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TRANSITION

Last month, I announced to the congregation that Lori Rubin, our Education Director, is leaving her position at the end of June. Lori has been given the opportunity to expand a part-time role that she has held at Jewish Learning Ventures, formerly known as the Central Agency for Jewish Education-Jewish Outreach Partnership.

Though we regret Lori's stepping down from her current position, we wish her well in this new pursuit. I am happy to let you know that Lori, Jon, Alex, Abby, and Hilary will stay with us as active and involved members of our congregation.

Lori has been at Or Hadash for twelve years. She has been an energetic and dynamic presence in our school and in our congregational community. All of Or Hadash knows Lori even if we have no children in the religious school. Under Lori's leadership, in classrooms with dedicated teachers, our children are learning and growing into Judaism in innovative ways. Unlike the religious schools that so many Or Hadash adults attended, Lori has led our school in which children don't decode prayers, they grasp the concepts. Our children aren't just learning about tzedakah (righteousness, charity) and tikkun olam (repairing the world), our children are actively engaged in acts of loving-kindness. Lori has turned our school into a pioneering, shining example of experiential learning. In layman's terms, we have a curriculum of exploring Jewish living in "out of the box" ways and being engaged with each other such that one does not even realize that learning is occurring. The creativity and innovation that I have seen in the school under Lori's tenure is remarkable.

There is nothing more important than the education and engagement of the next generation of young Jews. A process to find and secure the most qualified candidate to lead our school is underway under the able leadership of Karen Freedman, Debra Schaeffer and Jennifer Hoagland. The person who ultimately becomes our new Education Director will bring a portfolio of abilities, skills and talents along with a personal vision to facilitate the love, learning and ownership of Judaism that our congregation has continued to build since its founding.

I invite you to join me on Friday evening, May 11th at 8 pm as we celebrate Shabbat together, including the opportunity to honor Lori for the years of service she has given to Or Hadash as our Education Director. The evening will begin with a congregational dinner and our 2012 annual meeting.

I'll see you on May 11th.

Janet Karp

From Rabbi Josh

“HEY...YOU...GUYS!”

Anyone who has been at Or Hadash on a Tuesday at 4:15 knows what it is to see Lori Rubin in her element. Kids running around, yelping, letting off steam after a long day of public school and before a long afternoon of Hebrew school—and then the sing-song call of “HEY...YOU...GUYS!” rising somehow, improbably, over the yelling and the laughing and everyone drops what they’re doing and comes streaming into the sanctuary for *birkat ha-mazon* and pre-class announcements. A full-grown woman shorter than many of her students yet instantly commanding their attention and respect: it’s truly a sight to see.

Lori had my attention and respect from the moment I walked into Or Hadash, a not-quite-full-grown rabbi. Her infectious energy, her positive attitude and can-do spirit, her creativity and enthusiasm made quite an impression and have continued to for the past eight years it has been my privilege to work closely together with her. Over the years I’ve heard stories from rabbinic colleagues about the complexities and challenges of working with their education directors, and whenever I did I would consider anew how fortunate I was to have such a remarkable and capable partner.

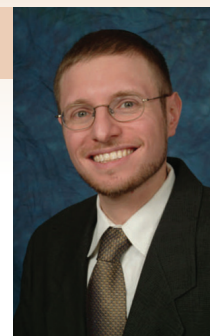
In truth, we were all lucky. Lori has worked hard for twelve years to build a school that we can all be proud of and to send our children into the world with a strong positive Jewish identity and a commitment to Jewish and Reconstructionist values. She harnessed her creativity, energy, and love of Judaism to develop a space where students could learn experientially, celebrate the richness of our tradition, and grapple with what it means to be Jewish in Twenty-First Century America. In all these efforts we collaborated closely, often planning and e-mailing back and forth late into the night, and our partnership was one of the best and most fruitful working relationships I have ever had in my professional career. We are fortunate that the congregation will continue to benefit from Lori’s energy and creativity as a member and we can all look forward to having Lori and her family enriching our community for many years to come.

