



Wine

GOODBYE MORTGAGE!

Temple Micah celebrates contributions of many at December party

BY SHELLEY GROSSMAN

IT IS CALLED a Mortgage Burning party, but the event scheduled at the temple on Saturday, December 5, at 7 pm is really a “celebration of ourselves,” as Rabbi Zemel described it.

In addition to a ceremonial burning of the mortgage on the original building—which will be paid off in February—the occasion marks 20 years in the building on Wisconsin Ave., NW, as well as the enormous community effort to plan the building and its expansion and to pay for it through four capital campaigns that together raised more than \$4 million. Even more important, the money was raised the Micah way: a large majority of households contributed, many to several campaigns, without the recognition of plaques or naming rights.

“This is huge,” Rabbi Zemel said. “Having a home of our own very much changed the nature of the congregation for the better. It gave us an identity, a sense of aspiration and a much, much stronger connection to Judaism.” In the 20 years since moving into the building, “the congregation [has] flourished enormously,” he said.

So the party is “to thank the people who led and participated in all four capital campaigns related to the building: the initial campaign to build the building, two for the addition and one to burn the mortgage,” said Jodi Enda, president of the congregation.

Added Martha Adler, who is co-chairing the event with Heather Moran: “This party is for everyone, the entire

Micah community.”

A formal invitation will soon be in the mail to members. The evening is free, but because of space limitations, everyone is asked to register on the temple’s website starting in early November at www.templemicah.org. Food and drink will be served at the party, catered by Micah Cooks, and the organizers promise surprise entertainment.

From the comfortable current vantage point of a stable congregation of 580 households in its own beautiful building about to become debt-free, it may be hard to envision the difficult road to making the building a reality—to say nothing of the financial and psychological distance the community has traveled over the two decades since. In the late 1980s, when Rabbi Zemel suggested moving the temple to its own home, the congregation of about 175 families shared a deteriorating building in Southwest DC with St. Augustine’s Episcopal Church whose membership was declining and enthusiasm for the relationship with Micah was dissipating.

A home of its own should have been appealing. But the notion of constructing its own building was foreign to the congregation, which had prided itself on not having an “edifice complex” like many suburban synagogues burdened with mortgages, capital campaigns and mandatory membership contributions to building funds. “So, we had a lot of meetings. Big meetings, home meetings,

FROM RABBI ZEMEL

PRAYER IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGY

DEAR FRIENDS,

I have come to feel that the habit of personal, regular prayer is more necessary than ever as a way of saving something incredibly important: our humanity. Defining what we mean by our humanity is no easy task but I am thinking here of the wisdom of Genesis that finds God moved to make a partner for Adam. “It is not good for a person to be alone.” Ecclesiastes states simply that “Two are preferred to one.”



Buber finds all real meaning in “meeting,” that is true relationship. We discover our humanity on the one hand by communing with another and alternatively, as throughout the Bible, by sitting in silence, alone on the mountaintop where God can be found in “the small voice of silence.”

Sherry Turkle, director of MIT’s Initiative on Technology and Self, takes up this theme of our humanity when she writes passionately and compellingly about how the digital, interconnected, cell-phone era depersonalizes us both from ourselves and from the world around us. We lose the ability to be intimate. We lose the ability to converse with ourselves. Children lose the ability to empathize. Without quiet, roaming space, our imaginations weaken. These gifts, the very essence of what we might call our traditional humanity, slowly disappear. We become different than we once were. Turkle writes in her new book, *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*, that we have become challenged to remember that we are “creatures of history, of deep psychology.”

There are those who might say that I

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“Every person shall sit under his grapevine or fig tree with no one to make him afraid.”
 MICAH, CHAPTER 4, VERSE 4

Vine

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THANK YOU FOR MAKING MICAH MICAH

By JODI ENDA

It's that time of year. We're done cheering or lamenting our favorite baseball teams. We've finished buying and counting underwear. We dismantled the Sukkah and read to the end of the Torah, only to start anew. We are settling into



the rhythm that comes with back-to-school and falling leaves. We are preparing for Thanksgiving and Hanukkah, girding for shorter, chillier days.

Soon, another annual ritual will commence, and we will receive year-end solici-

tations from every cause we ever—or never—heard of.

I can't say that you won't get one from Temple Micah. So I'll just thank you in advance.

Thank you for making Temple Micah the unusual, welcoming, mold-breaking, joyful place it is.

Thank you for coming up with great ideas, such as Aging Together and Forging Micah Connections, Kol Isha, and, yes, the Underwear Drive.

Thank you for giving us the breathing room to experiment.

Thank you for understanding that this is not your grandparents' shul. Thank you for not wanting this to be your grandparents' shul.

Thank you for participating in Machon Micah, whether you have children or not.

Thank you for hosting onegs.

Thank you for cooking for us.

Thank you for singing and clapping and helping to bring our worship services alive.

Thank you for sharing stories about loved ones who have passed away.

Thank you for tending to our members who are sick, and comforting the families of those who die.

Thank you for bringing your chil-

dren to family services, for helping them prepare to become b'nai mitzvah, for encouraging them to chant Torah on the High Holy Days, participate in MiTY and engage in their own Jewish journeys.

Thank you for letting us break things if they aren't working, and even if they are.

Thank you for donating money, even if you don't get your name on a big, shiny plaque. Or even on a small, dull one.

