we touch all of the Minnesota Core Competencies and ensure a safe, nurturing and happy atmosphere. We focus on goal-oriented lesson planning, because we

know the research: children learn better when teachers identify a clear goal and children are aware of said goal. This is accomplished through bi-monthly meetings with all teachers of a given cohort and my regular classroom visits to explore how the curriculum is implemented.

But it is not enough that we work with the children inside the classroom. We also collaborate with Behave Your Best, which allows us to help parents get past the stressful, emotional part of challenging behaviors and shift the focus to teaching and resolution. The Behave Your Best curriculum offers continuing professional education for our staff and teaches parents about the “light-switch method”: using praise to encourage desired behaviors and non-verbal communication and redirection to diminish unwanted behaviors. The consultants from Behave Your Best also conduct bi-weekly classroom visits to observe all children and teachers to optimize implementation of these philosophies and identify children who need more tools in their “success belt.”

We sometimes forget that our littlest children soak up every word we say and mimic every action and gesture. Their attention to detail is at times uncanny! In order to provide the best care and early childhood education we can, we have to pay even greater attention to detail. As a professional, I am honored to have taken on this role at the Aleph Preschool. As a parent, I’m thrilled that the role exists.



During the Parent Info Night in November, many of our parents turned out to learn about our new programs and changes in the school, demonstrating not only our commitment to them but their commitment to us—and our shared commitment to the children.



Detailing the Desires of our Families

By Amanda Awend, Director of Shorashim and Young Families Engagement

Over the past several years, as Director of Shorashim and Young Families Engagement, I have watched our Shorashim Shabbat morning program blossom, and we have the greatest number of Kindergarten and 1st grade students enrolled than ever before. Our children return each week excited to see their friends and eager to see what each session has in store for them.

Each morning is filled with a combination of *tefillot*, weekly *parashah* (Torah portion) discussions, activities, and art projects. We adapt our curriculum each year to best suit these specific children, always finding new ways to keep our children having fun and engaged. Additionally, as a Shabbat program, the children have the privilege of coming into the main sanctuary and participating on a regular basis. It is wonderful to see so many children on the steps of the bimah at the conclusion of each service.

Three years ago, a mother of two young boys asked if we could have a learning opportunity for “grown-ups.” She was thrilled with the knowledge her sons were coming home with each week from the Aleph Preschool and the Shorashim Shabbat morning program, but she wanted an adult learning experience for herself and other parents (and grandparents). As we surveyed her peers, it became clear that our families from diverse backgrounds could benefit from and enjoy an adult discussion group.

Through this came our Apples & Honey Grown-Up Learning program, where our clergy and other guest speakers present and discuss topics related to an upcoming holiday, Torah portion, Jewish values, etc. This has also been a great opportunity to learn about various programs in the community. Here these families are connecting to each other, to the synagogue, and to the community.

This of course is complemented by the Apples and Honey Young Families service I lead on the first Shabbat of every month. During Apples and Honey, we sing, we pray, we hear stories, and most importantly, we engage. We keep it “fresh and fun,” and, at the same time, maintain a standard consistency to the service that ensures families feel comfortable participating. If it seems that children have reached a point when they need to get up and move, we might incorporate a dance version of a song—and we often give the children an opportunity to come up and help lead the *tefillot*. Again, it is all about the attention to detail.

We make it our goal to connect with families and find out what families want out of their synagogue experience. This is why, for example, we had 300 young families and children participate in our Simchat Torah Celebration and Pizza Party. It felt wonderful to be a part of such a warm and enriched celebration. This is what synagogue life is meant to be, and this is what is happening here at Beth El because of our attention to detail.



On October 25, nearly 900 children and adults attended the third installation of Aleph Preschool Presents: The Okee Dokee Brothers Live in Concert. This was yet another example of how we serve the wider community, while still supporting our families here at home, since all of the proceeds from this event went to support early childhood tuition assistance.



Fractional Success

Mary Baumgarten, Education Director

Each year at Beth El we are blessed to celebrate 30-40 b'nai mitzvah. Our students come from different backgrounds and schools and each one brings their own skills, talents and drive.

