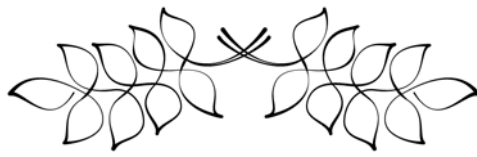


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CONGREGATION
SUKKAT SHALOM
Bulletin

Sukkat Shalom Hosts Young People Working to Build Middle-East Friendships and Understanding

[Sukkat Shalom recently hosted a number of teenage participants in Hands of Peace at a summer Shabbat in Gillson Park.

Hands of Peace is an interfaith organization developing peace-building and leadership skills in Israeli, Palestinian and American teens through the power of dialogue and personal relationships. The Middle East teens are hosted by local families.

After the service, the participants were invited to address the congregation. Following are excerpts of their remarks.]

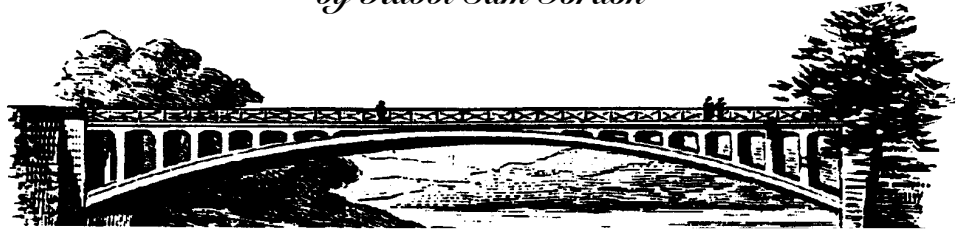
Fawzi: I am a Palestinian citizen of Israel, and I am a Christian. I live in Haifa with my parents and my three older sisters. This is my first time in the United States and so far it's amazing.

Hands of Peace allowed me to have a mature discussion with people at my age about things we go through in our daily life. Living as a Palestinian in Israel is not an easy thing. I don't get to have my complete freedom of expressing my thoughts or sharing my opinion. Spending time with Palestinians, Americans and Israelis all at once is not a thing I take for granted, and Hands of Peace is probably the only place I have the opportunity to do such an amazing thing.

During the dialogues, I improved my ability of listening and speaking my mind in front of a group. In addition, I discovered that I really have a hard time listening to painful stories people go through, and I cried when I heard people describing how their friend died in front of them without them able to do anything about it.

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My Journey by Rabbi Sam Gordon



Our congregation's newsletter has always focused on the personal journey stories of members of our Sukkat Shalom family. We are reminded that each one of us has a story of learning, growth and personal spiritual awareness. Many have written wonderful reflections about their own journeys, and we have been privileged to read these journey tales.

The Torah itself is largely a story of journeys. While it is also a book of law, genealogy, and universal creation, most of the Five Books of Moses contains the narrative that begins with God speaking to Abraham and saying, "Go forth, from your homeland, the land of your birth, the house of your father."

Abraham obeys and begins a journey that eventually includes Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Moses would continue the journey with the former slaves from Egypt. For 40 years the Israelites would wander in the Sinai desert. The Torah is thus a travel diary for a people's history.

While the Torah contains a narrative of a journey, more importantly it includes a central unifying message. Thirty-six times the Torah states: "Always remem-

ber that you were slaves in the Land of Egypt." We are commanded to never forget that experience, and the core lesson taken from Egypt is to fight against slavery, oppression and inequality. Having been slaves ourselves, we must defend the rights of the stranger, the outcast and the oppressed.



In 1965, prominent American rabbis joined with African-American leaders, as well as clergy of all faiths, to march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on Bloody Sunday, March, 7, 1965. The movie "Selma" portrayed the

terrible violence of that day. Thankfully, a great deal has changed in America in those 50 years. There has been significant progress in race relations and the fight against prejudice and inequality. Yet, much work still remains, as the events of this past summer have shown.

On September 1st, I will be carrying a Torah scroll on a different journey. On the 50th anniversary of the March from Selma to Montgomery, the NAACP has organized a Journey for Justice March from Selma to Washington, D.C. This year is also the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act. At least 150 other Reform rabbis have chosen to march with the NAACP for at
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"Family Promise" Program Changes Lives of Guests and Hosts Alike

by Carole Kenin Levin

One Saturday this past July, I hurried my husband Steve and 13 year-old twin boys home from the Renaissance Faire and "dragged" them to Sukkat Shalom to help host a Family Promise dinner. I won't say that they were kicking and screaming. They understood that our goal was to do something nice for other people, but they were certainly skeptical about what I had gotten us into.

