



BETH DAVID  
REFORM CONGREGATION *Seek. Learn. Do.*



Rabbi.....Beth Kalisch  
Cantor.....Lauren Goodlev  
Executive Director.....Jill Cooper  
Director of Education.....Rabbi Elisa Koppel

Rabbi Emeritus .....Henry Cohen, z”l  
Cantor Emerita. ....Lilia Kazansky, z”l  
Educator Emerita.....Susan L. Levey



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## Nomination of Officers and Trustees

This is to advise that in accordance with Article VII, Section 4 of Beth David's Bylaws, the Nominating Committee has nominated the following members of the congregation to serve as Officers of the congregation or on the Board of Trustees. Elections for these positions will be held at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, June 9, 2024 at 8:00pm via Zoom.

### **Officers:**

President -- Jane Horwitz\*  
Executive Vice President -- Samuel Becker  
Vice President -- Marjorie Volpp\*  
Vice President -- Eric Klinger-Wilensky  
Chief Financial Officer -- Michael Delfiner  
Treasurer -- Howard Sklaroff  
Secretary -- Caitlin Clason  
Solicitor -- Judith Meyer\*  
Immediate Past President -- Rodd Bender\* (no vote required)

(\* denotes individual currently holds Officer position)

### **Board of Trustees:**

Miles Barel  
Louis Bricklin  
Joshua Broker  
Madeline Gelb  
Paula Greenberg  
AnneMarie Horowitz  
Theresa Jaffe  
Adam Podowitz-Thomas  
Ilene Rosen  
Joshua Seeherman  
Seth Werfel

Respectfully submitted,

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Lisa Miller  
Chair of the Nominating Committee



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## **Beth David Annual Meeting - Agenda June 9, 2024, 8:00pm**

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| I. Song/Welcome/Invocation  | Rabbi Kalisch and Cantor Goodlev |
| II. Beth David Community Highlights                                     | Rabbi Kalisch and Cantor Goodlev |
| III. Chief Financial Officer Report                                     | Jesse Deutsch                    |
| IV. Three Paths to a Thriving Future Update:                            |                                  |
| A. Overview of Strategic Priorities Task Force Recommendations          | Rodd Bender                      |
| B. Preschool Project  | Rodd Bender                      |
| C. Endowment Fund   | Rodd Bender                      |
| D. Outdoor Space Enhancement Project                                    | Jane Horwitz                     |
| E. Membership and Marketing/Public Relations/Communications Initiatives | Jane Horwitz                     |
| F. Religious School/Teens/Young Families                                | Rabbi Koppel                     |
| V. Sisterhood Report  | Sharyn Katz                      |
| VI. Honoring Outgoing Officers and Trustees                             | Rodd Bender and Rabbi Kalisch    |
| VII. Election and Installation of Officers and Trustees                 | Rodd Bender and Rabbi Kalisch    |
| VIII. New President Remarks   | Jane Horwitz                     |
| IX. Closing   | Rabbi Kalisch and Cantor Goodlev |

## OFFICER REPORTS

### **President's Report/Slide Presentation Rodd Bender**



### **Chief Financial Officer, Treasurer and Finance Committee Report Jesse Deutsch, CFO and Finance Committee Co-Chair Steven Saltzman, Treasurer and Finance Committee Co-Chair**

Together, the Chief Financial Officer, Treasurer, and Finance Committee monitor Beth David's financial activities and health, both short term and long term.

The Finance Committee is tasked with:

- reviewing the monthly operating statements
- developing the annual operating budget
- reviewing proposals to improve the finances of Beth David
- reviewing proposals for larger expenditures
- reviewing any policy or event, whether at, or outside of, Beth David (e.g., COVID-19) that may impact the financial results
- providing recommendations to the Executive Committee, as needed, which then provides input and brings vetted recommendations to the Board of Trustees for consideration and approval

Developments during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024:

- Maintained paid membership unit count – increased by 2 units (from 268 to 270) since 6/30/23
- Received two grants totaling ~\$21,000 to offset security expenditures
- Continued to collect pledges to the Challenge Campaign established in response to the loan payoff donations
- Established endowment fund to support operating budget and other priorities
- Pursued alternative revenue sources including lease to local yeshiva (permitted for summer camp only) and Harmony School at Beth David preschool program (currently in zoning approval phase)

Last Spring the Board passed a deficit operating budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. Fiscal 2024 was a difficult year from an operating performance perspective (again) for two primary reasons - lower-than-budgeted receipts for both membership commitments and religious school tuition/fees. However, Beth David received several large, one-time unrestricted donations which drove the projected deficit to near zero. As a result of the Spring Fundraiser, Beth David expects to end fiscal 2024 with positive net income.

The balance in Beth David's "rainy day" fund was approximately \$286,000 at April 30, 2024. We dipped into this fund to cover the FY '23 operating shortfall.

Many steps are needed to solve this structural operating deficit. Some actions have been completed, such as paying off the mortgage, which has eliminated ongoing expenses for debt service. Others will take more time, such as increasing the school headcount and post-B'nai Mitzvah engagement – we are optimistic that our investment in hiring a full-time education director will help us achieve those goals. Other ideas to generate revenue from Beth David's physical plant will require more creativity due to significant zoning constraints imposed on the congregation when we moved to Lower Merion in 1985; our leadership has been actively working to make progress on this issue.