Although each of our students get up on the bimah in front of our congregation and make it all look relatively easy, it requires hard work and dedication on their part *and on ours*. We take seriously the job of preparing every one of our students for this important rite of passage. Therefore, we have developed an excellent program to ensure that our students are fully prepared to make it look easy. Here is one example.

When Cantor Newman (our Cantor Emeritus) was at Beth El this fall for the Yamim Noraim (High Holy Days), he read Torah on Shabbat Teshuvah. When he completed his reading, one of the gabbaim said: "Not bad; you get 31/32." We all laughed. After all, this fraction system was implemented by Cantor Newman and is still used today to assess our students on their t'fillah (prayer) skills. The fractions range from 1/2 to 31/32. Why this seemingly comical system?

We frequently hear jokes about being perfectionists with regards to pronunciation, accents, and melody. But, we have high expectations of all of our students. Moreover, our Fiterman B'nai Mitzvah Program is highly individualized. We meet each student where they are. We set personal goals for each one because we want them to be the best they can be. Quantity of material learned is not what

is important to us. Quality is. And we want them to feel proud of their accomplishment. Consequently, we have standards for all of our students, from those who have special needs to those who require enrichment.

Many students have remarked that one of the by-products of their bar/bat Mitzvah preparation was that it showed them that with effort they could master and even excel at things they once believed were insurmountable. It is most rewarding to have a student, previously lacking in self-confidence and self-assurance, say with pride: "I did it! I passed out" of my prayer unit, or my Torah trope.

In this way, the bar/bat Mitzvah experience becomes about more than just a one day event or celebration. Certainly it is about becoming a Jewish adult. But, for many of our students it is an affirmation of their true abilities and lays the groundwork for a "can do" attitude going forward. All those details, all those fractions add up to an important life lesson.

In my mind, that's a very big deal. We will continue to nourish and nurture our students with learning, positivity and confidence as we help to prepare them for their b'nai mitzvah. In all likelihood some will even continue to make jokes about our fraction system. On their special day, though, they will continue to make it look easy when it's their turn on the bimah.

Retreating With Our Upcoming B'nai Mitzvah



From October 23-25, 33 Beth El 5th and 6th graders in our Fiterman B'nai Mitzvah Program, spent a wonderful and engaging Shabbat at Herzl Camp. They were accompanied by Beth El staff members: Mary Baumgarten, Cantor Abrams and Jessica Koolick, who planned and executed this Shabbaton. Students prayed together, ate together, participated in discussions together and took part in many fun and interesting activities. We are grateful to the teen counselors who also staffed the retreat.

B'nai Mitzvah



January 2, 2016 / 21 Tevet 5776
Shemot

MIA CHESNIE KATZ

עמליה וידה בת יהודה וחנה מרים

Daughter of Jamie & Cindy Katz

In preparing to become a Bat Mitzvah, Mia has grown and matured. We are all proud of her accomplishments.



January 2, 2016 / 21 Tevet 5776
Shemot

SAMANTHA LAUREN KATZ

סשה נתניה בת יהודה וחנה מרים

Daughter of Jamie & Cindy Katz

Samantha has taken her studies seriously. She has done well and has taken pride in her work.



January 23, 2016 / 13 Shevat 5776
Beshalach – Shabbat Shirah

GABRIEL MICAH KAPLAN

מאיר גבריאל בן רפאל ושרה רבקה

Son of Ross & Laura Kaplan

Gabe is smart and kind. He is eager to please and to do right. He valued the opportunity to learn and grow as an emerging Jewish adult.



January 30, 2016 / 20 Shevat 5776
Yitro

MATTHEW SHANE SHAPIRO

מתן בן שמואל ודאבה

Son of Stuart & Debra Shapiro

Matthew is a fine young man with a warm and friendly personality. He has approached his bar mitzvah studies with respect and care. He follows in the tradition of his older brother and sister as he celebrates his bar mitzvah at Beth El.



February 6, 2016 / 27 Shevat 5776
Mishpatim

MIRA ESTHER MALKA

מירה אסתר בת רונן ורחל

Daughter of Ronen & Karen Malka

Mira has worked hard and diligently to prepare for her bat mitzvah. She has stayed focused and determined to reach the goals she set for herself.



