



HA-KESHER

September/October 2010 • Volume 27, Issue 4 • Elul/Tishrei 5570

Newsletter of Or Hadash
A Reconstructionist Congregation
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From Rabbi Roni

After much anticipation and preparation, I am so excited to begin my year as Sabbatical Rabbi at Or Hadash. It has been a pleasure to be a part of the Or Hadash community this past year as Rabbinic Intern, and I am very much looking forward to this coming year.

We learn from Torah that sabbatical, or *shmitah* in Hebrew, is the seventh year in a seven-year planting cycle during which the farming land of Israel must lay fallow. No planting is to be done during this year in order to allow the land to rest and rejuvenate. Rather, we must rely on the produce brought forth in the sixth year to sustain us throughout the sabbatical year. While these instructions technically only apply to agriculture in the land of Israel, and not to all cycles of seven, there are some lessons that we can learn from the biblical *shmitah* to take with us into this coming year.

First, and most importantly, is a reminder that rest is not a reward, but a requirement. However, in order to be able to successfully take this rest, we need to compensate for the sabbatical. We began this process last year as I spent much time shadowing Rabbi Josh and learning from him about many aspects of the congregation, and also getting to know many of you in various contexts. Community is built first and foremost upon relationships, and I look forward to forming and deepening my relationships with each of you this year.

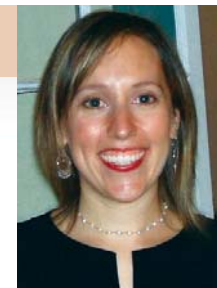
Next, in order to survive during the *shmitah* year, extra produce must be preserved during the sixth year in order to be consumed during the sabbatical year. Realizing that extra support might be required this year, we have created a liaison committee, (consisting of Rick Dzubow, Lani Moss, Amy Lieb, Carolyn Savitzky, Laurie Albert, and Marty Jacobs) in order to help with this transition. The goal of this committee is to help negotiate my time this year, to make sure everyone's needs are being met within the congregation, and to be an extra ear for all of you should any problems, questions, or concerns arise throughout this year. Please do not hesitate to reach out to any one of us throughout the year.

In addition to these support structures that have been set up for this year, extra assistance and involvement will also be required from every member at Or Hadash. Since my time will be limited this year, what will enable our community to flourish during this sabbatical year, will be for each of you to donate your time and skills, however you are moved to do so, in order to ensure the success of our congregation.

While there may be many similarities and lessons to draw from the biblical *shmitah*, there is also one key difference. In the Torah, *shmitah* is mainly about resting the land while the community tries to get by until the end of the year. Our goal here at Or Hadash this year is to not only maintain the status quo, but to push us outside of our comfort zone and perhaps try something we never did before. My blessing for us this year is that we may each learn to stretch ourselves for the betterment of ourselves as individuals and as a community. May we push ourselves to try something new, and most importantly to approach this year with an open mind and an open heart.

B'vracha,

Rabbi Roni



ABOUT OUR NEW RABBI

Roni Handler is a native Philadelphia and a 5th year student at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC). Prior to her studies at RRC, she received an MA in Jewish Communal Service from the Hornstein Program at Brandeis University and a BA in International Affairs from The George Washington University. Rabbi Roni has served as an intern in many Jewish organizations and congregations, including: Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters Community Mikveh and Education Center, The Rashi School, JRF (Jewish Reconstructionist Federation), No'ar Hadash (Reconstructionist youth movement), and the Reconstructionist Synagogue of the North Shore. She has also spent time working at the Aaron and Marjorie Ziegelman campus of Camp JRF in the Poconos, served as the advisor to Reconstructionist students at Brandeis University, and has been the Editor for Ritualwell.org since 2007.

Rabbi Roni has enjoyed counting herself among the builders of the Reconstructionist movement through her work at Camp JRF, No'ar Hadash, and on college campuses. Roni is continually inspired by the aspect of Reconstructionist ideology that affords all willing participants the opportunity to make a deep and lasting imprint on our future, and enables everyone's voice to be heard. Rabbi Roni is passionate about infusing every moment with meaning, especially through creating innovative Jewish rituals, adapting traditional rituals, and helping others to notice and mark life transitions in a deep and meaningful way. Combining contemporary and traditional modes of spiritual practice are integral pieces of Rabbi Roni's approach to Judaism; including yoga, mediation, Mussar (Jewish ethical practice), nature, and song.



Spring
Into
Judaica!