Family Promise is a national organization that works to help homeless families get back on their feet. The families have dinner and sleep at participating churches and synagogues for a week at a time. All the families we met when Sukkat Shalom



Steve, Jonas and Ethan Levin entertaining their Family Promise guests.

hosted in July were single-parent families with young children and infants.

As we left the synagogue at the end of the evening, my son Jonas said, "That was one of the best nights I've had." His twin brother, Ethan, spoke about the experience in his Bar Mitzvah D'Var Torah speech in August:

"Our lives in suburban Chicago are enriched by connecting with and helping our neighbors in need."

"It was a really nice night for everyone. I will admit that before we went, Jonas and I were not sure what our parents were getting us into and it turned out that we left at the end of the night feeling great. I saw close up how hard life can be for some people and I learned that, with a little kindness, I can make a big difference. I also learned that even people as young as us can really help those who don't have a lot of opportunity."

So... what happened that evening that had such a powerful and lasting impact?

On a very simple level, we brought groceries and, in the company of other congregants, prepared dinner, played with the children

of the families we were hosting, ate with the families - including a lot of conversation - cleaned up and went home.

On a more profound level, Steve, Jonas, Ethan and I had a heart-lifting experience from giving single parents time to rest at the end of their long day, while our children and theirs laughed and played. All of this was topped off with good food, good conversation and good companionship.

The real magic of the experience was the joy we felt. Steve commented at the end of the night that Family Promise is as important for us as it is for the families who are being hosted. Our lives in suburban Chicago are enriched by connecting with and helping our neighbors in need.

Our family will continue to participate in Family Promise whenever the opportunity arises.



Jonas Levin with two members of our guest family at Sukkat Shalom.

Journey, cont'd

least a day along that 800-mile route. We will march while carrying a Torah scroll in our arms.

I hope that the coalition of Jews and African-Americans fighting for social justice has remained strong. I am honored to be able to take a small part in the march from Selma to Washington. Even more, I am grateful for the opportunity to put into action the words of Torah as I carry that scroll along the blacktop roads of North and South Carolina.

As we sing each time we return the Torah to the Ark:

"It is a tree of life to those who hold it fast, and all who cling to it find happiness.

"Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace."

Hands of Peace, cont'd

My dialogue group got deeply connected after sharing a few of the hardest things we have ever been through in our personal lives. Even though we have fun and laugh together, the thing that really bonds us is when we share the pain we feel, respect each other and the support we give when one of us is in need of it.

It was wonderful to see how much people care about each other in this program and how you'll never be alone if you were upset or if you had a tough dialogue. Now I completely understand why people said that this is a life-changing experience.

Madeline: I am 17 and am going to be a senior at Glenbrook South High School. I live in Glenview, and I am a Christian. I am thrilled to be standing here representing Hands of Peace this evening, especially considering my partially Jewish roots and connections to Jewish people and practices.

"I learned that we have a lot in common, and that we have the same fears—for our land, for our lives, for our future. It motivates us to think about a solution for peace."

Sean

Through Hands of Peace, I have seen my peers move away from their instilled and stubborn values and open their minds to new perspectives. This I consider to be a huge step in developing as an educated, compassionate human being.

During one particularly difficult dialogue session, my group was recounting personal stories related to the conflict. An emotionally jarring story had left one member of my group unable to carry on, as they were fighting back sobs that had been stored up for what seemed like a long time. As the tears rolled down their cheeks, a person from the opposite delegation stood up to offer a tissue without being asked. I saw this as a moment of pure humanity and enormous growth.

"...when the program began and I saw the views of the participants, I thought about who I am, why I am here, and what do I want?"

Rand

I believe that Hands of Peace will have consequences that reach farther than the individual lives of Middle Eastern and American teens. I believe that simple things like a Palestinian offering a tissue and a hug to an Israeli is the first step to achieving understanding and equality.

Sean: I am a 17 year-old Jewish Israeli from Sha'ar Efraim. I live in a Jewish village in Israel that is surrounded by Arab villages. Last year, during the war, some people from those villages came and blocked the entrance to our village by setting tires on fire and throwing rocks. Before this program, I thought that the main goal of the Palestinians is to have a Palestinian state all over Israel—to erase the Israeli Jewish state.

In the dialogues I heard stories from the participants that made me surprised, like difficulties in their daily lives, confusions about their identities and other things that made me think harder about how to make peace. I learned that we have a lot in common, and that we have the same fears—for our land, for our lives, for our future. It motivates us to think about a solution for peace.