February 13, 2016 / 4 Adar I 5776
Terumah

BENJAMIN MICHAEL ARONOW

בנימין מיכאל בן מאיר מנדל ואביגיל נחמה

Son of Jeff & Amy Aronow

Benjamin is a quick learner who always wants to progress and learn more. He set high standards for himself and succeeded in accomplishing them.

B'nai Mitzvah



February 13, 2016 / 4 Adar I 5776
Terumah

SHIRA ARIELLA ARONOW

שירה אריאלה בת מיאר מנדל ואביגיל נחמה

Daughter of Jeff & Amy Aronow

Shira is an excellent and diligent student. She has been motivated in her studies and takes pride in her accomplishments.



February 27, 2016 / 18 Adar I 5776
Ki Tissa

GRIFFIN MARK SELL

יצחק מכאל בן מאיר ואלישבע

Son of Jason & Leslie Sell

Griffin is a positive, motivated and cheerful student. He thrives on his successes and forward progress.



February 27, 2016 / 18 Adar I 5776
Ki Tissa

MOLLY ANNE SELL

אסתר צ'אנסי בת מאיר ואלישבע

Son of Jason & Leslie Sell

Molly is easy going, sweet and serious. She has worked hard and taken pride in her accomplishments.



March 5, 2016 / 25 Adar I 5776
Va'yakheil – Shabbat Shekalim

ANIKA MEGAN HAHN

יפה חיבה בת לאה

Daughter of Jerad & Leslie Hahn

Anika is a warm and delightful girl. She approaches everything with seriousness and intensity and has reveled in her progress and successes.



March 12, 2016 / 2 Adar II 5776
Pekudei

LILY MAE FEINBERG

שרה בת דוד ובתיה שושנה

Daughter of Steven Feinberg and Jennifer Feinberg

Lily loves life. She has a positive attitude and has approached her Bat Mitzvah preparation with a "can do" attitude.



March 19, 2016 / 9 Adar II 5776
Vayikra – Shabbat Zakhor

MARGOT GISELLE USEM

מרים בת מרדכי ושמחה

Daughter of Renee Usem and Marc Usem & Lisa Baumgarten-Usem

Margot consistently exhibits the qualities of a true "mentsch." Sweet and sensitive, she approaches all her undertakings seriously and diligently.



Playing to Our Strengths

By Jessica Koolick, Youth Director

Each spring, our Youth Department looks ahead to the Fall and selects a musical to perform at our very own Dinner Theater. When we select a play, we keep in mind that our teens will be performing and rehearsing these songs and dialogues for weeks. We always aim to choose something with which they are not only familiar, but also will be fun for them to perform. Nevertheless, it is most important that we focus on producing a show that appeals to our main audience—the young families of Beth El and the Beth El Aleph Preschool.

Like all large scale events that the synagogue hosts, without time and impeccable attention to detail, there is no way to produce a successful event. In selecting Disney's *Frozen* for this year's performance, we're reminded that without truly paying attention to the audience for whom we will be performing, there may not be a reason to perform in the first place. *Frozen* surely captured the hearts of audiences of all ages, but it is no secret that, each day, our Aleph Preschool hallways are filled with *Frozen*-themed backpacks and lunchboxes.

Each year, our rehearsals and performances challenge our teens to take risks on stage and to find the confidence to act and become one with

Like all large scale events that the synagogue hosts, without time and impeccable attention to detail, there is no way to produce a successful event.



their character. But we also ask our performers to sell advertisements for inclusion in the Playbill that all Dinner Theater attendees receive. Our teens serve as ambassadors for Beth El and this year was no different; we had donations from businesses throughout the Twin Cities, simply because our teens reached out to them to talk about Beth El and their involvement in the synagogue community.

And though our production is an integral fundraiser for USY and the Youth Department at Beth El, our Dinner Theater rehearsals and performances are so much more. Our teen actors, actresses, meal servers, and set-builders spend weeks working together to create a show they are proud of—and even more so, a show they find fulfillment in as they serve and entertain the community.