Shop Our Online Judaica Store

President's Message

By Janet Karp

Gut yontiv! L'shana tova! May 5771 be a good year for you and for your family! May it be a good year for Or Hadash! Every year I wonder why it is that so many of us, many who are not eager to attend Shabbat services throughout the year show up reliably to attend high holy day services. Not just at Or Hadash, but at every synagogue many, many more seats are filled on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Don't we realize that high holy day services are twice as long as on Shabbat? Don't we realize that there will be lots of standing and lots of sitting? I think that we appreciate the chance to begin anew, to rediscover that "something" about Judaism, to immerse in our heritage that at the same time is ancient and new. We reconnect with friends after a busy and hectic year and after a long, hot summer.

Isn't it ingenious that the Jewish year and the school year renew together? Each September children and their teachers get to start over again. They are given the opportunity to put the past into perspective and to make the most of a new year. And as Jews, we do, too.

Many of us take a summer vacation. Hopefully, it is a time of rest, relaxation and restoration. We spend time away from home or at least away from work and from the people we interact with regularly throughout the year. I'm writing this column while on vacation. It is July and I'm feeling great. These living waters restore me. The natural beauty of the mountain wilderness, the infinite star-studded night sky and the quiet lift me up. And yet, this is an experience that is the opposite of community.

High holy days arrive after vacations when we are personally and individually refreshed. We come together as a community to revitalize Jewishly. That explains why so many of our prayers are in the plural. That is why we need to be part of a minyan. We need each other to create vibrant community for ourselves and for our children in good times and bad. I wish you a year of health, security and peace; and may we work together at Or Hadash and in the outside community to move closer to a world worthy of our children's inheritance!

L'shana tova u'metukah/toward a good and sweet year.

SAVE THESE DATES:

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Shabbat Al Fresco

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Selichot

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Rosh Hashanah

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Kol Nidre

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Yom Kippur

WEDNESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 22

Erev Sukkot

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Martinis in the Hut

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22

Shabbat Schmooze

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29

Erev Shabbat with speaker,
Jed Margolis**From the Administrator***By Laurie Albert*

5770 has been a busy year at Or Hadash. By now, I hope you have all seen and sat in our new Sanctuary chairs. They are very comfortable. Special thanks to Jim Rall and Jeff Alper for helping move chairs with our initial purchase.

Jeff Alper and his assistant, Ken Rosenberg, did yeoman service in the summer heat by redecking our porch! They spent weeks outside getting the porch ready for this fall. An incredible project, it is beautiful and splinter-free. Please thank them when you see them.

We have a new ON-LINE gift shop, chaired by Rhoda Gansler. Please visit at <http://orhadash.judaicabeautiful.com/store/>

Our kitchen committee, chaired by Michelle Smithman, did a major reorganization of our pantry.

So many other volunteers have been busy doing great things here. We are so fortunate to have an active and giving community – you make Or Hadash happen!

From my family to yours, all best wishes for the new year.

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Please contact Liz Nover, Director
215-635-7300, x 143 LNover@gratz.edu



MAZEL TOV!

- To **Rabbi Roni Handler** on her marriage to **Rabbi Isabel DeKoninck**
- To the **Learn family** on the birth of **Howard Joseph Learn** on July 13. Howard is son of Mackenzie and John, and grandson of Shelley Sanders and Warren Young

B'NAI MITZVAH

SEPTEMBER 25

Bar Mitzvah of **Aaron Katz**, son of Andy Katz and Debbie Blum

OCTOBER 2

Bar Mitzvah of **Matthew Lieb**, son of David and Amy Lieb

OCTOBER 9

Bar Mitzvah of **Tovah Kaiser**, daughter of Kenneth and Denise Kaiser

OCTOBER 16

Bar Mitzvah of **Zachary Rall**, son of Jim and Jill Rall

OCTOBER 23

Bat Mitzvah of **Samantha Horry**, daughter of Adam and Elisabeth Horry

OCTOBER 30

Bar Mitzvah of **Jonah Zitelli**, son of William Zitelli and Joleen Rovner

2010/5771 SCHEDULE OF HIGH HOLY DAY SERVICES

Shalom! Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are fast approaching. Please review this schedule for this year's High Holy day services as there are some time changes.

Rabbi Roni Handler will be leading our High Holy day services this year. Lori Rubin, our Education Director, is planning our children and teen programming, and is also arranging the tot, teen and family services. We look forward to seeing you as we observe the High Holidays together.