During the dialogue, I had to answer different questions that made me think about things that I never thought about, and these things will definitely stay with me for long time. I see this opportunity to meet with Palestinian kids as a huge gift, and I am proud to be a part of this program. I hope that the peace will come soon.

Rand: I'm 16 years-old and I'm Palestinian and live in a small village called Shoufa near Tulkarem in the West Bank.

At the beginning I did not take this experience seriously. I just wanted to travel for fun. But when the program began and I saw the views of the participants, I thought about who I am, why I am here, and what do I want? I have learned many things from

"I believe that simple things like a Palestinian offering a tissue and a hug to an Israeli is the first step to achieving understanding and equality."

this experience, including others' views about the conflict, and we have had a lot of fun together.

Madeline

Hands of Peace changed the way I thought about some things. For example, before the program I had a meeting between the participants in Jerusalem and, to be honest, I was scared at first because I was not used to dealing with Jewish Israelis.

But when I met those people and spoke with them, I discovered that they are good from the inside and they are different from their government.

I will miss the funny faces that we make among ourselves. I will miss the fighting during the dialogue, and then when we come back friends. I will miss the vegetarian food, and when I taught you how to make the bones of the spine do sound. And I will miss Santana music, although I often hear it. But I will miss you guys playing this music. I will miss all you guys.

Shabbat “Greeters” Will Help Create Community at Sukkat Shalom

by Lesley Peters,

Chair of the Sukkat Shalom Greeters Committee

We all know what they say about the importance first impressions. The same goes for congregations.

This year, we are embarking on a new way to create sacred relationships in our synagogue. We are asking for volunteers to greet members and guests at Shabbat services and act as *m'kabei panim* (literally, 'greeting faces'). We are striving to be a joyous place for all those who come on Friday evenings, whether it is inside our synagogue or somewhere else.

Any congregant can help us warmly greet all who come to Sukkat Shalom, to help anyone needing assistance, and to make everyone feel at ease. Our mission is to greet everyone who walks through our doors with a gracious reception so they feel a sense of belonging and community.

Rabbi Ron Wolfson, in his book *The Spirit of Welcoming: How to Transform Your Congregation into a Sacred Community*, writes that "greeting is the basis for meeting, which is the first step toward creating a sacred community." I know this from personal experience.

Many years ago, when my first husband and I were "temple shopping" on the North Shore, we visited several synagogues before we found one in which we felt at home. The president of that congregation came up to us as we entered. She introduced herself. She asked if we were visiting, and what information we needed. She invited us to sit with her for the service. She walked with us to the Oneg Shabbat, chatting about her synagogue.

My husband and I joined the next week.

I had a similar experience at Sukkat Shalom, where I returned after a long absence due to a move to another city. Rabbi Gordon came over to say hello. (He had married my second husband and me when Sukkat Shalom was still a dream.) I told him I was surprised he remembered me. He

replied, "Of course, I remember. I married you at the Kenilworth Club." I was impressed that he remembered a ceremony he had performed in 1992. He invited me to come and see him.

When I met with him the next week, we had a long chat about Sukkat Shalom, where it is today, and why he believes it is more vital than ever. I joined a few weeks later.

These two experiences left a lasting impression on me, just as reaching out to visitors to Sukkat Shalom can create a lasting experience for them.

We want our greeters to build a sense of community for others

to join. We want to provide a warm and caring impression when people walk through our doors. We want guests and congregants to feel welcome, know we will assist them, and help them to be comfortable.

We want to share the spirit that makes Sukkat Shalom such a special place, so that others feel it immediately when they step inside.

To join in this effort, all you need to do is to volunteer for Friday night Shabbat services a few times a year. You can contact Lisa Browne at the synagogue office and tell her at which services you can serve as a greeter.

Welcome! We'd love to have you!



“Our mission is to greet everyone who walks through our doors with a gracious reception so they feel a sense of belonging and community.”

Three Tales of A Summer B'nai Mitzvah in Israel

by the Krupkin Family

[A number of Sukkat Shalom families have celebrated a Bar or Bat Mitzvah in Israel. Following is an account from the Krupkin Family of a B'nai Mitzvah this summer, from both the parents' and children's perspective.]

Liz and Steve Krupkin: The idea to



Molly Jo Krupkin reading from the Torah on top of Masada.

travel to Israel as a family was hatched two years ago following the Bar Mitzvah of our oldest child, Billy. We had a beautiful service at Sukkat Shalom's new building, followed by a luncheon at our home in Evanston. The day was perfect, simple, fairly low-key and filled with lots of quality time spent with all who attended.