By the time the curtain rises for our two performances, our cast has become a warm, close-knit family, and it is incredible to witness the sense of ownership and pride the teens take in the final product they get to show the community. Because by then, our teens have learned discipline and responsibility, developed confidence, and become a deeper and more engaged part of the community they entertain.

Without attention to the details of our costumes, music, acting, memorization of lines, not to mention all of the logistics that go into two performances running smoothly, our yearly Dinner Theater would not be nearly as impactful. It is our goal to continue to use this attention to detail to provide meaningful experiences for the young people at Beth El as we enter 2016.



Leave the Details to Me

By Jan Hamilton, Congregational Nurse

Often, life is particularly busy. We have many things on our “to do list.” In those times, paying attention to details can be hard. We are distracted or overwhelmed by all the things we have to get done. At other times, life is calmer but we might not naturally be detail oriented. For example, I am someone who likes to look at the “big picture.”

Whether you are too busy or too big picture, I want to offer two helpful reminders to help stay on top of life’s many details.

One: Remain in the precious present. Attend only to that which needs attention in *this* moment. This will help you feel less overwhelmed by the enormity of all that needs doing.

Second: Remember to delegate. Many times what needs to get done doesn’t have to rest all on *your* shoulders alone.

As Beth El’s Congregational Nurse, I’ve enjoyed being able to lighten the load for members. Whether it’s listening to you or your family member, I’m here. Or perhaps you need help performing particular tasks, like getting medications in order, making doctor’s appointments or attending a care conference. If you need someone to advocate for you, or to speak on your behalf, I can help. Leave the details to me.

These are only a few examples of the things I might do to “lighten the load.” If you have questions about what might fall under my purview, please contact me at jhamilton@bethelsynagogue.org. I want to hear from you.

In case you didn’t know: I facilitate a monthly discussion group at Knollwood Place. I would love to see you or your loved one there.

MAZAL TOV TO MEMBERS WITH UPCOMING MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

NAME	DATE	YEARS
Ralph & Maralyn Atlas	January 7	65
Ronald & Janet Plotsker	January 23	45
Neil Kay & Micki Herman-Kay	February 4	5
Loren & Audra Mintz	February 4	10
Alex & Faina Lakhter	February 11	55
Ken Raskin & Lynn Lederman	February 12	10
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Kenneth Goodman & Marina Goodman-Flider	March 1	15
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Joel & Missy Lavintman	March 21	40
Jonathan & Sally Minsberg	March 21	40
David & Stacey Spencer	March 23	25
Todd & Teri Brown	March 26	10

If you would like to ensure your (or your loved one's) milestone is acknowledged in future publications, please contact the Beth El Office at 952.873.7300 or info@bethelsynagogue.org.

Mazal Tov to...

Barbara Bank and Phil Finkelstein on the births of their two grandchildren: Ephraim Shamsi was born on July 10 to Rachel and David Shamsi and June Felix Williams was born on August 8 to Ruth and Matt Williams.

David Halper & Sharlee Benson on their August 13 marriage. Mazal tov also to Shar's mother, Della Barrett Kinney, and to the couple's children: Jonathan (Jill) Halper, Heidi Gedis (Gordy Grimsby), Jobi (Steve) Levison, Nicole (Craig) Harrison, Kelly (Aime) Mayo, Arianna Halper Prunty, Ryan Benson, Barrett Benson and Jack Benson.

Sarah Gruber & David Scott on their August 23 marriage. Mazal tov also to their parents Josh & Pam Gruber and Debbie & Randy Scott.

Joshua Aaron Appleman & Negin Ashoori on their August 23 marriage. Mazal tov also to their parents, Dr. Michael & Mickey Appleman and Dr. Hooshang & Edna Ashoori, and their grandmother, Mahboobeh Tabibian Misgabi.

Jessica & Ronnie Almagor on the birth of their son, Yosi Benjamin Almagor born August 28. Mazal tov also to grandparents Steve & Michelle Waller and Dan & Revital Almagor.

Condolences to...