Wednesday evening, September 8 — Erev **Rosh Hashanah** at Or Hadash

8:00 – 9:30 p.m. Evening Service

Thursday morning, September 9 — First Day **Rosh Hashanah** at Gratz

9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Morning Service

9:30 – 11:00 a.m. Adult Study Havurah leads a discussion: “Jewish Matters – Various Approaches”

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Activities for Children and Teens

Friday morning, September 10 — Second Day **Rosh Hashanah** at Or Hadash

9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Morning Service

9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Activities for Children and Teens (rooms 203 and 207)

1:15 p.m. Tashlich

Friday evening, September 17 — Erev **Yom Kippur** at Gratz

6:30 – 9:00 p.m. Kol Nidre

7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Family Service (following chanting of Kol Nidre)

Saturday morning, September 18 — **Yom Kippur** morning at Gratz

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Morning Service

9:30 – 11:00 a.m. Adult Study Havurah leads a discussion: “Jewish Matters – Various Approaches”

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Activities for Children and Teens

Saturday afternoon, September 18 — **Yom Kippur** afternoon at Or Hadash

3:00 – 4:00 p.m. Healing Service (in the Garden weather permitting) led by Sandy Saull

4:00 – 5:00 p.m. Discussion Group led by Jeff Chebot: “Implications of the Confirmation of Elena Kagan – Is there such a thing as ‘Jewish Justice’ on the Supreme Court?”

5:15 – 7:45 p.m. Yizkor, Minchah and Ne’ilah

7:45 p.m. Shofar, Havdallah and Break the Fast: light refreshments in the Community Room

All are welcome.

SHABBAT SPEAKER

On Friday night October 29, our own Jed Margolis, Executive Director for Maccabi USA/Sports for Israel, will be speaking at Or Hadash.

The Maccabiah Games (Jewish Olympics) are held in Israel every four years, and Jed will speak about the Maccabi Movement, which builds Jewish Pride through sports. He is also recruiting Jewish athletes of all ages (15-85+) to go to Maccabi competitions in Australia, Austria, Brazil and Israel over the next four years.

Jed will be showing a video and will be available to answer questions.

Second Annual Or Hadash Martinis in the Hut

Celebrate Sukkot In Style!

Join your Or Hadash friends on Saturday evening, September 25 at 8 p.m., as we gather under the stars, in the sukkah and on the patio (or in the community room in the event of inclement weather). Sample a variety of specialty martinis, savory snacks, and delectable desserts while enjoying the company of fellow congregants, friends, and neighbors. Non-alcoholic beverages will also be available, of course.

Share the fun! Bring your friends and neighbors so they can meet the Or Hadash community! The cost is \$30 per couple / \$18 per person at the door. But if you pay in advance with your R.S.V.P., the cost is only \$25 per couple or \$15 per person.

R.S.V.P.: Steven Greene at sgreene@makethegrade.net or 215-540-8378

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, September 3, 7:00 p.m.

Celebrate **Shabbat Al Fresco** with a service outdoors. Join us on the patio to worship surrounded by our lovely trees.

Saturday, September 4, 7:30 p.m.

Selichot will be observed. Location details to follow. A full schedule of High Holiday services is published on page 4 in this newsletter.

September 12

Sunday School begins.

September 14

Hebrew School begins.

Wednesday, September 22

Erev Sukkot

5:30 p.m. Sukkah decorating and "Aid for Friends" meals

6:30 p.m. Pizza Dinner

7:00 p.m. Family friendly Sukkot Service with Lulav and Etrog

Saturday, September 25, 8:00 p.m.

"Martinis in the Hut"

This will be a time for adults only to gather in our sukkah for drinks and a sumptuous dessert buffet. *What a great time to get together with our Or Hadash community! Bring your friends and neighbors!* R.S.V.P. to Steven Greene at sgreene@makethegrade.net or 215-540-8378.

Wednesday, September 29, 6:00 p.m.

Simchat Torah Celebration

Join us in celebrating the end and the beginning of the Annual Torah reading cycle.

Festivities will feature:

- Potluck Dairy/Veggie Dinner at 6:00
- Evening Service at 6:30
- Hagigat Limud to honor all of our new religious school students
- Music and dancing with the Torah with dance leader, Sharon Polsky
- Ice Cream Oneg at 8:00!!

Due to the High Holiday schedule, our **THREE PART HARMONY** services will resume on **Friday, October 8** with Tot Shabbat at 6:00 p.m., dairy/vegetarian potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m., and Family Shabbat celebrating all summer and September/October birthdays at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, October 17, 9:00 a.m.