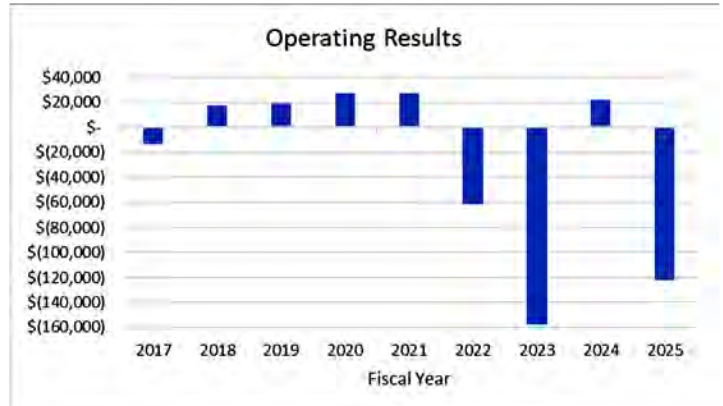
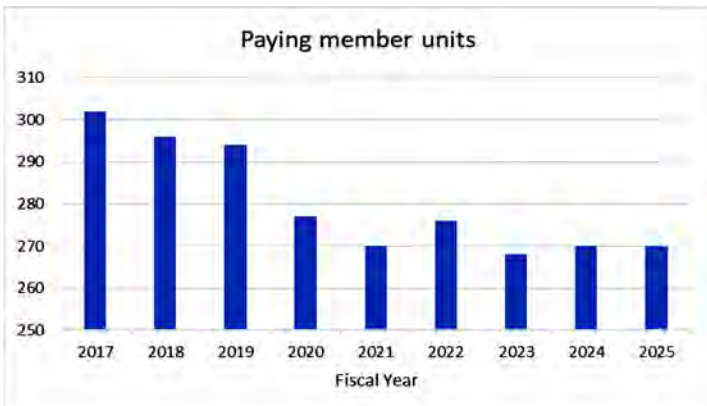
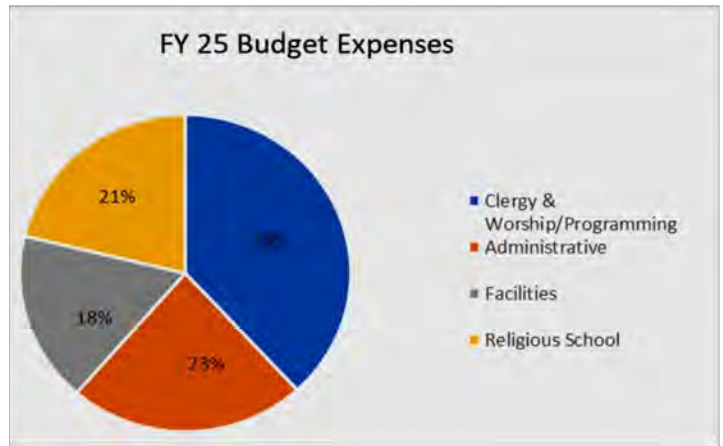
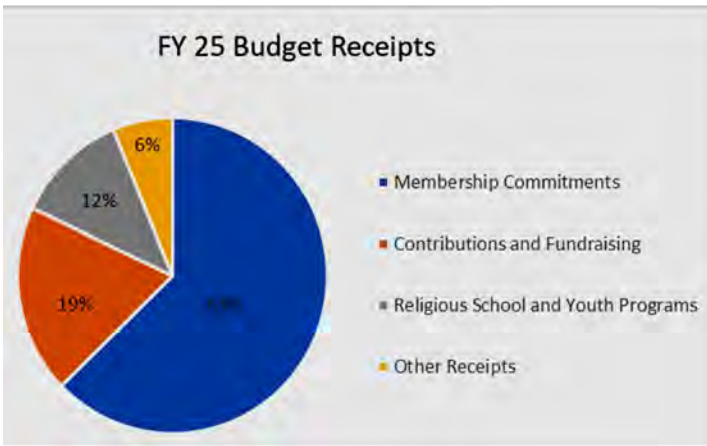
We understand that this message will be sobering for many of our congregants, but we're facing a real financial challenge with no immediate, easy solutions. Everyone must be aware of the existential threat to our community. It is important to understand that Beth David is not alone with respect to rising operating costs and stagnant membership counts, as these trends are impacting many synagogues across the country.

Beth David currently has 302 member units, including 21 lifetime members. A strong net increase in our membership count would tremendously improve Beth David's financial condition. If every member committed to recruiting one new family to just visit Beth David and check it out, that action could translate into a significant turnaround in our finances in a short time period.

As you have all experienced personally, costs are still rising, and these trends have impacted Beth David as well. As a result, the Board has made an informed decision to approve increases in both basic membership commitment levels and religious school fees by an average of 3.5% for the coming fiscal year. The voluntary giving levels above Basic Commitment have not changed.

For Fiscal Year 2025, Beth David is budgeting an operating deficit of approximately \$(122,000) which is comparable to the originally budgeted operating deficit for Fiscal Year 2024.