- **Ed Prohofsky, Richard (Jodi Aronson) Prohofsky, Sheri (Paul) Sisler, Susan (Brian) Krelitz and Pam (Howard) Friedman** on the loss of their wife and mother, **Joyce Prohofsky**
- **Brian (Mitz) Sobol and Morley (Catherine) Sobol** on the loss of their father, **Leonard Sobol**
- **Bonnie (Eddie) Engler, Barney (Sally) Rosen and Phillis (Gerald) Fields** on the loss of their father and brother, **Don Rosen**
- **Melanie (Dmitriy) Vinokur** on the loss of her father, **Don Teichner**
- **Karen (Isaac Rischall) Hessel** on the loss of her father, **Samuel Hessel**
- **Nancy (Alan) Goldfarb** on the loss of her father, **Dick Joseph**
- **Teresa Victor, Jeff (Judy) Victor and Nancy Victor** on the loss of their husband and father, **Irving Victor**
- **Harold (Jackie) Sadoff** on the loss of his brother, **Eugene Sadoff**
- **Jeremy (Jennifer) Zacks** on the loss of his mother, **Susie Zacks**
- **Mark (Amy) Rotenberg** on the loss of his mother, **Naomi Rotenberg**
- **Suzy (David) Baum** on the loss of her mother, **Felice "Cookie" Kronfeld**
- **Mickey (Michael) Appleman** on the loss of her mother, **Rita Elaine Bromberg**
- **Caryn (Keith) Evans** on the loss of her father, **Mel Parness**
- **Dale Krishef** on the loss of her husband, **Robert Krishef**

With heavy hearts we mourn the loss of these loved ones within our community. This reflects the losses in our community through mid-November.

A RAMAH-VURAH IS BORN



Though it may be winter now, for many families, it is already time to be thinking about summer—and for those families who pay close attention to detail, preparation for the summer consists of packing lists, deposit fees and application deadlines.

For seventy years, our community has founded and patronized some of the greatest Jewish overnight summer camps in the country. Members of Beth El Synagogue started Herzl Camp and Camp Ramah in Wisconsin. And for many years, summer after summer, a large majority of our children go to camp. However, participation in the Jewish community – especially summer camping – is becoming more and more cost prohibitive and we’re losing potentially engaged families as a result.

Further, Beth El has had tremendous growth in the early childhood and young families segments of community-building, but we wanted to do more. We wanted to pilot an organic chavurah (social group) incubator using family camp as the galvanizing force.

Last year, the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) launched their Seeds of Innovation Grant, funding innovative initiatives spearheaded by JTS graduates for the purpose of creating, nurturing, educating, or inspiring communities or individuals based upon the principles and ideals of Conservative Judaism. Rabbi Olitzky was selected to receive a grant to launch this family camp initiative and Camp Ramah Wisconsin became the incubator.

It’s been a mere quarter of the calendar year since 16 families joined together at family camp in August. Since then, the friendships have blossomed organically, the group has gotten together for holiday and Shabbat meals, social gatherings on small and large scale, and has become a support system—a village so to speak—for each other navigating blessings and challenges of life, and being part of a Jewish community.

As this group – now referring to themselves as Ramah-vurah – continues to grow closer, they will eventually re-gather at Ramah Family Camp in the summer of 2016. Future chavurot will be based off of this model—at Beth El and nationally. In fact, this initiative also served as the catalyst for a young families steering committee at the synagogue, which will be up and running in full force by the Spring.

We are proud and honored to have launched this initiative by way of the JTS Seeds of Innovation Project, and we look forward to nurturing many more organic social circles for years to come.



Beth El Synagogue Foundation

Ensuring the vitality of our congregation now and in the future

PREPARING FOR the Future

By Susan Lieberman,
Director, Beth El Foundation



The mission of the Beth El Foundation is to ensure the future vitality of Beth El through increasing the endowment to meet our current and future needs. Our founding rabbis, Rabbi David Aronson²¹ and his successor, Rabbi Abelson, turned to the Torah to establish the principal that continues to

guide us: *"We shall go forward with our young and our old."* This vision inspires us to cherish both the past and the future. In order to ensure our future vitality, we must prepare for our future financial needs. This requires attention to detail and planning.