The ancient rabbis asked: “Who is wise? One who learns from all people.” Lori’s gift has been, and continues to be, the capacity to find opportunities for learning wherever she is – whether in the classroom, on school activities, talking with parents between school shifts, social action programs, cooking activities, sleepovers in the sanctuary, you name it. Lori is the consummate educator because she meets people where they are and then uncovers the possibility for growth and learning inherent in that place. And all of us are wiser for the time we have spent with her.

So if we ever find ourselves falling back on a routine or easy way of doing things, if we stop questioning assumptions and just do things because that’s the way they’ve always been done, if we ever fall into the trap of thinking there’s only one right way to learn and experience Judaism – then we can all pause for a moment and listen to the call of Lori shaking us out of our complacency and preconceived notions: “HEY...YOU...GUYS!”

B’shalom,

Rabbi Josh



CONDOLENCES

- To **Marianne Adler** on the passing of her uncle, Michael Lipton, great-uncle of Zoe and Sophie.
- To **Scott Crespy** and **Jacki Steinberg** on the passing of their mother, Miriam Crespy, mother-in-law of Gayle Crespy and Chris Steinberg, and grandmother of Hannah, Leah, Emily, Sarah, and Sophia.
- To **Zell Kravinsky** on the passing of his mother, Dr. Reeda Kravinsky, mother-in-law of Emily and grandmother of Joshua, Sarah, Lev and Eli.

B’NAI MITZVAH

MAY 5

Bar Mitzvah of **Jacob Fields**, son of Stephanie and Benjamin Fields

MAY 12

Bar Mitzvah of **Efrem Leventhal**, son of Binnie Polonsky and Jess Leventhal

JUNE 2

Bar Mitzvah of **Lucas Pollack**, son of Robyn and Jonathan Pollack

JUNE 16

Bat Mitzvah of **Abigail Goldstein**, daughter of Diane Goldstein and Claire Verden

President's Message

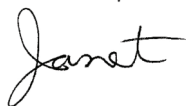
I am in the home stretch of my presidency at Or Hadash. Of the many roles that I've taken at Or Hadash, serving as your president has been the most challenging and has been genuinely rewarding. As president, there are so many details and decisions to attend to, and yet, I have never felt alone in this task. Rabbi Josh, all our staff, and our lay leaders are always available to help. Or Hadash really is a team; it is one that extends beyond our leadership to each and every one of you.

Our strength lies in what each of us brings to this community. We must live up to the covenant of membership. By joining our spirit, our love, our energy, and our dollars together, we are able to offer and to accomplish so much. As president, I have heard over and over from so many of you that Or Hadash is truly important in your lives. I've heard how this wonderful, sacred community rallies around its members time after time. I hear about your love for this community, how Or Hadash just feels right, and how you are so comfortable at Or Hadash.

Very soon, the mantle of the Presidency of Or Hadash will pass to Lani Moss. Lani has been at Or Hadash for a very long time, continually serving our sacred community in one capacity or another with her love, dedication, and her variety of abilities. Lani, I wish you a hearty mazel tov as you take on this new role. I know that you will be a wonderful President and the Or Hadash team will be by your side.

May Or Hadash continue to go from strength to strength, and may Judaism thrive in each of us in this sacred congregation.

Your President,



Janet Karp

Ha-Kesher Now Accepting Advertising

Thank you for your interest in advertising in our synagogue newsletter, Ha-Kesher. We have "gone green," and Ha-Kesher is now a bimonthly online publication available at our web site, www.orphadash.com. We will be publishing quarter-page ads at a rate of \$30.00 per issue or reproducing business cards at a rate of \$20.00 per issue. Please contact me if you have general questions. If our terms are acceptable, please email photo-ready ads to debra.schaeffer@gmail.com for evaluation. If your ad is accepted for publication, we will invoice you through email and forward your ad to our printer. Please contact our printer, Guy Homer, at homer@homer-group.com, for more specific information regarding printing specifications.