All are welcome in the Rabbi's study, as, in the tradition of "Nosh with Rabbi Josh," we will **Rap with Rabbi Roni**.

Friday, October 22

Shabbat Schmooze

Watch your email for details.

Friday, October 29, 8:00 p.m.

Erev Shabbat service will include Jed Margolis speaking about the Israeli Maccabi Games.

ECO CLEANS UP!



ECO, the committee of Environmentally Concerned Or Hadashers, volunteered to clean up the Disc Golf Course at Fort Washington State Park on Sunday, June 6. This was organized by Michael Oswald a. Participants included Guy and Shelly Homer; Adam and Seth Horry; Alex, Peter and Sam Jacobson; Adam, Caren, Jessica and Sarah Levin; Hal Moss; Michael Oswald; Jon Shapiro; Doug Smithman; and Len Zangwill. The volunteers trimmed Frisbee-eating bushes in order to restore the course to a usable condition. Poison ivy inflictions were minimal and Len used a disc found during the clean up to perform a quality assurance test run after the job. Thanks to all who participated.

My Bat Mitzvah Project

By Abby Rubin

For my Bat Mitzvah project, I adopted a mile-long road in my township. My family and I spent time picking up trash along the road. Even though it was one of the shorter roads, we still took several hours to make our way to the end. I contributed to my community by picking up all the trash that I saw and the pieces that others missed. I learned that the residents of the street were grateful for our work when a woman driving by thanked us. I learned that I don't need to be embarrassed because I'm wearing a neon orange vest. The people that see me are glad that I am helping the world. I would recommend this project, especially if you do it with friends because that makes it less tedious and boring.

From the Education Director

By Lori Rubin

Greetings from Camp JRF! For the second summer, I am blessed with the opportunity to spend my summer in the Poconos with phenomenal educators, Rabbis, Cantors, counselors, specialists and, of course, campers. This summer, we have fourteen campers from Or Hadash at Camp JRF. I am excited to be able to spend quality time with them away from the "real world."

In last summer's Hakesher, I talked about what Camp JRF offers, and what we can bring home to Or Hadash. Specifically, I wrote about inclusivity, multi-aged groupings, spirit or Ruach, and Jewish values. In fact, I used most of these topics in creating our new school structure for 2010-2011. In this article, I'd like to touch upon the notion of Sacred Time and Shabbat.

I have written and spoken about Sacred Time before. Something special happened on June 18th; and I'd like to share it with you. June 12th was my daughter, Abby's Bat Mitzvah. We enjoyed sharing this joyous occasion with many of you and appreciate all of your good wishes. Following that busy weekend of celebration, I was supposed to be at Camp JRF to begin senior staff week on June 15th. Not sure of being able to tie up all my loose ends quickly enough, I arranged my arrival for the 18th. That gave me time to finish what needed to be done, and to be present at my children's end-of-year activities. So, I packed my bags, went to a board meeting on Thursday night, and after one last awards ceremony, began the drive to Camp JRF on Friday morning, June 18th. When I arrived, I wanted to jump right in and make the most of what was left of senior staff week. I attended one quick meeting and then, Rabbi Isaac, the Camp Director, said, "Time to get ready for Shabbat." I was astounded. I shouldn't have been – I knew it was Friday, and I had been to camp before. But I was so ready to jump right in, I hadn't realized that my arrival coincided with preparations for Shabbat. I got to camp and the folks said, "Unpack, relax; we are going to celebrate Shabbat; all the stress of the week is about to melt away." And so it did. I had the opportunity to unpack my things, and by the time Shabbat rolled in, I was ready. What a gift!

We need that gift in our lives. As the high holidays approach, we think about doing things a little bit better in the upcoming year. I encourage you to include taking time to stop and savor what is around you. Find the sacred time in your life. Shabbat comes once a week. If we really take that sacred time, our lives would be so much more whole. Shabbat means different things to different people: going to synagogue; taking a walk in the woods; a family game of Scrabble or Banagrams; pizza and a movie. Whatever it means to you, take it. It is a gift we need to savor.

I look forward to sharing more thoughts with you about my camp experience.

From the Bookkeeper

By *Loretta Fogel*

I hope everyone had a good summer and that you are making an easy transition from summer to fall.

Here are a few reminders regarding bookkeeping at Or Hadash.