Thank you for volunteering your time to edit the Vine and the Web site, run the auction, serve on committees, serve on the board, stuff envelopes, organize the library, chair the High Holy Days, participate in discussion groups, run the Judaica shop, sing in the choir, play an instrument during services, dance with (or without) Liz Lerman, sell bagels, read poetry on Yom Kippur, schlep Torahs, prayer books and all kinds of chazerai to and from "our church," create a group, lead a group, find stimulating speakers, be a stimulating speaker, serve on the Micah House board, work with Sasha Bruce, help rehabilitate a house with Sukkot in Spring, participate in Next Dor, organize a mitzvah project, perform in the Purimspiel, teach our children, document our history. Thank you for doing all these and the many other things that make Micah so much better.

Thank you for wanting to make Micah so much better.

Thank you for having coffee with Rabbi Beraha and ice cream with Rabbi Landau.

Thank you for interviewing job candidates and for choosing the outstanding staff that we have. Thank you for serving on that staff.

Thank you for making Micah haimish, even as it grows. Thank you for helping new members know that this is their home, too.

Thank you for hosting a rabbinic intern.

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CLARIFICATION: The Member Recognition Task Force would like to acknowledge that Temple Micah has documentation of its history in Brenda Levenson's book, *Derech Micah (Micah's Journey), A History of Temple Micah (1963-2003)*, as well as archives in our downstairs library. The task force regrets that the quote from our report to the board, printed in the *Vine* article on the Living History Team (September/October 2015), did not mention these two major volunteer undertakings that document our history.

HIGH HOLY DAY VOLUNTEER THANK-YOUS

A hearty "thank you!" to all who volunteered their time and supported our incomparable staff to make Temple Micah's High Holy Day observances so special this year.

High Holy Day Co-Chairs:

Fatema Salam, Adam Klinger, Jackie Harwood

HH Committee Chairs:

Ushers: Doug Grob

Security: Mark Levine (lead), Todd Jasper

RH Oneg: Kathlene Collins

Apples and Honey: Dorian Friedman

YK Break the Fast: Marina Fanning

Signs: Sara Morningstar and Phil Katz, Susan Lahne

Medical: Gail Povar

Loaner Books: Emma Spaulding

Website: David Diskin

Ticket Assistance: Geri Nielsen

Hineni/Rides: Tina Coplan, Evelyn Sahr

Parking:

Jenny Luray

Avodah Service:

Aaron Karsh, Josh and RJ Seidman, Manya and Hero Magnus, Debby Kanter, Lynn Bonde, Noah Westreich

Torah Readers:

Shayna Brotzman, Nina Rutzen, Jordy Parry, Hero Magnus, Arielle Weinstein, Sarah Carleton, Alia Schechter, Ilana Samuel, Mia Goodman

Haftarah Readers:

Rachel Snyderman, Isaac Rosenblum-Sellers, Matthew Hua, Thomas Mande, Franny Sewell, Marina Schechter, Aviva Rosenbaum, Sophie Futrovsky

Shofar Blowers:

Hero Magnus, Zachary Lynch, Jacob Rosenberg, Shirit Westreich, Aaron Klaus, Bill Page

Instrumentalists:

Ruth Simon, Eli Blum, Lora Ferguson

Choir:

David Adler, David Asher, Geoffrey Barron, Sue Baum, Nadine Braunstein, Stuart Brown, Gary Dickelman, Barbara Diskin, David Diskin, Laura Ferguson, Ron Ferguson, Lora Ferguson, Julie Galambush, Jan Greenberg, Genie Grohman, Ed Grossman, Jennifer

Gruber, Yael Hoffman, Betty Hollis, Debi Kant, Barbara Klestzick, Zachary Lynch, Mary Mahle, Marjorie Marcus, Bill Page, Bob Rackleff, Penny Roberts, Karen Rosenbaum, Suzanne Saunders, Ellen Sommer, Sonia White, Daniel Yett

Kol Nidre:

Julie Galambush, Paul Greenberg

Following Shabbat services, stay to enjoy great food and hear from an exciting panel of experts:

Judge Gladys Kessler, Senior U.S. District Court Judge for the District of Columbia

Schroeder Stribling, Executive Director, 11 Street Village

Ruben Castaneda, Author of *5 Street Rising* and former reporter, *The Washington Post*

Moderator: Jennifer Budoff, Budget Director, Council of the District of Columbia, and Micah House board member

Micah House Shabbat and Community Shabbat Dinner

November 20, 2015
7:30 PM

RSVP by November 16 at
www.templemicah.org.

\$20 for ages 13 and over; free for younger children.

For more info, contact
CommunityDinners@templemicah.org

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Here's a sampling of coming Micah activities. For a detailed schedule of all upcoming events and services, check out www.templemicah.org.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14 • 7:30–10 PM
Micah Movie Night

The Tzedek Committee hosts a screening of the documentary *Inequality for All*. Produced by former Labor Secretary Robert Reich, the film explores income disparities and economic injustice in America through statistics and personal stories of Americans living on the edge. Join friends for the film, snacks and a lively discussion on how the Micah community can understand and help alleviate economic inequality in our midst.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20 • 6 PM

Micah House Shabbat & Community Dinner

Oneg at 6 pm; service at 6:30 pm. Followed by Community Shabbat Dinner from 7:30 to 9 pm. This year, featuring an informative panel discussion on local poverty, homelessness and solutions. (See page 3 for details.)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22 • 10 AM

Annual Book Fair at Politics and Prose

Enjoy some Hanukkah shopping at Politics and Prose and support Temple Micah at the same time. Youth Choir performs at 11 am.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5 • 7–10 PM

20-Year Building Anniversary and Mortgage Burning Party!
(See page 1 for details)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11 • 6 PM

Hanukkah Kabbalat Shabbat

Oneg at 6 pm; service at 6:30 pm. Bring candles and your menorah as we light up the Sanctuary for this magical annual celebration.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25 • 6 PM

Community Kabbalat Shabbat at Adas Israel

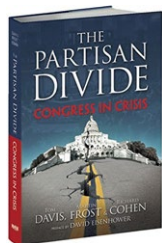
Welcome Shabbat with members of the wider community as we join with Temple Sinai and Washington Hebrew Congregation at Adas Israel for services this evening.