Beautiful Or Hadash cards now available

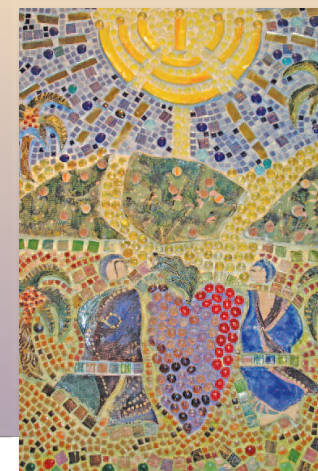


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Dear Or Hadash,

When I interviewed for my position as Educational Director twelve years ago, I met with three people—two representatives from the education committee and the Rabbi. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that I knew two of the interviewers from my experiences at other local congregations. Right from the start, Or Hadash felt like home for me and over the next few years, Or Hadash became more than a job for me; it was a home for my whole family.

Now, a dozen years later, I am consistently proud to call Or Hadash my community. Here, we offer amazing diverse programs, a dynamic school structure with an incredible teaching staff, warm and friendly office staff, lay leaders who give freely of their time and expertise to make Or Hadash the best it can be, a plethora of creative Shabbat and holiday services, and a wonderful Rabbi who helps make it all happen. There is no way I can say thank you enough to all of the people who have supported me in my work.

Although I am leaving my position as Educational Director, I am not leaving Or Hadash. One of my favorite quotes is Lo alecha ha-m'lacha ligmor, v'lo atah ben chorin l'hibateyl mimenah, or "It is not up to you to complete the work (of perfecting the world), but neither are you free to refrain from doing it." To me this means that I hope that I have planted the seeds of a love of Judaism through our children at Or Hadash; and as I move on to new adventures, I continue to be connected to Or Hadash as my community. I remain inspired by this community's strength and commitment to Reconstructionist Judaism as well as by the bonds my family has established with each of you.

So, I won't be disappearing from Or Hadash very quickly. It is an amazing place where I have been blessed to work for the past twelve years. As I look forward from here, I realize that it has been Or Hadash that has provided me with the foundation for growth. It is the experiences I have gained from Or Hadash that have taken me to work as a consultant for the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, as Rosh Hinuh, Director of Education, for Camp JRF, and now to my work at Jewish Learning Venture where I work as Program Director of Family Engagement and will be expanding my role to include experiential Jewish Education consulting.

So this is not Shalom or good-bye, but instead L'hitraot-until next time!

L'hitraot!

From the Education Director

By Lori Rubin

With what do we want our students to come out of our religious school?

- *The knowledge of how to lead services?*
- *An ability to feel comfortable in our synagogue?*
- *An understanding of how they identify as Jews*
 - through prayer
 - through rituals
 - with community
 - by doing social action activities
 - with culture-movies/food/music/museums
- *A background knowledge of:*
 - Jewish holidays
 - Jewish history with an emphasis on the Holocaust
 - The Jewish life cycle
 - Bible stories
 - Torah texts
 - Ethics/Values
 - An understanding of Reconstructionist Judaism
 - An appreciation of other religions including similarities and differences
 - Prayer Hebrew
 - Israel: its culture, its language, its history

Our religious school program culminates in Confirmation at the end of tenth grade. I tell our seventh-grade class that Confirmation is an affirmation of the students' continued Jewish education. Learning doesn't end when you become Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Whether or not our children continue in our program post B'nai Mitzvah, it is our hope that they continue to learn and grow as adult Jewish members of our community. We are blessed by those who do continue and are continually impressed by these students at our annual Confirmation service.