The following two charts show the breakout of budgeted receipts and expenses:



## AUXILIARY REPORTS

### **Beth David Sisterhood (Women of Reform Judaism) Year in Review 2023-2024**

In the past year, we continued to provide enriching and entertaining programs including:

- A brunch and guest speaker, Luisa Marins, from Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ), on WRJ projects in Israel.
- Hamantaschen baking and distribution of Mishloach Manot (Purim bags) to all congregants. \$2,400 of the proceeds from congregants' donations were donated to four food security organizations, Jewish Relief Agency, Manna, Mazon, and World Central Kitchen.
- Broadway Bound took a day trip in May to see Water for Elephants on Broadway. Carole Dichter and Zelda Prince, after many, many years of leadership and organizing these trips, are retiring from this role. We are looking for someone interested in continuing their legacy!
- Yoga with Ilene Rosen was live several times during Religious School. We are so grateful to Ilene for her years of leading us in gentle movement through yoga and will miss her next year. We are looking for someone interested in continuing her inspired movement!
- Bagels n' Banter was live several times during Religious School led by Cat Classon. These were casual gatherings that sparked interesting dialogues and a chance to get to know one another better.
- Three book clubs read over a dozen books collectively, via Zoom, with one group having an option to meet in person.
- On June 7 we sponsored the Schmooze:00 PM - 6:30 PM. BYOB. Sisterhood is provided light hors d'oeuvres.

The Mishloach Manot and Broadway Bound are our largest fundraisers. The Purim project is also a community builder. ORT Honey led by Carol Shiffrin, Mah Jongg Cards, and Hanukkah Candles led by Susan Bricklin, were also successful fundraisers. Gifted was open several times throughout the year led by Sara McNew. Gifted sells an assortment of beautiful gifts for the holidays, B'nai Mitzvahs, and other celebratory occasions. Proceeds from Gifted also funds Sisterhood projects.

With the income from our dues-paying members and the support of the congregation for the various sales and especially the Purim bag program, we were able to donate over \$4,000.00 to Beth David including sponsorship of the 10th anniversary of Rabbi Kalisch. Smaller, but still important donations and gifts went to:

- Women of Reform Judaism, our umbrella organization which supports, among other things, training of Reform rabbis and cantors, youth programs, and social initiatives on a national and international platform.
- WRJ's Atlantic District which supports youth programs on a local level.

Congregants will soon receive information on joining Sisterhood, ways to participate in our activities and an invitation to join our leadership team. Sisterhood will hold its planning meeting for the 2024-2025 year on the evening of Wednesday, June 26, 2024, at 7:30pm on Zoom. We are looking for leaders and co-leaders for a variety of roles, some ongoing and some event-oriented such as Broadway Bound, WRJ liaison for the Atlantic District, Passover Seder, and Gifted.

### **Beth David Men, We Are Mensch President, Jim Castello**

Beth David Men had another successful year in 2023. The small but mighty group of volunteers banded together to accomplish the following on behalf of Beth David

#### **High Holidays**

Ushering for the many high holiday services remains a critical component of how Beth David Men gives back. Our group of dedicated ushers met and greeted everyone attending HH services and kept the sanctuary in good order between services. My thanks to everyone who took part. We had another successful sukkah build with what I believe was a first time of not having to disassemble in mid stream due to an error in putting the sukkah together. I know that a number of events were conducted in the sukkah and it is always a pleasure to see the congregation gather.

## **Latke Making**

100 pounds of potatoes and onions were shredded, squeezed and fried into latkes in what is now an annual event that brings out a wonderful group of school families and the extended Beth David community. Due to security concerns this year we were unable to celebrate our Latke fest in the parking lot but a hearty group of Beth David men managed to pull off the event in the social hall to great success. I just recently got the smell of fried potatoes out of my clothes!

We are planning on supporting all of these efforts once again in 2024 and welcome new members of the men's club to volunteer to help. Anyone interested in participating please reach out to me at [jcastello@bdavid.org](mailto:jcastello@bdavid.org).

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## **SH'MA SMALL GROUPS REPORTS**

### **Art Appreciation Sh'ma Small Group Lisa Miller and Lisa Prince, Co-Facilitators**

Art through a Jewish Lens:

This was our second year exploring the visual arts together. Our gatherings took place at the home of Lisa Prince and included interesting discussions on several thought-provoking topics. Lisa Prince led a group discussion which focused on the art of understanding through the Jewish lens of empathy. We had fun imagining what the figures in several different works of art might have been thinking about and feeling. We also enjoyed celebrating the last night of Hanukkah together with candle lighting and jelly doughnuts. Another interesting group discussion was led by Janet Schwartz where we examined the work of artist Sarah Sze, who recently installed an exhibition at the Guggenheim entitled "Timelapse". We watched a video together about the intricate installation process, learned about "emotional time" (the relationship between an image's emotional intensity and the resulting internal memory), and enjoyed connecting the concept of emotional time to our understanding of Judaism. Our group gatherings were rewarding on many levels.

### **Communal Table - Empty Nester Happy Hour Sh'ma Small Group Debra Kauffman and Lisa Miller, Co-Facilitators**



Our group gathered several times this year and tried a variety of venues, days of the week, and times. We tried to vary our gatherings in hopes of attracting a larger crowd. In the end, our size remained the same, but our gatherings varied in who attended. This enabled us to have contact with numerous people in smaller gatherings over the course of the year.

Since our demographic focused on parents of children who are grown and partially flown, many of our conversations focused on not only how we were processing the events of October 7 and beyond, but how it was impacting our adult children who were not at home. We discussed topics varying in scope from our own experiences in Israel to how our children were navigating some of the complexities of being on a college campus where protests were abundant.