INTERESTING SPEAKERS!

Temple Micah features two monthly lecture series—on Sunday morning and Wednesday noon. For more details, go online to www.templemicah.org.

SUNDAY SPEAKER SERIES

Sundays from 10:15 to 11:45 am



November 15 – The Honorable Martin Frost and Tom Davis

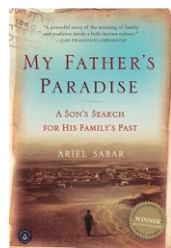
were the field generals for their respective parties, each serving two terms as chair of the Democratic or Republican House campaign committee during their combined four decades in Congress. They'll join us to discuss their book, *The Partisan Divide: Congress in Crisis*, which they co-authored with journalist Richard Cohen. According to the authors,

Congress is incapable of reforming itself without a good kick in the seat from the American public. Together, they dissect the causes of legislative gridlock and offer a common sense, bipartisan plan for making Congress function again. Former President Bill Clinton calls their joint effort “a smart book that asks the right questions and offers some intriguing solutions.”

LUNCH & LEARN

Wednesdays from noon to 2 pm

A monthly program sponsored by the Aging Together Team. Reserve online at www.templemicah.org. Contact Livia Bardin, lunchandlearn@templemicah.org, or call the temple office, 202-342-9175, for details.



December 9 – Ariel Sabar, on “Paradise Lost and Found:

How a Jewish Kid from Los Angeles Traveled to Wartime Iraq in Search of Roots, Identity and His Father's Improbable Life Story.” Growing up in materialistic 1980s Los Angeles, Ariel Sabar wanted nothing to do with his father. Yona Sabar was a distinguished professor at UCLA and one of the world's foremost experts on Aramaic, the 3,000-year-old language of

the Jewish Talmud—and of Jesus. But Ariel saw his father as a stone-age relic, a walking fashion tragedy who couldn't get his clothes to match and refused to see a barber about his out-of-control, Einstein-like hair. Then Ariel had his own son, and everything changed. In his talk, Sabar will weave the remarkable story of the Kurdish Jews and their Aramaic tongue with the moving tale of how a consummate California kid came to write a book about his family's Kurdish roots. The book, *My Father's Paradise: A Son's Search for his Jewish Past in Kurdish Iraq*, won the National Book Critics Circle Award for Autobiography, one of the highest honors in American letters.

January 13, 2016 – Rabbi Josh Beraha, on “Do Jews Believe? The Rise and Fall of Jewish Theology in Post-World War II America.” See website for details.

LESSONS FROM LANDAU

FINDING HOME

BY RABBI SUSAN LANDAU

Whenever I move somewhere new I try to make the bed as quickly as possible. That small act makes a new space feel more familiar, more livable; it makes a new house feel more like home. But it really becomes home when I hang my *mezuzah* on the front doorpost. The *mezuzah* is a statement to myself that this is a place in which I am committed to staying for a while, and a place where I belong. It is a statement to the world that a Jewish household occupies this space and marks it as their own. My *mezuzah* is a symbol of what it means to feel at home.

A few weeks ago I sat in the *sukkah* at Temple Micah and welcomed Sukkot with a group of Next Dor young professionals, and we talked about how it feels to be at home. “What are some differences between a house and a *sukkah*?” I asked. People shouted out

the usual answers about a lack of electricity, exposure to the elements, and the temporary nature of the *sukkah*. Finally, one woman suggested that, unlike a house, a *sukkah* doesn’t have a *mezuzah*. Yes! That is a key difference. We reserve *mezuzot* for permanent dwelling places, not *sukkot*. Spending time in the *sukkah* reminds us how lucky we are to have homes we can claim as our own, decorate as we please, and mark with *mezuzot* that proclaim to the world that we are here. We are lucky to have *mezuzah*-worthy homes.

But the *mezuzah* is not a passive decoration; it is an active symbol. Every time we enter and exit our homes, the *mezuzah* reminds us that we are obligated by the commandments written inside. One way we embody those obligations is by helping others feel as secure as we do. We can help others find their own

mezuzah-worthy homes. This year Next Dor is partnering with Micah House in the holy work of helping women turn their lives around and eventually move into their own homes.

As we sat in the *sukkah*, Ben Moss and Stacy Cloyd, two active Next Dor members, gave a compelling presentation about their work on the Micah House board. They spoke about Micah House’s mission, its work with the women who live there, and their own motivations for being involved. This year Next Dor members will donate their services to Micah House, share a table at the Micah House Shabbat to hear stories from alumnae and supporters, participate in the Micah House walk, and more. Next Dor is a special part of the Micah community, and we want to infuse our time together with justice.



We can all work together to help as many women as possible graduate from the Micah House program, move on from the insecurity and transience of their former lives, and find their own permanent dwellings.