We are aware that some in the congregation have generously helped lead the way by making future plans for Beth El in their estate. The beauty of giving in this way is that depending on the gift arrangement and your circumstances, you can potentially increase your income and decrease your estate taxes or receive a tax deduction for items that you can no longer use or want to maintain.

You might, for example, name Beth El as a beneficiary in your will or trust. This can be a dollar amount, a percentage of your total estate or a specific asset. Planned gifts can also include; cash, stock, life insurance, IRAs and other retirement planning tools. These examples of estate planning or "planned giving" can also provide benefits to your family and loved ones.

As you thoughtfully prepare for your future, please consider a gift to the Beth El Foundation. Your generosity will help guarantee that our congregation is able to meet the future challenges and remain strong and vital for generations to come.

If you have already made a planned gift to Beth El, please let us know so we can thank you and inspire others to do the same. I can be reached at 952-873-7309 or slieberman@bethelsynagogue.org.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

William and Sharon Hope have established the William and Sharon Hope Family Endowment Fund. This fund will help support Beth El Synagogue where most needed. William and Sharon have been active members of Beth El since they were married almost sixty years ago. The Hopes are committed to family and community.

William and Sharon have three children and eight grandchildren. Bruce and Anne Hope are active members of Beth El along with their three children.

Michael and Linda Hope and their two boys live in the Chicago area. Randi and Tom Mitchell Live in the Boston area and have three sons attending college.

Although William and Sharon now live in Florida during the winter months, they still consider Beth El their home.

"We are grateful for William and Sharon's generosity and commitment to the future of Beth El. We thank them for this gift and for helping sustain the synagogue for future generations."
Gary Krupp, Foundation President



William and Sharon and family on the occasion of grandson Isaac's Bar Mitzvah.

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TZEDAKAH

Tribute donations to Beth El funds honor friends and family, commemoration significant events, memorialize loved ones and provide essential support to the congregation. Endowment funds provide permanent funding where needed most or for a specific purpose. Endowment funds are held in the Beth El Foundation. Funds for immediate use are support specific programs or projects, are for general use and are spent in their entirety. To make a donation, or to establish a new fund through our Foundation, please contact Susan Lieberman, Foundation Director at 952-873-7309, slieberman@bethelsynagogue.org.