In the end, our communal table was a space for connection and reflection. We all walked away each time feeling as though it was time well spent.

### **Playground Fun Sh'ma Small Group Adam Podowitz-Thomas, Facilitator**

The inaugural year of the Playground Fun Sh'ma group was a rousing success! Our group of six families with kids not yet religious-school age met numerous times throughout the year, allowing our kids to play with one another and the adults to connect with other families in the congregation. We also had a great Hanukkah celebration, where the kids played dreidel, decorated cookies, and ate latkes!



### **Positive Aging Sh'ma Small Group Marya Margolis, Facilitator**

The Positive Aging Sh'ma Group held 8 Sunday morning meetings from September 2023 until April 2024 in-person at members' homes. Our final meeting in June will be an outdoor Shabbat dinner. The group includes 13 members who have been long-time participants. This year's topics were led by each meeting host and included resilience, health, societal attitudes towards elders, writing your memoir and your own obituary, and what death can teach us about living more fully. We celebrated birthdays together and mourned the passing of family members. Through our several years of sharing, we have formed deep friendships and trust with each other.

### **Positive Aging 2.0 Sh'ma Small Group Vicki Lipoff, Facilitator**

Our group began with 10 interested parties and has expanded to 14 at this writing. We began in response to interested congregants as well as the first Wise Aging group remains full.

At this time, we are one year in and continue to have meaningful gatherings, typically once every 4-6 weeks. We meet in the Library at Beth David; this room lends perfectly to group interaction. While there may be assigned topics for reading or listening followed by vigorous discussion, there are also times when there is no proscribed topic and the facilitator will then highlight what group participants are learning from various sources about current events - both national as well as global.

Two recent examples include the following:

1. Group reading of a popular opinion-page writer discussing early and later stages of life and our identities throughout; and,
2. Hosting a guest lecturer to discuss Israeli history as well as current events

Facilitator intention is for our group to enjoy more relevant activities such as films, lectures, and podcasts to lend to our ability to keep our meetings interesting and relevant.



## **SSDO - Suburban Singles Dining Out Sh'ma Small Group** **Sandy Portnoy, Facilitator**

Suburban Singles Dining Out was conceived as a way for singles to meet other singles who live close to them and are Beth David members. We are trying to build a bond among the members of this group - to meet new people, discuss issues around Beth David and Judaism, and to enjoy a meal together. There is a list of Beth David members who are interested in this group, whom I email each month with details of the next outing. There is no commitment to attend each session. Unlike other Sh'ma groups, we welcome new members, as long as they are single. We meet monthly, usually on the second Sunday of the month, generally for lunch in the nearby suburbs. Our first meeting was September 21, 2021. We have met monthly ever since. Members also suggest restaurants, and each person pays for his or her own meal. Anybody who is interested in joining can contact me - Sandy Portnoy <[spsportnoy@gmail.com](mailto:spsportnoy@gmail.com)>

## **Center City Sh'ma Small Group** **Susan Hoffman, Facilitator**

The Center City Sh'ma group meets every few months in a restaurant, for good food and discussion. We are open to anyone who is willing to come into the city, regardless of place of residence.

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## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Adult Education Committee** **Don Friedman, Chair**

The Adult Education Committee presented three Koffee Kallahs this year. These included:

- January 21, 2024 - ***Understanding and Bridging Perspectives: Engaging with Progressive Jewish Youth on Israel.*** Andrew Goretsky, Regional Director of the Philadelphia ADL, was the guest speaker. He talked about understanding the various factors that contribute to the strong opinions that some Jewish youth hold about Israel. His PowerPoint presentation was very informative and stimulated a lively discussion and question and answer period afterwards.
- March 3, 2024 - ***Leonard Cohen – The Man, The Poet, His Life and Musica: A Life-Long Seeker.*** Paula Greenberg and Don Friedman led a program that explored the long career of Leonard Cohen as a poet, novelist, and musician. Judaism was always a major influence in all his work, although he also explored other spiritual paths. We discussed Cohen's early life in Montreal as the grandson of a Talmudic scholar and the evolution of his writing and eventually his music. We also focused on Cohen's spirituality, his thoughts about God, and his need to embrace the darkness and the imperfections of being human. Cantor Goodlev shared her ideas about Cohen's last song, "You Want It Darker," and how it was infused with Jewish thought and beliefs. Many of the attendees grew up listening to Leonard Cohen and enthusiastically shared their thoughts and impressions about him.
- May 19, 2024 - ***Why are Jews So Funny?*** This Koffee Kallah explored the origins, purposes, benefits, delights, and downright hilarity of Jewish humor. It has always been a part of our culture and was used as a means of survival and resilience during times of suffering and difficult challenges. Jill Cooper, our Executive Director, was our guest speaker, and she did a wonderful job explaining the origins, growth, longevity, power, and cultural identity that makes Jewish Humor so satisfying, entertaining,



and a community builder. She also talked about how Jewish humor has evolved and shared prime examples of Jewish jokes. The laughter in the room was audible and palpable. Adult Ed Committee members talked about their favorite Jewish comedians (Alex Edelman, Lewis Black, and Mel Brooks) and attendees shared Jewish jokes and remembrances of Jewish comedic performers.