I smile as I am greeted by my *mezuzah* at the end of the day, reminding me that there is work to be done. It is a privilege to be reminded that I now call Washington, D.C. and Temple Micah my home. I was blown away by my welcome service at Kabbalat Shabbat on October 2. It is proof of how quickly this community has become *mezuzah*-worthy for me. Thank you for helping me feel so welcomed into your home. I look forward to engaging in holy work together.

Mortgage Burning FROM PAGE 1 ►

lunches,” recalled Bobbie Wendel, who was campaign co-chair with Henry Zapruder (z”l). The first task was to get members comfortable with the idea. Then, “we had to discuss what people wanted in a building, what sort of place it would be,” she continued. “It was decided that we would stay in DC. That was a biggie.”

Once the leadership agreed to go ahead with the project, a major challenge was raising the large sums of money required. Staying true to Micah’s fundamental commitment to egalitarianism, the leadership decided that there would be no public recognition of donors, large or small. Some people refused to give money without getting their name on a plaque, Wendel remembered. A few left. The fundraisers

solicited every household individually and “most people were very forthcoming, very generous,” she said. Securing additional financing, getting the permits and actually building the structure confronted the leaders with a series of obstacles, but each was surmounted. When banks wouldn’t lend money to an institution without physical assets, for example, Ed Wendel managed to secure funding through a union-backed financial institution. Then came neighborhood complaints, legal hassles, zoning problems. “Everything was tzurus,” Bobbie Wendel recalled.

But the project moved along. Architects Robert Weinstein and Judith Capen, who are long-standing members, made the designs. Jeff Grotte chaired the building committee that oversaw construction. Ground was broken and the community moved in with great

ceremony in 1995—to a barebones structure that had a concrete floor in the sanctuary, no ceiling in the social hall, no kitchen or Judaica shop. “What we also did not have for about a year was ANY shelving in the office!! No bookshelves, no shelves for storage, no cabinetry—nothing!” Rabbi Zemel wrote in an email. Bit by bit all those amenities were added. Before installation of the sanctuary’s wood floor, members gathered and signed their names and wrote brief messages on the concrete, a profound experience for many.

Membership doubled—and soon the community outgrew the original building.

Two fundraising campaigns, one in 2006, chaired by Larry Cooley and Celia Shapiro and the other in 2007, headed by Paul Greenberg, Sid Booth,

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FROM ANACOSTIA TO AFRICA:

A Micah Family's Vision Leads to The Ndarakwai Experience

BY DORIAN FRIEDMAN

For the Soloway family, longtime Temple Micah members, the Jewish value of tzedakah has taken shape in an exciting and uniquely rewarding adventure: The Ndarakwai (pronounced “en-DAR-akwai”) Experience, a service-learning program that sends promising low-income youngsters from Washington, DC to Tanzania for two weeks each summer. Its mission: “to provide the opportunity for inner city youth to develop a sense of global responsibility and grow in their understanding of their relationship with the world.”

The Soloways launched the program in June with an inaugural group of six students from Thurgood Marshall Academy, a college-preparatory public charter high school in Ward 8’s historic Anacostia neighborhood. The students—selected based on references and interviews—lived and worked at Ndarakwai Ranch, a private conservancy that has deep connections to the local Bantu and Maasai communities and schools. During their stay, they divided their time between conservation activities at the ranch and teaching,

building and repair work to support two local schools. Through daily interaction with local students and villagers, they learned about their lifestyles, challenges, and what it really means to live in a ‘developing’ country.

The seed for the initiative was planted during a family trip to Africa when Anna Soloway, currently a social worker at KIPP DC (a group of award-winning charter schools), was working with impoverished women and children in Uganda. Anna had been a clinical social worker in Boston and DC for several years and took a hiatus in 2012 to work overseas. Today, she, father Stan, and mother Kathy are the most directly engaged in the Ndarakwai project, but it is a true family effort. Kathy was a social worker for 30 years in Washington and, although now an interior designer, she remains deeply engaged in charitable causes. Anna’s younger sister Sonya is an educator running the Jumpstart Center at Howard University, and her older sister Mollie spent nearly eight years as a youth mentor and is now involved in



nutrition and organic food production. Stan, in addition to having served in the Clinton Administration, was a longtime board member for the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency that funds and oversees Americorps and much more.

We recently asked Stan and Anna to reflect on this inspiring project for readers of *The Vine*.

Please tell us a little more about the students you select. Who are you looking for?

Most importantly, we are looking for students who we think, based on interviews and applications, are the most likely to benefit from such an experience. Toward that end, we are looking for students who have a passion and drive to explore themselves, their identities and the world. We speak a lot with our students about what it means to be a “citizen of the world”, and we are hoping to foster a sense of this in our students. Our students do need to be in basic, good academic standing mostly to ensure that they will not need to attend summer school. But we aren’t looking for the straight-A students. Ultimately, we want them to be curious—curious about life and the world outside their neighborhoods and their country.

What’s the role of Thurgood Marshall Academy?

The school facilitates our engagement with the students, provides meeting space, an official imprimatur, and so on. We also take at least one faculty member on the trip. The school serves the demographic we hope to reach: those who would most likely not have the opportunity to have an experience like this otherwise.



Visiting Ndarakwai students and staff, their guide, and the director of a local school they spruced up this summer.

We know the program is still new, but how do you think the experience has affected your first group of students?