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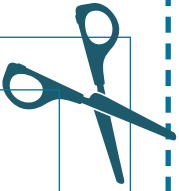
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Barbara Bearmon	Samuel Goldish Hattie Goldish	Jacqueline Herman	Sylvia Berlatsky	Harold Sadoff	Hannah Rank Rose Sadoff
Ceil Bell	Ruth Karsner	Lowell Herman	Frances Herman	Norman Sandler	Clara Sandler
Diane Berg	Emanuel Friedman	Ann Hunegs	Joseph Brochin Donna Brochin	Steven Schachtman	William Schachtman
Zhan Berkovich	Nehama Berkovich	Mildred Ingber	Abe Harris	Nancy Schachtman	Ida Baratz
Mara Beugen	Daryle Silver	Herbert Isbin	Neil Isbin	Myrna Schaeffer	Daryle Silver Sally Levitan
Phillip Bloom	Fay Ribnick	Harry Jacobs	Fred Jacobs	Ide Schertzer	Max Berman
Carolyn Bloom	David Bloom	Louis Jurisz	Miriam Jurisz	David Schlaifer	Howard Schlaifer
Sandy Blumenfeld	Fred Walder	Myra Juster	Jerome Chapman	Nathan Schwartz	Betty Pomus
Lou Ann Bongard	Leon Bongard Viola Heifetz Harry Heifetz	Ruth Kaiser	Evalyn Schwartz	Howard Schwimmer	Helen Schwimmer Stanley Schwimmer
Marlene Brandys	Murray Brandys	Harold Kaiser	Samuel Streigold	Amy Segelbaum	Lawrence Zweig
Jerry Bronstien	Reva Bronstien	Bea Kampf	Sonia Kaiser	Sandy Selnick	Myra Chazankin
Marlene Bukstein	Nellie Goldstein Louis Goldstein	Bruce Karsner	Joe Welgrin	Judith Shaich	Yordis Hirschorn
Harry Cohen	Howard Cohen	Claire Katz	Helen Karsner	Janet Shanedling	Sandi Soffer
Peggy Cohn	Nathan Friedell	Karen Katz	Saul Zeesman	Merle Shapiro	Monnie Swatez
Felicia Costea	Maria Moscovitz	Dalia Katz	Harvey Tesler	Kathy Share	Sheldon Steward
Clarice Cutts	Margaret Desnick	Esther Kaufman	Leonard Kaufman	Lois Siegel	Esther Paul Rose Schwartz Wesley Siegel
Michael Davis	Marilyn Kaufman	Alvin Kaufman	Marvin Kaufman	Artice Silverman	Louis Marofsky
Stanley Dobrin	Arnold Dobrin Helen Dobrin	Rose Kay	Jerome Kaufman	David Silverstein	Rochel Silverstein
Carol Dobrin	Elizabeth Ehrlich	Sharon Klein	Polly Krasner	Blanche Singer	Elisheva Schore Sherman
Dale Dobrin	June Dobrin	Harold Koritz	Florence Chodos	Daniel Snyder	Betty Jane Snyder
Lois Dobrin	Sally Ozwoeld	Sam Kvasnik	Idele Koritz	Janet Snyder	Ruth Herzoff James Snyder
Harold Drucker	Anna Drucker	Mark Laboe	Abraham Cooper	Alan Stein	Gen Stein
Barbara Drucker	Lillian Drucker	Arthur Lavintman	Shirley Van Wie	Alan Stiegler	Daniel Farman
Barbara Eiger	David Samuel Eiger	Michael Lazarus	Isadore Lavintman	Helene Tapper	Daniel Bloom
Lois Epstein	Ida Myles	Reida Lazer-Chein	Maurice Lazarus	Sophie Teener	Batyah Gerb
Marsha Finkelstein	William Silverman	Lisa Lebedoff Peilen	Harold Laiderman	Brian Tell	Meyer Tell
Jerry Fishman	Herman Fishman	Gayle Marko	Mary Lebedoff	Sharon Torodor	Sherman Marrinson
Bruce Frank	Ben Frank	Judy Mogelson Radel	Mildred Marko	Paul Tuchman	Evelyn Marrinson
Phil Freshman	Miriam Freshman	Frances Moses	Louis Marko	Teresa Victor	Irma Tuchman
Barbara Friedman	Harry Atkin	Linda Nass-Tell	Jack Mogelson	Susan Walder	Leonard Sadoff
James Fruen	Morrie Fruen	Judith Nathenson	Jacob Michlin	Norman Winer	Fanny Victor
Eleanor Gantman	Jacob Lazer	Riva Nolley	Sarah Michlin	David Wolfe	Charlotte Shapiro
Daniel Gelfand	Maynard Gelfand	Joseph Novich	Samuel Nass	Roz Wyles	Sally Winer
Jeffrey Gershone	Eloise Gershone	David Olshansky	Esther W. Davis	Marina Zigelman	Gerald Davidson
Eugene Gittelsohn	Morris Gittelsohn Bessie Gittelsohn	Bruce Peilen	Aaron Nathenson	Sara Zuk	Natalie Zouber- Wyles
Kaye Goldberg	Simon Cohen	Marilyn Percansky	Ellis Nolley II		Anatoly Zigelman
Jeffrey Goldish	Samuel Goldish	Morton Percansky	Rose Kamesar		Mina Freier
Marilyn Goldman	Michael Goldman Sam Skolnick Florence Skolnick	Lois Pervien	Frieda Levy		
Debra Gottesman	Nathan Gottesman	Aaron Pinkus	Marian Handelman		
Phil Greenberg	Sam Greenberg		Natan Olshansky		
			Martin Lebedoff		
			Morris Gittelsohn		
			Bessie Gittelsohn		
			Mildred Percansky		
			Florence Brodsky		
			Diana Pinkus		



UPCOMING AT BETH EL

Below is a sampling of only some of the upcoming events at the synagogue. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. Look for more details in future *Hakol* and *Kesher* publications, and as always, feel free to call the Welcome Desk at 952.873.7300 for additional information.