The attendance at the Koffee Kallahs varied from 20 to 40 people per event. A breakfast buffet of bagels, lox, cream cheese, white fish salad, fresh fruit, and Jewish apple cake was served each time, and the \$8.00 fee charged covered the food expenses. The programs reinforced a sense of community where friends and longtime members reconnected and enjoyed seeing each other and new members were welcomed. Sharing of experiences and questions about the subject matter were encouraged.

Committee members this year included Don Friedman, Paula Greenberg, Debby Weinstein, David Richman, Judith Meyer, and Caitlin Clason. We met with Rabbi Kalisch and Cantor Goodlev periodically to share ideas and discuss the programming.

**Cemetery/Har Hasetim, Friends of the Gladwyne Jewish Memorial Cemetery  
Neil Sukonik, President**



Highlighted by the well-attended sixth annual Stephen J. Anderer Day of Service in October, numerous volunteer groups helped stabilize the trails and the areas among the graves. Additionally retaining walls were built out of railroad ties to stabilize the downhill sections of three sections of graves.

Joe Ferrannini, of Grave Stone Matters, continued with his exceptional efforts, completing two additional sections of graves. An area within the cemetery that approximates a finished condition so that visitors and potential donors can see what is possible throughout the entire cemetery now exists. All 3 local television newscasts gave Joe and Har Hasetim great coverage. Please see our Facebook page for all 3 newsclips:

<https://www.facebook.com/GladwyneJewishMemorialCemetery/>

Name plates were placed on numerous trees throughout the cemetery so that visitors can view the many different species that exist.

Headstone translation efforts progressed. We expect to create a photographic database for all the graves, starting with those that Joe Ferrannini has completed.



*Before, and after conservation*



**PHILADELPHIA Jewish Exponent**  
Beth David Reform Congregation Revives a Forgotten Cemetery  
By Linda Ferrannini  
March 17, 2016  
Grave restoration before and after at Har Hasetim. Courtesy of Beth David Reform Congregation  
Leslie Feldman  
In the heart of Gladwyne, nestled amid whispering woods, is Har Hasetim, a cemetery forgotten by time. Tombstones, scattered and tilted, tell the story of a forgotten past.

**The Philadelphia Inquirer**

**After decades of neglect, volunteers work to save a historic Main Line Jewish cemetery**

Since 2015, a Friends group and other volunteers have undertaken an extraordinary effort to undo sprawling disrepair at the six-acre Gladwyne Jewish Memorial Cemetery.





**MAIN LINE TODAY**

**FRONTLINE**

**RECOVERING LOST SOULS**

A GLADWYNE CONGREGATION EMBRACES THE EFFORT TO PRESERVE THE FINAL RESTING PLACE FOR HUNDREDS OF EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS

## **College Age Connection Caryn Rudy, Chair**

This year's College Connection program had four successful mailings to our college aged-kids; our young congregants enjoyed the usual holiday goodies for Rosh Hashana, Hanukkah, and Purim, but this year, with all the unrest on campuses, we felt they needed more. So, we added an additional mailing in November with some delicious and comforting treats and a letter to let them know we were thinking about them!

This year, six congregant volunteers helped brainstorm package items, ordered these items, assembled the packages, then mailed them directly to the kids along with a letter written by our Clergy and Professional Staff.

Thank you to our Beth David College Age Connection volunteers for all of your work this year: Deb Kauffman, Robyn McKnight, Amy Rubinoff, Lisa Miller, Marjorie Volpp, and Caryn Karmatz Rudy.

If you would like to be a College Age Connection volunteer—or are interested in heading this rewarding committee in 2024/25, please contact Lisa Miller, [lmiller@bdavid.org](mailto:lmiller@bdavid.org).

## **Family Promise of the Main Line (formerly Interfaith Hospitality Network) at Beth David Marc and Amy Leader, Co-Coordinator**

Family Promise of the Main Line (FPML) provides a caring and positive environment for homeless families while they design and implement a plan to break the cycle of homelessness in their lives. Using area congregations and the energy of several hundred community volunteers, FPML is dedicated to helping families who seek to be accountable, resilient, and strive for a better tomorrow. Guest families spend one week at a time at each congregation from dinner until early morning. Days are spent at the day center in Norristown, which provides school transport for the children and facilitates securing housing, job training, placement services and classes in parenting and budgeting. Beth David has been an active participant in FPML for more than four decades and is joined by 12 other Main Line congregations.

Over the past year, Beth David hosted FPML five times (five weeks) with more than 30 Beth David families and individuals supporting the FPML families as they dined and slept at Beth David. Thank you to our dedicated volunteers who made our hosting weeks successful!

We are always seeking new volunteers! Please consider getting involved. We have many ways that you can contribute. Volunteer opportunities include:

- Providing family dinners in the evening
- Overnight hosting, which is the easiest task to perform, yet the hardest position to fill. Please consider spending a night at Beth David and helping sustain this program.
- Setting up classrooms and the kitchen for the guests to stay in relative comfort
- Purchasing supplies for the week (breakfast and snack foods)
- Takedown at the conclusion of the week, including removing air beds, lights, alarm clocks and signs so school can be in session on Sunday morning
- Laundry duty – Laundering all linens and blankets
- Contributing supplies as needed for the day shelter or Beth David

Please contact Marc Leader at [marcleader@gmail.com](mailto:marcleader@gmail.com) to learn more about getting involved. Special thanks to Joel Hirsch who is the Beth David representative to the Family Promise Board of Directors.