(continued on page 8)

MY BAR MITZVAH PROJECT REFLECTIONS

By Jason Greene

Beginning in October of 2011, I have been volunteering almost every week at the Brandywine Assisted Living at Dresher Estates playing games and spending time with the elderly residents. “Wii with Jason” every Thursday is an event at the retirement home that has become more and more popular every week. There are many games that we can play, but the most common game, and the favorite of the residents is Wii Bowling. Some other games we *tried* were “Are You Smarter than a Fifth Grader” and “Big Brain Academy;” and although these games went better than you may think, in the end, bowling was the favorite, and was what we played most of the time. I think they like it because it does not take much energy to play, and is also interactive enough that it is enjoyable for all of those involved. Plus, the residents get very competitive over who wins the games. You should see how excited they get when they get a strike or a double or even a turkey.

Through the hours I have spent over the months with these people, I have realized that the elderly, with a little bit of practice, can kick some major tuchus in bowling. Also, this time with them has helped to reinforce the age-old Jewish value of “respect and honor for your elders.” At times before this experience, outside of my own family, I did not have any relationship or communication with those who were in the retired age range. I only have one grandparent left and most of my relatives are the same age as my parents, or their children are my age or so. Now, having spent a lot of time with these residents, I heard some great stories and learned a few life lessons along the way. One lady that was there every time had a bad hip; but through the pain she bowled because she didn’t want to give up. A man who was occasionally there told me stories about his days in the Navy and taught me a few moves for the ladies. Another woman had very bad vision and could hardly even see the screen for the game, but we worked together (I had to hold her hand while she bowled) and she could tell how many pins she knocked over by the cheering in the room.

First and foremost, I learned that old people have NO IDEA how the movements are transferred through the “magic wand” of the Wii onto the screen. It is very strange to them. Attempting to explain this was difficult, because for most of their lives there were no flat screen televisions or game systems and even if

there were, they probably didn’t use them very much. This whole “boom” of technology that my generation takes so much for granted is all so incredible to them. Through the process of trying to explain for weeks that this was not magic, I learned both patience, and also how to talk to people that do not understand something as well as I do; because it is simple to assume that everyone knows what you do. I learned that everyone can learn something if you are patient in the way that you teach it to them and if you give them enough time and enough chances to practice.

Through these valuable lessons, I have come away learning valuable life lessons, such as patience, the ability to be patient and to teach people something that is challenging to them, and to not take the things that I have in this world (such as technology) for granted. At the very least, I know that I taught them how to bowl. It is special thing to see how hard they try, and when they succeed, it is a great thing to watch.

My Bar Mitzvah signified my journey from boyhood to manhood. Although I am young at heart and still have a lot of growing up to do, I became a man. However, over the past couple of months with my new friends at the Dresher Estates, I have learned that no matter how old I get, I can always learn something new and it is important to keep learning every day. As I have learned through my years of Hebrew school, we do mitzvot to add holiness to the lives of others. I helped to add a change in pattern to the lives of those who seemed to become so strictly timed. When they learned a new activity, I learned the most valuable life lesson of all: never lose that little kid inside of you. When a resident bowled his first strike, a smile spread over his face, which was kind of sad and expressionless up to that point. Seeing that first strike was like watching a child take his first steps, or like when I hit my first homerun. When we all laughed about my funny dance moves after I did something well, the mood in the room changed from sad to joyful. At the end of each night when the participants thanked me, I could tell that they were genuinely happy and thankful for the time that I had spent with them. Over time, it is easy to lose this, but the more you can hold onto this, the more enjoyable life will be, and I will try to keep this in mind for the rest of my life.

Report from the Development Committee

By Lani Moss

It is noteworthy when a person or group reaches a goal that it sets for itself. This year, Or Hadash launched an annual campaign. The Development Committee set a goal for that campaign and the budget was predicated on our reaching that goal. On behalf of the Development Committee, I am pleased to share with you that the ***Campaign to Renew and Sustain Or Hadash*** not only reached its goal, but exceeded it! We raised \$42,553 - \$53 over our goal. The intent of the campaign is to help to fund the day-to-day operations of the congregation. Our synagogue's economic reality is such that to continue to achieve the fiscal balance that enables us to share our beautiful home and create a dynamic Jewish community, we needed a new approach. The Campaign to Renew and Sustain Or Hadash fills the gap that exists between our membership dues and our financial obligations. The Campaign provides the security needed to continue to enjoy the long history of excellent rabbinic leadership and our thriving school in which to educate the younger members of our community. *Todah Rabah* (thank you very much) to all the members of the community that contributed to this effort. This is an Annual Campaign...so watch your mailbox around the High Holidays for next year's letter. Best wishes for a happy and healthy summer.