The impacts are still evolving but our participants have already demonstrated a remarkable ability to talk about them in some depth. In fact, in preparing to share their experiences with their families, teachers and peers, the students themselves selected three words they think represent the core of the experience: Learn, Serve, Explore. And to hear them talk about what each word means to them in the context of the program is really rewarding and even moving.

Having experienced first-hand the abject poverty of the Tanzanian communities we spent time in and the challenges faced by people their age and younger, the students talk a lot about how their appreciation for what they have has been elevated. They also shared that, despite that poverty, how profoundly impacted and impressed they were by the spirit, energy and warmth of the dozens of kids they worked with in the schools or elsewhere.

There were many days during which they were almost thrown in front of a classroom of students with whom they did not share a common language and had to seriously step out of their comfort zones and figure out how to communicate through other means. Communication through dance, song, sports and art were so powerful on this trip.

And of course, the sheer beauty of the region and their incredible experiences with wildlife—including literally playing with two elephants—also had a huge effect. Indeed, none of the students had traveled overseas before and at least a couple had never even been on an airplane. So they went from near zero to 100 mph experientially as individuals and as a group.

You believe it's important that your students take the lessons they learn

in Africa and 'pay it forward' to their peers in Washington, DC.

Yes, all of the major longitudinal studies have shown that service and international learning have a profound impact, and there is no doubt in our mind that this experience has generated a spirit



A Washington, DC student meets Incarsis and Rasiki, two of Ndarakwai's majestic elephants

of service and giving among all of the students. A number of them already had that ethic and for them, this experience has served to elevate it. Many have expressed interest in mentoring the 2016 group of students, sharing what they learned with their home communities, and continue to talk about the impact of being able to 'give back' to the communities we worked with.

How is the program funded?

The program is entirely volunteer led—we have no paid staff—and all of our funding comes from friends, family and a handful of business leaders who share our vision of and commitment to the goals of this program: providing a powerful international service learning experience to students who most likely would not otherwise have such an opportunity.

While our budget is modest—just \$70,000 a year—funding is never easy to come by. (And yes, we certainly welcome contributions!)

How does your family's passion for this project align with your Jewish values?

In truth, we do try to live the spirit of tzedekah that so characterizes the Temple Micah community and it is that spirit and ethic that really was the catalyst for the program. In other words, service is something that is a core to our family. When we were in Africa together in 2013, we were strongly urged to visit Ndarakwai Ranch which itself has a strong ethic of community service (they provide all the food for two local schools, for example). While there, we had the opportunity to spend time

in a local Maasai village and at a local school. And one night, sitting around after dinner, we just started talking about what a great experience it would be for inner city youth to have the experience we were having. We talked to the ranch owner, who immediately agreed to support the initiative... and about a year later, Anna looked at Stan and said "so, are we gonna do this or not?" And we are very proud to say we did.

Based on its initial success, The Ndarakwai Experience will welcome another six to eight District students next summer and beyond. For more on the program and how you can support it, visit www.ndarexperience.com. ●



Stan and Anna Soloway, co-founders of Ndarakwai Experience

Mazel Tov to Martha Adler!

At a festive award ceremony on October 29, Friendship Place honored the temple's Martha Adler for envisioning and sustaining Micah's annual Underwear Drive. Conferring the Benjamin E. Cooper *Partnership in Mission Award*, Friendship Place said the following about Adler's leadership:

"Sixteen years ago, while she was representing Temple Micah on the Friendship Place Board of Directors, Martha pitched an idea to her congregation: collecting undergarments to donate to Friendship Place for distribution to men and women experiencing homelessness. Since then, the annual fall "Underwear Drive" has generated an astonish-

ing total of more than 75,000 items. Furthermore, it's become a tradition cherished by the entire temple community and has given generations of Temple Micah 6th graders – the pre-bar/bat mitzvah class, which runs the project each year – the opportunity to learn about the realities of and solutions to homelessness.

Martha didn't stop with her faith community; she got her workplace, Sheridan School, involved as well. Over the years, the students have made sandwiches for our Welcome Center, held bake sales to raise money for our mission, and, most recently, made soup and muffins for Friendship Place's annual Winter Warmth Day."



Rabbi's Message FROM PAGE 1 ►

sound old fashioned, that having reached my 60s I have become reactionary, that our addiction to smartphones is simply the way of the world, another click in the ever-unfolding adventure of progress and evolution. Just as the codex (book) replaced the scroll, the smartphone's many apps will come to replace actual face-to-face conversation.

Maybe so. But to the extent that I am pushing back against our predilection to constantly text, tweet and post, it is because I fear this new way of life is doing real damage to our actual lives.

I believe that it is time to pause, reconsider and turn the smartphone off—not put it on vibrate, turn it off—and to cultivate the gift of prayer. Prayer can restore to us moments of solitude. It enables us to discover deep wisdom within ourselves as we take stock of our days and weeks and take the opportunity to turn the random events that make up our lives into coherent stories of who we are and who we wish to be. Prayer is the vehicle to explore the distance between what we profess and what we practice.

On Yom Kippur, I quoted Rabbi Larry Hoffman, who wrote that prayer "evokes

human imagination. Life requires imagination, and prayer is the longest-running play of imagination that we humans have ever devised."

Creativity requires imagination. Conceiving a future requires imagination. Aspiration requires imagination. Each of these is or can be a gift of prayer. Each of these is an essential part of our humanity.

There is more.