## **Membership Report Lisa Miller, immediate Past President and Jane Horwitz, Executive Vice President, Co-chairs**

Recognizing the current importance of membership dues and fees as Beth David's primary source of financial support, as well as the intrinsic value of membership as the lifeblood of the Congregation, we have taken several steps to reverse the downward trend of paying member units as conveyed in the CFO, Treasurer and Finance Committee Report.



As part of our ongoing effort to enhance visibility through outreach, Beth David participated in several in-person, community-wide events this year: the annual Community Fall Festival at the Kaiserman JCC in October, a celebration of Purim at the Philadelphia Zoo in March, and a Yom Ha'atzmaut Israel event at the Kaiserman JCC in May. (We're also participating in the Narberth Pride at the Park event again this year on June 15th.) At each of these events, Beth David volunteers brought friendly, welcoming smiles while providing a fun and engaging hands-on activity for kids and families to enjoy.



At the Fall Festival, we made Yad Torah pointers out of squishy clay, and at the Zoo Purim and Yom Ha'atzmaut events we made friendship bracelets out of colorful beads, with Hebrew and English letter options. We also provided the opportunity to make a friendship bracelet for a child in Israel at the Yom Ha'atzmaut event. Our activities generated much joy at our table and perfectly conveyed the thoughtful and friendly essence of our Beth David community. In addition, we have systems in place (including the routine use of QR codes and hashtags in our outreach graphics) to direct participants to our website and capture information for follow-up; as a result, the Synagogue received several follow up inquiries, and one family just recently enrolled their kids in the religious school for next year.

We are continuously on the lookout for other opportunities to bring Beth David out to meet people where they are. Special thanks to Rabbi Koppel, Jill Cooper and the volunteers who helped staff our tables at these events.

Recognizing we had need for professional expertise in the areas of communications, public relations, marketing and social

media, we issued a request for proposals and conducted an objective review of the 12 submissions received. Ultimately, we selected Feldscher Horwitz [no relation] Public Relations, a Maple Shade, NJ firm with a strong understanding of the needs of the local media, a penchant for storytelling, and a deep understand of issues facing the Jewish community. In the 4 months we have been collaborating, there has been a marked increase in coverage in both print and broadcast media (including the cover of the Jewish Exponent in celebration of Rabbi Kalisch's 10th anniversary). We are developing and rolling out a social media strategy which involves going beyond Facebook posts to targeted advertising on all Meta platforms as well as other digital sites. Now, our challenge is to measure the impact of these efforts through increased and diversified participation in the Synagogue's activities, as well as ultimately an uptick in membership.

Maintaining a healthy membership is as much about retention as it is about recruitment. Looking at this year's numbers as compared to the four preceding ones, this is an area which needs increased attention.



While the Pandemic is behind us, we still feel its impact on rebuilding and sustaining community engagement. Efforts have been made (e.g., Board cohorts, nametags for every adult congregant, celebratory and creative intergenerational events), but there is much work to be done in this area. Currently, Beth David does not have a Membership "Committee," and this is an area where help is urgently needed. We have money budgeted to host events for prospective and new members but will only be able to make these happen with more volunteers. If you have ideas, and the bandwidth to run with them, please contact Executive Vice President-elect Sam Becker to get involved.

## Shabbat Dinner Shma Group Report Coordinator: Judith Meyer

This group was inspired by a desire to share Sabbath dinner as a community. Many of us recall Sabbath family dinners with our own family and friends. Today, with many of us having family far away, the thought was to get together with other Beth David members and create our own family community. We were a group of eighteen Beth David members - it turned out all of a certain age - and we met monthly on Friday evening in someone's home for a shared Shabbat dinner. Everyone contributed food so preparing the Shabbat meal was shared. It was a wonderful way to welcome Shabbat, catch up with old friends, meet new friends, and spend Friday evenings in a home setting with members of Beth David.

## Social Action/Social Justice Report Coordinators: Helene Bludman, Vicki Lipoff, Bill Madway, & Sandy Portnoy

Our social action and social justice activities covered many causes this year, involved a number of partner organizations, and resulted in several notable successes. Here are the highlights.

### Collection Drives

Beth David members can always be counted on to participate in food, book, toy, and other collection drives in support of individuals and charitable organizations in our community. Here are those highlights:

- Our annual Sukkot food drive attracted over 40 volunteers, including some of our youngest congregants. A little rain couldn't dampen our enthusiasm, as we moved everything down to the social hall and packed close to 300 dinners on behalf of **Caring for Friends** (formerly Aid for Friends), which shares food and friendship with homebound, homeless, and hungry people in Greater Philadelphia. We also wrote postcards in support of reproductive rights, enjoyed a pot-luck dinner, and sang Sukkot songs.
- Always striving to go above and beyond, we carried out two Thanksgiving food drives simultaneously. Beth David members donated 20+ turkeys, boxes/bags of stuffing, countless side dishes, veggies, and desserts, which were packed up and delivered to **Ebenezer Temple Pentecostal Church** in West Philadelphia. While this was occurring in the Atrium, downstairs in the Social Hall, religious school students prepared 200+ meals for **Caring for Friends**. Special thanks to Lynn Zack for expertly coordinating the Ebenezer Temple Pentecostal Church mitzvah project.
- During Hanukkah, Beth David members spread holiday light and joy to students attending **Mastery Charter School at Harrity Elementary** in Southwest Philadelphia. We packed 20 gift baskets filled with food, socks, games, puzzles, art supplies, and more. Not to be overlooked, the home-baked cookies prepared by several volunteers and packed into decorated bags by JoAnne Fischer (see photo below). Special shout out to congregant Amy Rubinoff and her daughter Erica (see photo below) for their help packing and transporting the baskets; congregant Melissa Anderson for setting up this project; and Cynthia Clark, the school's fabulous social worker, for her invaluable assistance.