1. We do NOT send out a completed obligation form to you. You MUST fill out a form and return to us at the beginning of each year (July 1), along with your payment(s). This is what determines your obligation to Or Hadash for the year. Statements of your account showing your current balance due will be mailed in late September, early December, and mid-March, as well as a statement for tax purposes (mailed by January 31).
2. When you remit payment to Or Hadash for your yearly commitments, payments are credited in the following order: tuition, dues, building fund and then voluntary donations. It is done in this order regardless of what you list in your memo line.
3. When sending in donations for any purpose to Or Hadash, please indicate on your check's memo line which fund the donation is to be made. This is in addition to any note that might accompany the check. In case the check and note get separated, the check will still get deposited into the designated fund.
4. When requesting a reimbursement from the synagogue for purchases made on our behalf, PLEASE include a self-addressed stamped envelope or indicate that it should be left in your mailbox (if applicable) here at OH.
5. I am in the office on Mondays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and on Wednesdays from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Feel free to contact me by email at bookkeeper@orhadash.com (which is checked daily) or 215-283-0276 during my office hours, or leave a message at any time. Both my email and phone mailboxes are confidential, and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Thanks and here's wishing everyone a Healthy and Happy 5771

The Leadership Development Committee of
Or Hadash proudly presents

LA'ASOT

["To Do"]

Leadership And Advanced Service Organizational Training

- **Increase your knowledge about the genesis and growth of Or Hadash: Who are we, What we stand for, How our past affects our present and our future.**
Session 1: Tues., Oct. 12, 2010
Facilitator: Shelley Rosenberg
- **Learn how Reconstructionist values affect you as a congregational leader at Or Hadash.**
Session 2: Tues., Nov. 9, 2010
Scholar: Rabbi Roni Handler
- **Enhance your leadership potential through "Values-Based Decision Making." Take it out of the boardroom and into your life.**
Session 3: Tues., Feb. 8, 2011
Guest Facilitator: Debra Brosan, ACAJE/JOP
- **Expand your practical leadership skills: Leading so people will follow. Chairing a successful committee, Delegating work responsibly, Preparing an achievable agenda, Running an effective meeting.**
Session 4: Tues., Mar. 8, 2011
Guest Facilitator: Debra Brosan, ACAJE/JOP
- **Develop an understanding of the organizational budgeting process: Making and living with responsible financial decisions**
Session 5: Tues., April 26, 2011
Facilitator: Jules Mermelstein

Session 6: Graduation and Celebration: Friday, May 13, 2011

Who? Current Board members, current committee members and chairpersons, congregants who would like to serve on committees or the Board....YOU, if you would like to know more about how Or Hadash works!

When? 7:30 – 9:00 pm. Tuesdays

Where? Or Hadash Board Room

Cost? \$18/person (to cover the cost of materials)

Register Now by contacting the synagogue office

Approaching Jewish Education in a New Way

Or Hadash proudly announces a new and innovative approach to weekly religious school. Synagogues have been the main provider of Jewish children's religious education for years, but not always with the best results. Religious school for the 21st Century needs to keep up with where today's kids are and what they like, so that they will look forward to attending class each week.

At Or Hadash, the school's twenty-seven year history is one of looking for different and unique ways to reach and teach its children. This coming year, school director Lori Rubin will make sweeping changes to the program's curriculum and teaching methods. In an effort to be "engaging, meaningful, and outside-the-box," the school will focus on multi-age groupings for students from kindergarten to Confirmation; hands-on experiential activities that include art, cooking, music, drama, and trips;

service learning in conjunction with the congregation's social action committee, and intergenerational and interfaith experiences.

Rubin explains that, instead of traditional textbooks, students will use technology and varied activities guaranteed to interest and excite them. The program will focus on making Jewish education relevant to a new generation of Jews who sometimes wonder why they are studying people, places, and events that are thousands of years old. Children with different learning styles will be accommodated in a school geared to those with active and inquiring minds.

This is a bold new step in Jewish education and for Or Hadash. You are invited to learn more about the program, by contacting Education Director Lori Rubin at school@orhadash.com with questions or to arrange an appointment.

CONDOLENCES

- To **Jill Deeves**, on the passing of her husband, John Deeves, and father of Adam and Jack.
- To **Laura and Marc Feller**, on the loss of their grandson, Noah Jacob Cohen.
- To **Marc Grossman**, on the passing of his father, Manny Grossman, father-in-law of Amy, and grandfather of Rachel, Sarah and Samuel.
- To **Debbie Karl** on the passing of her mother, Myrna Rubenstein, mother-in-law of Charles and grandmother of Hannah.
- To **Fred Wilf**, on the passing of his father, Leonard Wilf, father-in-law of Shirley Ann and grandmother of Chelsea and Rob.
- To **Earl Lane** on the passing of his brother, Dr. Eli Lane, and brother-in-law of Edith.
- To **Alisa Belzer** on the passing of her father, Leroy Belzer.
- We mourn the loss of **Rabbi David Forman** of Rabbis for Human Rights, our 2010 Scholar In Residence.