Prayer restores in us a sense of humility. Who does not need that? One of the greatest gifts of the God idea is the check it places on the human ego. We each know deep within ourselves that mere human beings cannot be the standard against which we measure ourselves in any way, be it our wisdom, justice, compassion, generosity or any other value we hold precious and dear. We require a God—an absolute against which we push our aspirations as well as hold ourselves accountable. Prayer is the vehicle for acknowledging that reality.

As Thanksgiving approaches, we also recognize that prayer gives voice to our gratitude for our abundant blessings. We, American Jews, should feel doubly blessed. We enjoy greater freedom and greater acceptance than at any period in Jewish history. This freedom and accep-

tance has led our community to unbelievable new levels of achievement and success. Thanksgiving is an opportunity for gratitude, but also much more. If we can turn off the din and take a moment to pray, we might consider how we can share our bounty with others in our region, in the United States and across the globe.

Whom do we want to help?

Which causes most need our help?

What voices call to us?

These are Thanksgiving questions.

Finally, Thanksgiving prayer is an opportunity to bond with the people you are sharing the holiday weekend with. Prayer gives voice to love, warmth, affection, memory and connection. Through moments of prayer, we forge lasting bonds and create memories that sustain and define us.

This Thanksgiving, turn off the phone, turn down the noise and find a time and a way to say a prayer. Then, make it a regular habit—each week or even each day.

Have a great American holiday weekend. Make it even greater by making thanksgiving itself a regular habit, by restoring a bit of humanity.

Shalom,

Rabbi Daniel G. Zemel

TZEDAKAH

ASSISTANT RABBI DISCRETIONARY FUND

IN MEMORY OF
Hyman Foster, by Ronna
and Stan Foster

AUCTION FUND

IN MEMORY OF
William Paul, by Debbie
and Jim Roumell

ENDOWMENT FUND

IN MEMORY OF
Louis Levenson and Pearl Levenson-
Simmons, by Brenda Levenson
William Paul, by Ellen Sommer,
Temple Micah High Holiday Ushers

IN HONOR OF
Betsy Broder and Sheri Zaitz-Blotner,
by Alex Bachorik and Gail Povar
Temple Micah High Holiday
Ushers, by Douglas Grob

FOX-MEHLMAN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

IN MEMORY OF
Carl Hirschmann, Dr. Frieda
Hirschmann, and Dr. Hans
Hirschmann, by Carole
and John Hirschmann

IN HONOR OF
Eric Berman, by Douglas
and Hiromi Grob

GENERAL FUND

IN HONOR OF
Shelley Grossman's birthday,
by Miriam Grogan
Rabbi Susan Landau, by
Meryl and Neil Landau

Steve Rockower, by Mark
and Myra Kovey
Darwin Mark Seifert, by
Rita and Alan Seifert
Meryl Weiner's B'nai Torah
class, by Kenneth Liberstein
Ronit Zemel at the World Zionist
Congress, by Kenneth Liberstein

IN MEMORY OF
William Paul, by David and Livia
Bardin, Frances and Stuart Schwartz
Geraldine Sterenfeld, by Greer
and Gerald Goldman
Bessie Tucker, by Robert
and Carolee Walker
Ben Wattenberg, by Al
and Ginger From
Diane Yalowitz, by Sidney
and Elka Booth

INNOVATION FUND

IN HONOR OF
Shelley Grossman's birthday,
by David Glass, Geri Nielsen,
Sharon and Joseph Salus, Ken
and Nancy Schwartz, Frances
and Stuart Schwartz
Learita Scott and Robert Friedman's
wedding, by Michelle Sender

IN MEMORY OF
Anna Hadley, by Michelle Sender

KALLEK ADULT EDUCATION FUND

IN MEMORY OF
Donald Rothberg, by Lynn
Rothberg and Jennifer Tanzi

LIBRARY FUND

IN HONOR OF
Owen Benjamin Lynch, grandson
of Barbara and David Diskin,
by David and Livia Bardin,
Nancy and Sam Raskin

MICAH COOKS

IN MEMORY OF
Clarice Arbetter Meer, by
Janet and Alan Carpien

MICAH HOUSE

Todd Goren

IN HONOR OF
Rabbi Susan Landau's installation,
by Dr. and Mrs. George Beckman

IN MEMORY OF
Barbara Landfield, by Susan Landfield
Clarice Arbetter Meer, by
Richard and Susan Lahne

MUSIC FUND

IN HONOR OF
Owen Benjamin Lynch, grandson of
Barbara and David Diskin, by Ronna
and Stan Foster, Ellen Sommer
Gail Povar, by Jacqueline
Simon and Doug Meyer
Rosh Hashanah services at
Temple Micah, by Isabel Lucas
Roz and Arnold Schneider's 60th
anniversary, by Sheila Platoff
Meryl Weiner, by Sidney and
Elka Booth, Steve Rockower and
Ann Sablosky, Thelma Weiner

IN MEMORY OF
Flora August, by Paulette
and Stan Shulman
Laurel Bergold, by John Lynch
Sarah Manasevit, by Dorian Friedman
Clarice Arbetter Meer, by Sidney
and Elka Booth, Lora Ferguson,
Sheila Platoff and Robert Effros
Walter Page, by William Frank Page

NEXT DOR FUND

IN HONOR OF
Rabbi Susan Landau, by Robert
Landau and Lesley Beckman Landau

PRAYERBOOK FUND

IN MEMORY OF
Adolph Blumenfeld, by
Norman Blumenfeld

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

IN HONOR OF
Rabbi Herb Schwartz, by
Michael Shenkman

IN MEMORY OF
Flora August, by Susie and
Harvey Blumenthal
Miriam Mintz Foster, by
Ronna and Stan Foster
William Paul, by Eugene Bialek and
Arlene Brown, Sidney and Elka Booth