## Moral Education Budget Action & Advocacy Day

For decades, the State of Pennsylvania has been underfunding public education, particularly in black and brown communities. The inequality of the funding of schools in Pennsylvania's poorest school districts is shameful, depriving the children of an adequate education, up-to-date textbooks, sufficient school supplies, and environmentally safe schools.

Finally, in February 2023, the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court ruled that the current system of funding education in the state is unconstitutional. The judge in the case left it up to the Pennsylvania Legislature and the Governor to work out an equitable funding mechanism. But with a highly partisan legislature with a reputation for being unwilling to compromise, it was going to take a great deal of pressure from Pennsylvanians to get the parties to act.

Enter **POWER Interfaith**, a large, highly influential, multi-racial grassroots movement, comprised of congregations of all denominations and individuals committed to racial and economic justice. Education funding is one of POWER Interfaith's top issues, and it organized a full-day trip to the State Capital in June to advocate for major changes in state education spending in the coming fiscal year and a long-term solution to the underfunding problem. With encouragement from Beth David, a longtime supporter of POWER Interfaith, RAC-PA signed on as a co-sponsor of the event.

Over 100 Reform Jews from across PA, including several Beth David members, participated in the event, meeting with various State Representatives and Senators. Although agreement on a long-term change in the state's funding formula for public education wasn't reached, the event helped secure major increases in public school funding for the 2023 – 2024 school year. We will continue to work with POWER Interfaith on this vital issue.

## E-Cycling Initiative

In January 2024, Beth David embarked on an exciting social action project in partnership with **PAR Recycle Works**, a nonprofit electronics recycler that helps protect the environment while providing transitional employment, job skills training, and re-entry support to formerly incarcerated men and women. PAR's mission is to help these individuals make a successful transition to life after prison.

One method PAR uses to accomplish its mission is partnering with local businesses and organizations, including several local synagogues, to provide electronics recycling or e-cycling services. PAR removes and safely disposes of computers, laptops, tablets, printers, phones, AV equipment, and other electronics that are collected on site by the partner organization.



The program launched in January. Here's how it works. PAR set up a collection bin – a 4-foot by 4-foot by 4-foot container on a pallet – just outside the synagogue office. Members simply “dump” their old electronics in the bin whenever the synagogue is open. PAR comes by on a regular basis, currently about once a month, to collect the contents of the bin.

For more information about this initiative, including a list of accepted items, visit our social action call to action page at <https://bit.ly/BD-Social-Action>. We thank Beth David members Sue Sukonik and Bill Madway, Executive Director Jill Cooper, and the Board of Trustees for their support.

## Ending Gun Violence

Ending the scourge of gun violence continues to be a top social action pursuit of Beth David members. Over the past 12 months, we maintained our close working relationships with **CeaseFirePA**, the leading gun violence reduction advocacy organization in the state, and the **Southeastern Pennsylvania Coalition of Synagogues to End Gun Violence**, a coalition of Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructing synagogues.

Adding to our clout, our gun violence reduction efforts were bolstered by the Pennsylvania Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. RAC-PA decided to focus on ending violence for its 2024 social justice campaign, bringing the state's entire Reform movement to bear on this life-saving cause. As its primary partner, RAC-PA selected CeaseFirePA.

Gun violence reduction advocates across the state were optimistic about the possibility of passing meaningful, life-saving gun legislation during the 2023 – 2024 legislative session. The source of the optimism: the fact that a majority of the members of the PA House of Representatives supported gun violence reduction legislation, a dramatic shift due in part because of RAC-PA's successful redistricting campaign in 2022. And the PA House delivered, passing a bill authorizing Extreme Risk Protection Orders (HB 1018) and another bill requiring Universal Background Checks (HB 714) in May 2023, and passing a bill prohibiting "Ghost Guns" (HB 777) in March 2024.

With two, then three, bills pending, the focus of the gun violence reduction coalition shifted to securing passage of these bills by the PA Senate, a sizable challenge. (The new governor of PA, Josh Shapiro, had vowed to sign these bills into law if they were passed by the PA General Assembly.) Over the course of the first five months of 2024, Beth David took the following steps with our partners:

- Wrote letters to urge leaders in the PA Senate to schedule a hearing and a vote on life-saving gun bills passed on a bipartisan basis by the PA House.
- Participated in the March 19 call-in day to State Senate leadership to try to force hearings and votes on the bills.
- Encouraged Conservative & Reconstructing synagogues in Southeast PA to join the CeaseFirePA/RAC-PA campaign.
- Emailed our State Reps to urge them to vote to ban ghost guns (HB 777).
- Organized a screening of a series of videos featuring families scarred by gun violence titled, *Deadly By Design*, produced by CeaseFirePA. Temple Brith Achim in King of Prussia, another RAC-PA congregation, co-hosted the screening at Beth David.
- Participated in End Gun Violence Advocacy Day at the State Capitol, organized by CeaseFirePA and co-sponsored by RAC-PA. More than 500 Pennsylvanians, including over 100 Reform Jews, traveled to Harrisburg to meet with members of the General Assembly and attend a rally on the capitol steps.