JANUARY	
5	Aleph Preschool Mom's Night Out
15-16	Emtza Region USY Winter Shabbaton (our synagogue is hosting!)
16	Young Families Havdalah Family Fun Night
22-23	Shabbat Shira, Artist in Residence, BEMA Coffee House with Basya Schechter
25	Tu B'Shevat Seder – Fine food, wine and mysticism, local chefs and community
31	HaZamir, International Jewish High School Choir Gala Concert
FEBRUARY	
19-21	Heschel Shabbaton
21	Family Fun Day Sunday
25	Inspiring Minds Speaker Series: <i>An Evening with the Dr. Bennet Omalu</i>
MARCH	
1	Daddy 101/Daddy's Night Out
3	Sefardic Music Concert – Casa de Espana
20	Purim Carnival
20-22	Beth El Delegation to AIPAC National Policy Conference (in Washington, D.C.)
23-24	Purim Services/Extravaganza/Shpiel
SPRING LOOKING AHEAD	
APRIL	
3	Aleph Preschool Annual Pasta Party Fundraiser
22	First Night of Passover (First Seder)
MAY	
15	Trucksploration



In order to include Ma'ariv and Havdalah in our Saturday night davening, we are setting service times to correspond to the changing seasons. In the winter months, therefore, minchah/

maariv will rotate later as the days grow longer.

We will publicize precise times in the *Kesher*, *Hakol* and *Yahrzeit* letters and will announce the time from the bimah. But we need you to attend to the details and notice the changing times.

We hope you join us for Havdalah in these coming months.

ONGOING SERVICES

EREV SHABBAT

(Friday evening)

Kabbalat Shabbat 5:45 pm

YOM SHABBAT

(Saturday)

Shacharit 9:00 am*

Minchah**

SUNDAY

Shacharit 9:00 am

(Chevra Breakfast)

Minchah 5:45 pm

DAILY MINYAN

Shacharit 7:00 am

Minchah 5:45 pm

*Apples & Honey Young Family Service and Grown Up Learning – the first Shabbat of each month starting at 10:00 am.

**See *Kesher* and *Hakol* for exact times.



5225 Barry Street West
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JOIN US FOR OUR THIRD ANNUAL

Tu B'Shevat Seder

Monday, January 25, 2016 • 6:00 pm

Enjoy an eight-course wine dinner prepared by premiere local celebrity chefs, highlighting the flora of the Holy Land. Reservations may still be available by visiting www.besyn.org/tbs.



Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, on Thursday, February 25, to hear from our next Inspiring Minds Speaker, Dr. Bennet Omalu, as he brings to the stage a rare combination of humility and fervor, sharing his story of going from humble beginnings in war-torn Nigeria to becoming one of the biggest disruptors in the history of sports and medicine. Dr. Omalu will detail the challenges he faced taking on the NFL and

other top US franchises to ensure that the truth—and risk—of chronic brain damage was known, understood, accepted, and at all costs, prevented. Dr. Omalu will also discuss the biases and obstacles he overcame as an African immigrant staunchly committed to studying medicine in the U.S. and rising to the top of his field, despite all odds. For more information and tickets, please visit: www.besyn.org/concussion.



BEMA PRESENTS THE 2016 COFFEEHOUSE CONCERT

An evening with New York Singer/Songwriter/Cantor
BASYA SCHECHTER
"Songs From Many Seas"

January 23, 2016 • 8:00 pm

An exploration of original music inspired by a combination of neo-Chasidic influences, with travels through many countries and in many different Diaspora languages.

Accompanied by local renowned musicians, Randy Sabien (violin), Shai Hayo (percussion), Laura Caviani (keyboard).

Reserved Table Seating: \$30

General Seating: \$20 (\$25 at the door)

Purchase tickets at www.bethelsynagogue.org

Watch the Keshet and Hakol for information regarding other events throughout the weekend.