From the Administrator

By Laurie Albert

The long-awaited renovations to the administrative office at Or Hadash took place this winter. It is beautiful! Special thanks to the Aesthetics Committee (Michael Oswald and Laura Feller) for defining our color scheme and picking the furniture; to Building Committee chair, Rich Freifelder, for his many contributions of painting, oiling the woodwork, installing lighting, doors, shelves and more; and to Lani and Hal Moss, Shelley Rosenberg, and our custodian Albert Thompson, for helping to pack up and then move everything back into the newly-furnished office. Our bookkeeper, Loretta Fogel, joins me in thanking all who helped bring this long awaited project to fruition.

Please note that the entrance to the office is now located in the hall across from the boardroom.

MAZEL TOV

To **Joshua Albert** (son of Laurie and David Albert) for earning his Ph.D. in Physics from Duke University.

To **Betti Kahn** on her engagement to Bill Conrad.

A Reminder from The Bookkeeper...

If you submit expenses for reimbursement from Or Hadash, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope. Save Or Hadash dollars; even little things add up.



Italian Maremma & Umbria: A Pasta & Wine Lover's Culinary Tour, October 3 to 13

Join Aliza Green, Or Hadash member, Italian food expert, and author of 12 cookbooks, including *Making Artisan Pasta*, for a unique 10-day small-group exploration of autumn's culinary delights, Italian-Jewish cuisine, fresh pasta, and superb wine in wild, ancient Etruscan Maremma and Umbria, "Italy's green heart."

For complete itinerary and pricing:
www.epicopia.com

OR CONTACT ALIZA 215-635-0651
cranberrybean@comcast.net

Or Hadash has been the recipient of many gifts from our congregants, for which we are grateful. However, we are requesting that all donations of treasured items such as books, tapes, videos and other Judaica be placed on hold. We appreciate your cooperation at this time.

Paws for the Blind

On May 6th the Membership Committee is hosting "Paws for the Blind," a fundraiser for the Israeli Guide Dog Center for the Blind. This event will take place from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm. The purpose of the event is threefold: (1) to raise money for a deserving organization, (2) to bring new families to Or Hadash to meet our members and see our beautiful synagogue, and (3) to have a really fun time!

This event will have something for everyone, including your well-behaved dog. Great food and craft vendors for the adults; carnival games, a moon bounce, gaga, and a blind obstacle course for the children, and even a dog show! In addition, there will be a dog parade for all with Israeli flags sponsored by the Israel Committee. Prizes will be given for the best dog costume and best dog tricks...so start practicing. A representative of the Israeli Guide Dog Center will be there to explain the work of their organization. A bake sale and a craft table will be sponsored by two children for their B'nai Mitzvah projects. It's truly a team effort.

But...we need your help to make it a really great day. Please invite your children, grandchildren, friends, and neighbors to this great event. The cost is \$5.00 per person or \$20.00 per family. All donations go directly to the Israeli Guide Dog Center for the Blind. To pre-register for the event and make your donation, please follow this link to a special Or Hadash donation page. For more information or to volunteer at the event, please contact Caren Levin at cklevin@comcast.net or 610-940-3804. See you at the dog party!

Caren Levin



UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, May 4 and June 1 - Three Part Harmony

These services will be open house events. Bring your friends and neighbors. Tot Shabbat is at 6 pm, followed by a dairy/vegetarian Pot Luck Dinner and Intergenerational Services at 7:00. April and May birthdays will be celebrated at the May service. June birthdays will be celebrated at the June service.