SOCIAL ACTION FUND

IN HONOR OF
The Wise Aging Committees,
by Harriette Kinberg

IN MEMORY OF
Phyllis Apple Bell, by
Harriette Kinberg
David Micah Booth, by
Sidney and Elka Booth

THE RABBI DANIEL GOLDMAN ZEMEL FUND FOR ISRAEL

IN MEMORY OF
William Paul, by Susie and Harvey
Blumenthal, Alan and Deborah Kraut

Mortgage Burning FROM PAGE 5 ►

Marc Levy and Andrea LaRue, yielded almost \$2 million. "A couple of times we had a lot of people in the office making phone calls," Shapiro said. "Generally, people were willing to give because they agreed we needed to expand."

Combined with other temple assets, that was enough to expand and renovate the building to accommodate

more classrooms and offices for a growing staff—without borrowing more money. Again, this was accomplished with no promises of plaques. However, that still left a \$1.1 million mortgage on the original building with \$100,000 in debt service payments each year, and the need to repay ourselves for the additional temple assets used for the addition. So for the temple's 50th anniversary celebration in 2013,

then-president Mary Beth Schiffman launched a \$1.5 million drive to pay off the mortgage in 2016. Tom Green and Al From led that drive.

Once again, the Micah community came through and raised a sufficient amount to retire the mortgage. That's why Micah is celebrating on December 5—looking back to a huge accomplishment and forward to a debt-free future. ●

SEEKING VINE CONTRIBUTORS!

Do you love to find out what's really going on—and tell others about it? Get a kick out of writing? Seeing your name in print? *The Vine* is looking for contributing reporters like you! Only requirements: an interest in news about the Temple Micah community, and a little spare time now and then. If you'd like to learn more, please contact Dorian Friedman or Shelley Grossman at vine@templemicah.org or leave word for us in the temple office.

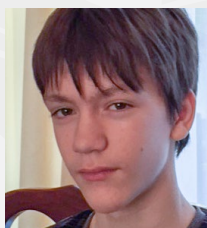
B'NAI MITZVAH



SETH SABAR
NOVEMBER 7 / 25 CHESHVAN
PARENTS: Ariel Sabar and Meg van Achterberg
TORAH PORTION: Chayei Sarah
MITZVAH PROJECT: Seth is preparing food for needy neighbors at a soup kitchen on Capitol Hill.



MAX GREGORY
NOVEMBER 14 / 2 KISLEV
PARENTS: David Gregory and Beth Wilkinson
TORAH PORTION: Toldot
MITZVAH PROJECT: This summer, Max spent a week of service at Martha's Table, a community organization dedicated to feeding the hungry and supporting families in distressed neighborhoods. Max fed the homeless, prepared food and groceries for families in need, and worked at a fresh food market—and learned firsthand about the needs in our community and the work being done by a great organization to serve others.



GEFFEN BENDAUID
NOVEMBER 21 / 9 KISLEV
PARENTS: Naftali Bendauid and Dara Corrigan
TORAH PORTION: Vayetzei
MITZVAH PROJECT: Geffen is tutoring a Takoma Park Elementary School student twice a week in math.



MATTHEW MANDE
DECEMBER 5 / 23 KISLEV
PARENTS: Elizabeth Drye and Jerold Mande
TORAH PORTION: Vayeshev
MITZVAH PROJECT: Matthew will be supporting his class social justice projects through Machon Micah this year.



ELIAS DIWAN
DECEMBER 19 / 7 TEVET
PARENTS: Kristin and Roger Diwan
TORAH PORTION: Vayigash
MITZVAH PROJECT: Elias will be studying the history of Sephardic Jews, especially from Lebanon, his father's home country. He will also be collecting donations for Syrian refugees.

MAZAL TOV!

Barbara and David Diskin on the birth of their grandson, Owen Benjamin Lynch

Rachel Gross (Micah's Executive Director) on her November 8th wedding to Douglas Taphouse

Aaron Kaufman, on his profile in the *Washington Jewish Week*

Maggie and Russell Kirsh on the birth of their son, Jonathan Henry Fraser Kirsh

Ruth Simon and Frank Anderson on the birth of their granddaughter, Anderson Josephine Mooneyhan

Sammi Sinsheimer, daughter of Cathy and Robert Sinsheimer, on her marriage to Jesse Sedler

David Turnbull, son of Bruce and Susan Turnbull, on his marriage to Elizabeth Liedel

CONDOLENCES

The Temple Micah community extends its deepest condolences to:

JENNIFER GRUBER, on the passing of her father, Everett Gordon Gruber

ANDI MATHIS, on the passing of her mother, and **MELINDA AND ALLISON MATHIS**, on the passing of their grandmother, Mary Rosenstein

JANICE MEER, on the passing of her mother, Clarice Arbetter Meer

LYNDA MULHAUSER, on the passing of her mother, Shirley Cahan

MARILYN PAUL, on the passing of her husband, and **MATT PAUL**, on the passing of his father, Micah member William Paul

JUDITH ROSEN, on the passing of her husband, and **SONIA AND DANIEL ROSEN**, on the passing of their father, longtime Micah member Merv Rosen