We even made calls to PA House members on the bus ride home from Harrisburg to lobby for passage of two additional gun violence reduction bills brought to the floor.

But sadly, despite all of our efforts, the two bills voted on May 7 failed, and the PA Senate still has not even had a hearing on the three bills that were passed by the PA House. The failure of the CeaseFirePA/RAC-PA coalition to achieve success was not because we lack power. It is because too many districts in the General Assembly, particularly in the PA Senate, are gerrymandered. And as a result, too many state legislators can continue to ignore the will of the majority of Pennsylvanians.



That's why we at Beth David will be returning for the 3rd election cycle of **RAC-PA's Every Voice, Every Vote Campaign**, kicking off in June. Our goal will be to strengthen our democracy in Pennsylvania by ensuring the largest possible voter turnout in the fall, especially in under-represented communities. Making sure people turn out to vote is the best way to hold politicians accountable despite the still unfairly drawn districts throughout our state.



Look for calls to action for our **Every Voice, Every Vote Campaign** and other social action activities in your email inbox, on our website, and in our weekly Shabbat Bulletin. And if you're not receiving our social action email alerts – we typically send out one or two per month, more if circumstances dictate – visit <https://bit.ly/BD-SocialJusticeEmailForm> to sign up.

## Spring Fundraiser– A Decade of Devotion Rebecca Stein, Chair

On Friday, May 10, the Beth David community came together to honor and celebrate Rabbi Beth Kalisch as we marked her 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with Beth David under the title of: *A Decade of Devotion*

We were especially excited to welcome Rabbi Rick Jacobs, President of the Union of Reform Judaism, as our guest speaker.

The event details included:

- **5-6 pm - Thank You cocktail hour for Beth David donors**
- **5-6pm - Family Friendly Social Action Events**
- **6:15-7:30 - Festive Buffet Dinner (filled to capacity with 190 attendees)**
- **7:30-8:45 - Shabbat Service with D'var Torah by Rabbi Rick Jacobs**
- **8:45 - Home-baked Oneg**

As part of the event we presented Rabbi Kalisch with a [digital Tribute Book](#) to commemorate her *Decade of Devotion* to Beth David.

This was the spring fundraiser with a goal of \$25K. The revenue raised was \$71K. Expenses were about \$12K. The net proceeds are close to 59K.

The event required detailed and extensive support from the Beth David team, especially Jill Copper. This was provided with utmost courtesy and efficiency.

A huge thank you to all the wonderful Committee members who made this Celebration happen:

Susan Anderer, Sarah Barnwell, Cat Clason, Carolyn Cohen, Toby Gang, Paula Greenberg, Dara Klein, Nancy Levitt, Sara McNew, Lynne Pastor, Ilene Rosen, Amy Rubinoff, Caryn Rudy, Janet Schwartz, Rachel Somers

As well as the bakers and flower arrangers.







**BETH DAVID**  
REFORM CONGREGATION *Seek. Learn. Do.*

**ANNUAL COMMITMENT AND FEES 2024-2025**

Please consider one of the higher commitment levels if your circumstances allow - the Supporting level approximates our per-household break-even cost.

NOTE: First year members pay 50% of the Basic level.

**ANNUAL COMMITMENT**

Membership Type	Description	Basic	Supporting	Partners	Builders
<b>Family</b>	Couple age 36-65 as of 7/1/24, includes children through age 29	<b>\$3,510</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Single Family</b>	One adult age 36-65 as of 7/1/24, includes children through age 29	<b>\$2,230</b>			
<b>Senior Family</b>	Couple age 66 as of 7/1/24, includes children through age 29	<b>\$2,290</b>			
<b>Senior Single Family</b>	One adult age 66 as of 7/1/24, includes children through age 29	<b>\$1,410</b>			
<b>Young Family</b>	Single/couple/family age 30-35 as of 7/1/24	<b>\$900</b>			
<b>Young Adult</b>	Single/couple/family through age 29 as of 7/1/24 and not a child of a current member	<b>\$360</b>			

<b><u>RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FEES</u></b>	<b><u>Basic</u></b>	<b><u>Supporting</u></b>
Grade K	<b>\$ 180</b>	<b>\$ 360</b>
Grades 1 - 2	<b>\$1,170</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>
Grades 3 - 7	<b>\$1,420</b>	<b>\$1,800</b>
High School Grades 8 - 10	<b>\$ 360</b>	<b>\$ 500</b>
Optional at Home Hebrew	<b>\$ 180</b>	<b>\$ 360</b>

**ADDITIONAL FEES**

Security	<b>\$218 per family unit</b>
Bar/Bat Mitzvah	<b>\$1,700</b> (\$700 deposit/\$1,000 balance)
Confirmation	<b>\$525</b>

**BUILDING FUND**

**\$3,600** Payable over 6 years, *first year deferred*  
(not applicable to Young Family or Young Adult categories)

Inspiring a community of seekers, learners, and doers to pursue the best in ourselves and the repair of the world (tikkun olam תיקון עולם).

## **BETH DAVID MISSION STATEMENT**

**Beth David Reform Congregation: Inspiring  
a community of seekers, learners, and doers to pursue  
the best in ourselves and the repair of the world  
(תיקון עולם tikkun olam).**