Sunday, May 6, 11:30 am to 2 pm - Paws for the Blind

Or Hadash will host a fundraiser for the Israeli Guide Dog Center for the Blind. Join the fun with a parade, prizes for dogs in costume and doing tricks, moon bounce, gaga, vendors, food and more.

Friday, May 11- The Congregational Dinner and Annual Congregational Meeting

Dinner, 6:30 pm (Italian meal at no cost to our members)

Annual Congregational Meeting, 7:00 pm.

Services with the choir, 8:00 pm.

Tuesday, May 15 - Last Day of Hebrew School

Saturday, May 19, 9 am - Introduction to Torah Study This class meets in the Rabbi's Study with Anne Feibelman.

Sunday, May 20 - Last Day of Sunday School Our Confirmation Service will be at 10 am.

Friday, May 25 at 7 pm - Shabbat Al Fresco Enjoy a beautiful spring evening with a service on the patio.

The Or Hadash office will be closed on Monday, May 28 in observance of Memorial Day.

Wednesday, June 6, 7 pm – Healing Service

This service is intended for those who are seeking physical or emotional healing for themselves or someone they care about. We share inspirational and comforting readings and music, and enjoy the warmth and support of our community. The service starts usually lasts about an hour.

Friday June 15 - Shabbat Zemirah with music by Sandy Saull, Phil Rosenberg and Barry Bell, and our choir will sing on June 22.

Saturday morning services continue every week with breakfast and Torah Study at 8:45 and services at 10:00.

From the Education Director *(continued from page 4)*

This year, we were perplexed at how to schedule the Confirmation Service. Traditionally, Confirmation is held on the evening of Shavuot, the festival where we celebrate the receiving of the Ten Commandments. This year, Shavuot falls on Memorial Day weekend. It was felt by many that friends, family and congregants might not be able to attend Confirmation if it was held on Memorial Day weekend. So, the decision was made to hold it the week before on Sunday, May 20th, which is also the last day of religious school.

How wonderful it will be to witness the Confirmation class lead us in a special service that incorporates our end of the school year assembly. We will be able to see firsthand what those who complete our program know and how they feel about their

accomplishments. If you have never been to a Confirmation service, this year make it a priority. Our Confirmation services are always creative, innovative and a treat to behold. Join us on the morning of Sunday, May 20th as we honor this class with our presence and they share their knowledge and thoughts with us. Kudos to Arielle Toub, Lauren Goldenberg, Jessica Shapiro, Seth Horry and Andrew Meyer, our confirmands, and to Ruth and Jules Mermelstein for teaching them and guiding them through the creation of this special service. All school families should plan on attending. What a great group of role models they would be for our younger students. The program will also incorporate our end-of-year assembly honoring our teachers and looking at what we've accomplished this year. I am looking forward to seeing many congregants there in support of the school and in preparation for Shavuot.

Sponsor Your Own Oneg/Kiddush

By Michelle Smithman

I just wanted to draw your attention to a practice that we have at Or Hadash: sponsoring onegs and kiddushes. Congregants can sponsor onegs or Kiddushes for a whole host of reasons. If you and your family would like to sponsor a special occasion like a birthday, anniversary, baby naming, your favorite sports team winning a championship, whatever is important to you, please let us know. For example, if you sponsor an oneg for a birthday and enjoy having the congregation sing Hag Sameach to you, we will do that for you. For other occasions, a mishaberach (blessing) to commemorate your mitzvah can be done as well.

If you want to sponsor an oneg or Kiddush, please contact Laurie Albert or me and let us know what date you are interested in. For a suggested donation of \$54, we will provide a beautiful oneg or Kiddush for you. It will be more festive than our regular onegs/kiddushes, something that really marks your mitzvah. In addition, your sponsoring an oneg or Kiddush will be announced in the weekly update.

Whatever reason you have for sponsoring an oneg or Kiddush, sharing that occasion with Or Hadash is a lovely way to do it. If interested, please call me at 215-641-4646 or Laurie Albert, our synagogue administrator.

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