May their memories be for a blessing.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Matthew Adler and Peter Scully, Stefanie and Lisa Alfonso-Frank, Seth and Rebecca Allyn, Scott Barash and Gayle Wald, Noah Bierman and Abby Goodnough, Evan Bloom and Amy Royden-Bloom, Marla Bobowick, Barbara Cristy, Ilana Eisenstein and Thomas Scott, Yael Hoffman, Jessica Katz, Bernhard Kluger and Laurel Blatchford, Lauren and Marc Laitin, Philip and Barbara Levine, Hannah Lobel and Roy Rich, Benjamin and Kristin Mandel, Joshua and Diana Oboler, David Merrill and David Rosen, Reva Price, Sarah and Eric Rosand, Helen Seasonwein, KateLyn Claffey Smith and Joshua Smith, Joshua Soven and Renata Hesse, Jeremy Strauss and Leanne MacDougall, Yinuo Naomi Tao and Gabriel Ortiz-Barroeta, Greg Vekstein and Elenora Troja, Mark Wolfe and Barbara Flotte, Shira Zemel and Adam Goldstein, Elaine Zuppe

BERAHA'S BLACKBOARD

REIMAGINING OUR B'NAI MITZVAH
YEAR OF STUDY

BY RABBI JOSH BERAHA

The 7th grade year of Machon Micah is undergoing a transformation.

On three pillars does the new Temple Micah 7th grade stand:

Pillar one—Hebrew language and prayer. As in the past, Temple Micah 7th graders will spend their bar/bat mitzvah year studying Hebrew, prayer and cantillation through our Skype Hebrew program, our Tuesday afternoon program and regular meetings with a tutor.

Pillar two—Social justice. In place of individual mitzvah projects, Temple Micah 7th graders will now participate in two group social justice experiences that will be planned each year by a Micah staff member in conjunction with interested adults (see me if you have ideas!). Through these experiences, we wish to expand the idea of what we mean by social justice—

so while the students might volunteer at a soup kitchen, they might also spend a day exploring poverty in our city by meeting with experts on the issue and engaging in serious discussion around the topic.

Pillar three—Empowered learning. In order to empower our students to begin to create their own Jewish lives, we're making what may be the biggest change. Instead of attending regular class meetings on Sunday mornings, this year's 7th graders will chart their own year-long course of Jewish engagement. With ongoing consultation and support from clergy, staff and advisers, each student will design and carry out an individualized learning plan that reflects his or her own passions.

Already two months into the year, I am motivated by the willingness of this year's

7th grade families to be the pioneers in this new program of study. I am equally moved by the variety and depth of the proposed self-directed learning (pillar three) that various students have chosen. As one parent told me recently, you can see the personality of the kids through their choice of project. For example, one student is using her bat mitzvah year to volunteer at young family Shabbat programming while another is reading books on Israeli history along with his dad.

While several major Reform Jewish organizations envision a "B'nai Mitzvah Revolution" (see www.bnaimitzvahrevolution.org), it seems to me that a revolution is hardly necessary and far too drastic a measure. A revolution suggests a sudden marked change, an overthrow of an old system. From where I stand, b'nai mitzvah is one of the more understood and



practiced of all Jewish rituals. Would congregations have made it this far were it not for a parent's desire to call their child a bar/bat mitzvah? What we need is not a total disruption of the system but a simple return to core principles that have held our people together for centuries. We need not a revolution but continued evolution. The core principles I speak of are our three pillars—the study of our ancient language and liturgy, a pledge to imagine a better world and a yearning from within that points a way forward that is true for each individual.

With the help of our community, I hope that our new 7th grade program brings excited participants and helps to create learned, motivated, empowered young Jews.

President's Column FROM PAGE 2 ►

Thank you for leading services.

Thank you for learning the new music to keep our services fresh and meaningful.

Thank you for letting us know what works and what doesn't.

Thank you for helping to fix what doesn't.

Thank you for opening your homes to friends and strangers on Shabbat Shalom Around Town.

Thank you for donating parties, dinners, events or time with you for the auction.

Thank you for making this the one-of-a-kind kind of place that Rabbi Zemel would want to lead for more than three decades.

Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your vision.

Thank you for your sense of humor.

Thank you for putting up with ours.

Thank you for securing Micah's future

by raising money for and building our Wisconsin Avenue home, by raising money for and building an addition, by raising money to pay off our mortgage.

Thank you for attending a cocktail party December 5 so that we can celebrate 20 years in our building, burn our mortgage and thank you in person over a drink and a nosh, with a laugh or two. Thank you for planning the cocktail party and making it exciting, fun and full of surprises that I won't give away here.

Thank you for continuing to support Micah by responding to the year-end solicitation.

Thank you for understanding that I can't list everything here, but that I value your contributions nonetheless.

Thank you for granting me the honor of being your president.

Thank you, oh thank you, for reading to the end.

CALLING ALL BAGEL LOVERS!

(And who doesn't totally love a great bagel?!)

Temple Micah would love your help at Micah Mocha, the popular Sunday morning bagel-and-coffee table.

If you're free on an occasional Sunday to run the shop (set up, sell and clean up), we'd greatly welcome your support. Please contact Sarah Gordon (sarahagordon@gmail.com) or the temple office to volunteer!



Underwear = Dignity. Each year, Machon Micah's 6th graders coordinate one of Temple Micah's most important mitzvah projects: providing dignity to the area's homeless by donating new under garments to Friendship Place. As of November 1, the class was within 100 items of meeting its 2015 goal of 10,000 pieces! Machon Micah extends a huge "thank you" to all members who contributed to this group mitzvah.



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