Our two other children, George and Molly Jo, are 17 months apart and we felt that having services and parties back-to-back would be asking a lot of our extended clan. A B'nai Mitzvah (combining the two ceremonies) seemed the logical choice, but one that we wanted to be different than the first. After consulting with many people over the next 18 months, we devised an itinerary, had the kids continue working with Hebrew instructor Ronit Levy and Cantor Adam Davis, and booked our trip to Israel.

We thought it was a beautiful vacation in Congregation Sukkat Shalom Fall Bulletin

many ways and were incredibly awed by all that we saw and experienced.

Molly Jo: Israel was a great experience for our entire family. We did many things that I thought I would never do. We floated in the Dead Sea, spent time in Tel Aviv, Old Jaffa and Jerusalem, spent the night in a Bedouin tent, rode camels, hiked to waterfalls and ate a lot of hummus.

One of my favorite parts was staying in the Bedouin village. We learned how they ate, cooked, traveled, what they wore, and how they survived. Since the Bedouins live in the desert and we were there in the summer, the tent was especially hot, but we were able to sleep anyway.

Our B'nai Mitzvah ceremony took place on the top of Masada. We hiked up the mountain early in the morning wearing shorts and T-shirts because it was

so hot. I think the experience of the B'nai Mitzvah really changed the meaning of the service because we were literally standing on history, surrounded by paintings and mosaics that were over 2000 years old!

I loved our time at the Dead Sea as well as a rock-climbing hike at Mapal Devorah. At the bottom of the hike was a waterfall with a pool of water where we swam. I loved Israel and am so happy we went.

George: Going to Israel meant a lot to me because it gave me a chance to look back at ancient history that I had learned from history books and compare it to

what I was seeing with my own eyes. All throughout Israel, but especially in Jerusalem, there were places where the Torah came to life. I stood over King David's palace, walked through Hezekiah's tunnel, and saw a light show telling the story of Jerusalem in the middle of the Tower of David Museum.

There were also many beautiful natural wonders throughout Israel, including many lovely waterfalls, mountains and trails. We took a crazy, bumpy Jeep ride and visited old army bases and fruit orchards. We ended our trip in Tel Aviv, where the water in the Mediterranean was extremely warm and fun to play and body surf in.

Having a B'nai Mitzvah with my sister on top of Masada is something I will always remember. What makes Masada so significant is that it was a Jewish fortress -- one of the last taken over by the Romans almost 2,000 years ago.



George Krupkin takes his turn during his Bar Mitzvah in Israel.

It was an amazing experience becoming a Jewish adult in Israel -- a once in a lifetime trip.

Hineinu Committee Is Here for the Sukkat Shalom Community

[Sukkat Shalom's Hineinu (We Are Here) Committee provides comfort and assistance to members of the congregation upon the death of a family member, an illness, a new baby or other lifecycle events.

Following are some recent letters of thanks from congregants for the help and support they received]:

If you know a member family in need or want to volunteer, contact Judy Buckman.


"Thanks for the wonderful bag with all sorts of delicious things. I know my granddaughters will love the board book. I appreciate what your Hineinu Committee does--such a warm and wonderful acknowledgement of temple membership. We don't celebrate Shabbat as we should--the challah and the candles are a great reminder that this is a ritual we should remember to include in our lives."

"Thank you very much for the wonderful honey basket our family received around Rosh Hashanah. This was such a sweet and unexpected welcome gift. My husband and our kids enjoyed the treats - cookies, apples and honey! We look forward to being members of the congregation."

"Thank you for all the support that I have received from all of you. Looking up and seeing the beautiful flowers makes me smile every time. I am looking forward to reading the books soon. I truly know that being a part of the Sukkat Shalom community has helped me get through surgery and the recovery."

"What a pleasant surprise returning home last Friday to find the 'goodies' on our doorstep. That was so kind and so greatly appreciated. The brownies and challah made it to Milwaukee on Monday to be shared with my mother and sister who both were flabbergasted at the kindness shown by Sukkat Shalom. This gesture meant the world to me."

"Please extend my appreciation to the Hineinu Committee for thinking of us once again and providing such kind support. I hope they realize how much those lovely little bags mean to a family who is grieving. It is nice to feel embraced by our temple community at all times, but most especially when times are tough."



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CONGREGATION
SUKKAT SHALOM

Save the Date

Saturday, November 7, 2015

The best way to celebrate twenty years...

Smile, feast, raise a glass,
Laugh, chuckle, have a blast,

Nibble, dine, drink some wine,
Grin, roar, then feast some more!

In celebration of Sukkat Shalom's 20th anniversary as a community balancing tradition and innovation...

Please save the date for a casual evening featuring Second City and dinner.