Or Hadash Joins First Suburbs Project!

Or Hadash has joined the First Suburbs of Southeastern PA, a regional coalition of institutions including congregations, municipalities, and non-profit and social service organizations in the developed suburbs. The goal of the organization is to harness the regional power that we have through our numbers to address issues in our communities such as: equity in public education (including fairness in tax burdens), fixing water and sewer infrastructure, encouraging development in communities with infrastructure rather than providing incentives for greenfield development, transit-oriented development, and other related issues.

In short, federal and state incentives since WWII have encouraged sprawl by artificially reducing the cost of new development; and these policies continue today, even though the result is now demonstrated in the creation of new shopping malls as older ones are abandoned, or town centers deteriorate.

Member institutions span religious divides (and now a synagogue!), racial, ethnic, and economic cleavages. We are in four counties, and include municipalities like Norristown, Yeadon and Jenkintown Boroughs. It is a people-based organization, and so our involvement allows us to influence the decisions made by the entire region, as well as state-wide influence with similar partner organizations in Pennsylvania, as well as nationally.

For more information, please contact Michael Golden (magolden1@aol.com) or Jules Mermelstein (Jules.Mermelstein@gmail.com).

Be the Change You Wish to See

By Sharon Starr & Diana Brody

Some readers are well acquainted with our congregation's annual mitzvah when each November we house up to three families who are temporarily homeless. This article originally appeared in Ha Kesher in 2008. Please continue reading if you are new to Or Hadash, or simply curious about this program.

Or Hadash has been part of the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) for over ten years. Inter-faith Housing Alliance, formerly IHN, is a faith-based organization, largely volunteer, that provides homeless families from Montgomery County temporary housing while they save for and locate their own apartments. Professional staff screen applicants and assist them during their stay in the program, typically three months. Families may be comprised of one or two parents and most families include children. Adult guests work during the day while their children are in school or daycare.

Each host congregation in IHN houses the guest families for one calendar month. This means the families must relocate every month. IHN provides mattresses and linens, which are transported with the families along with their personal belongings to their new congregation. Families leave their host building quite early every morning, between 6 and 7 a.m., to attend work and school. On weekends they are also out during the day. They return after 5 pm, to avoid interfering with congregational activities, although there may be some overlap in busy congregations such as ours.

Or Hadash hosts guest families for the month of November. The guests stay in several classrooms upstairs, one family to a room. They also have the use of the upstairs bathroom and kitchen. To offer the families some privacy, we either avoid using their rooms for classes during November or work around their belongings as respectfully as possible. We are not alone in our commitment during their stay. Other congregations often “buddy” with us to assist with meals, transportation, or sleepovers during the families’ stay at Or Hadash.

Families enter IHN for many reasons. With frail personal economies, families become homeless as a result of

domestic violence, home fire, illness, job loss, or loss of a car. They use their time in the program to work, and save for their own apartment. Some families have their own cars, while other families depend on SEPTA and volunteer help to commute.

Those of you who volunteered last year will remember the two young families who were afflicted with the flu! They were able to move into IHN transitional apartments. (Because of confidentiality, IHN is unable to confirm the whereabouts of the third family, who entered IHN just before Thanksgiving; we trust they are also settled by now.)



So, what can you do? We are looking for volunteers to help the families move in the evening of November 1, and move out to their next congregation at the end of the month; to bring dinners to the families; to provide morning or evening transportation for families lacking cars; to sleep overnight at Or Hadash; and to help with weekly tasks such as washing linens or shopping for breakfast and lunch food. There is also a need for coordinating one of these jobs over a week or two. Please note that your help is particularly appreciated during Thanksgiving week. So, if you can, why not share the holiday with a family?

Some volunteers like to include their families in their efforts. Whether you help out alone, with a spouse or friend, or with the whole mishpocheh, you will know that you have contributed to the eradication of homelessness in Montgomery County.

To volunteer, or if you have questions, contact Sharon Starr at starr@lasalle.edu or 215-283-2883. You will also have the opportunity to sign up at the High Holidays using our “mitzvah cards.” Thanks, and see you in November!