



TIKVAH TALK

CONGREGATION
B'NAI TIKVAH

Volume 43 Issue 1 | July-September 2024

NEW LOOK!



COLUMNS

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UPCOMING HOLIDAYS

- August 13: Tisha B'Av
- August 19: Tu B'Shvat
- October 3: Rosh Hashanah
- October 12: Yom Kippur
- October 17: Sukkot
- October 24: Simchat Torah

CALENDAR

Scan Here!



How Can We Support One Another? Be a Part of CBT's Chesed

Have you recently had a baby, a surgery, or an injury or illness? Do you need a ride to synagogue, a hot meal, a listening ear, or a friendly visit? Our Chesed Committee wants to hear from you.

Are you able to offer a ride, a meal, be a listening ear, visit someone in need? We need you! Many hands make light work and they build the community we aspire to be to one another. We'll add you to our list and call on you as needs arise in our community.

Making ourselves vulnerable to one another is what creates the opportunities for each of us to do the mitzvah of serving one another, and it's what knits our community together. Let us build together an authentic community of lovingkindness by naming our needs and showing up for one another.

Email chesedCBT@gmail.com and tell us what you need or how you can help!

MISSION STATEMENT

At Congregation B'nai Tikvah, we believe that a kind and vibrant Jewish community deepens and restores our sense of purpose and connection to the world. We are dedicated to learning, music-infused prayer, personal relationships and a commitment to social justice and welcome all who are looking to explore the many innovative paths to meaning that Judaism has to offer.

STAFF

Jennie Chabon, Rabbi Cantor
Sue Bojdak, Director of Congregational Learning
Lori Siegel, Interim Executive Director
Kathy Jacobs, Office Specialist
Tami Welch-Robinson, Office Specialist
Chanel Benhamou, Finance Manager
Jen Selman, Facilities Staff
Samantha Youngman, Communications
Lisa Zeiler, Music Specialist
Raphael W. Asher, Rabbi Emeritus
Stephen Richards, Cantor Emeritus

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CONTACT

Summer Office Hours:
Monday-Friday: 11:00 am - 5:00 pm
office@tikvah.org | (925) 933-5397
www.tikvaheastbay.org

As we begin our new fiscal year at Congregation B'nai Tikvah it is membership renewal time. I wanted to take a moment to thank you for being a part of our CBT community. Membership is first and foremost about being part of Jewish community life and creating relationships that keep us feeling connected to others. The financial support that each and every one of you provides through your membership contributions are the foundation upon which everything else that we do together is possible. Our membership model is based on mutual commitment and shared trust; your generous financial support allows CBT to meet our current operating expenses. In addition, it allows us to welcome new members regardless of their financial situation...

Read more from President and Interim Executive Director, Lori Siegel, in your email from Monday, July 1. Be sure to sign up for any clubs or committees you are interested in joining as well!



Mazel Tov to our Midrasha Graduates!

MAZEL TOV
to our growing families!

Cynthia & Herb Scher's granddaughter, Zoey
Claire Bernardo & David Ratner's grandson, Hugh

REFLECTIONS...

By Rabbi Jennie Chabon



Dear friends,

I have exciting news! The leadership of CBT has decided that it is time for us to engage in a strategic planning process, something that has been on our minds for a long time but which we have been unable to

begin for many reasons until now. When I first became the rabbi of CBT in 2019, we had many wonderful conversations about who we were as a community then and who we wanted to become. Then the world shut down, and our conversations were understandably put on hold. It is only now that we feel able to come up for air and think once again about the future of our beautiful community.

In the 20 years that I have been serving here, we have never engaged in a strategic planning process. The present moment has always been so consuming that we have not been able to lift our eyes from the details of everyday shul life to be able to move them to the horizon. But we have finally made it and I could not be more happy to share this news. We have hired Dale Glasser to guide us through the process. Dale is an immensely talented and experienced consultant and trainer who worked for 16 years as the senior management consultant at the URJ. He knows congregations better than anyone we could have found, and we are thrilled he can work with us.

To make this process valuable we need your help! This summer, we will contact key stakeholders at CBT to have conversations with Dale to prepare him to meet our community. At the same time, we will create a strategic planning task force to be our emissaries for this critical work in the year ahead. August 10-11 Dale will come to Walnut Creek to hold focus groups and a leadership training seminar for our community. You are all invited to participate in the focus groups, as Dale wants to listen deeply to the voices of our members so he can understand who we are now and who we want to become.

How can you help? When someone from CBT calls to ask you to participate, say yes! Please sign up to be in one of the focus groups. They will each last just one hour and we want your voices to be heard. We cannot

Continued on Page 6

EDUCATION

By Sue Bojdak, Director of Education



What Will the Future Look Like?

The Talmud tells the story of Moses atop Mount Sinai waiting for God to finish up the Torah. God is affixing the crowns, the fancy frilly bits at the top of each Hebrew letter. With some amount of chutzpah, Moses

asks why God is holding up the process by messing with the crowns. God responds, because someone will come along “a few generations from now” (in actuality about 1300 years give or take) who will generate from these “crowns” mountains of laws, giving us a whole new understanding of Judaism. That person is the great first-century scholar Rabbi Akiva. Moses asks God to show him this man. So God puts Moses into Rabbi Akiva’s academy to study. And Moses shrinks as he realizes he has no idea what Akiva is talking about or what is even happening in this room. But when a student asks Rabbi Akiva how he arrived at a particular conclusion, Akiva says, “Because Moses received this law at Mount Sinai and passed it on to succeeding generations.”

Is it the worst game of telephone ever, that Moses can’t recognize his teachings filtered through a millennium of learning? Or is it the genius of Judaism? That we change, that we adapt, that each generation makes new meaning of our master narrative and continues to make our tradition relevant for each succeeding generation.

I remember once reconsidering how or whether to continue to offer a 7th-grade trip to Los Angeles at another local congregation. When we proposed a change to the program, a parent of a rising 7th grader (who had an older child who had been on a prior trip) said, “But we’ve always done this trip in this way.” We had done it for 3 years. The congregation was over 100 years old. Had we really always done it this way? Or had we just begun to reimagine the 7th-grade trip and play with what is possible?

Over the past year, our Reimagine Task Force has been exploring what else our education programs at B’nai Tikvah might be. We’ve looked at CBT’s history and a wide range of innovative models for Jewish congregational schools. We’ve begun to explore

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SISTERHOOD NEWS

By Mona Epstein, Sisterhood President

Booksisters participated in a wonderful program through the Jewish Community Library in SF called “Book Club in a Box.” This program provides everything you need for a great discussion, including books, discussion questions, and background information, all at no charge. In addition, we viewed a virtual discussion with the author, in this case, Elizabeth Graver, author of Kantika. The library offers more than 180 titles ranging from classics to newly released novels and we will likely do this again.

Next up for Booksisters to read is “The Women” by Kristin Hannah with a discussion on August 25. We will have a potluck brunch at Rayna’s house.

The results of the Wise Aging questionnaire are in and we have begun to plan for next year. Areas of interest included healthy aging, dealing with loneliness and isolation, and caregiver concerns. We are considering a format to include discussion groups and group viewing of films on aging. Thank you to Sue Bojdak for coordinating this program.

Please take a moment to check out our new Ride Board; the link is in the Monday and Friday emails or scan the QR code here.



A group of Sisterhood members saw “Cabaret” at the Leshner on June 9th, pictured below.

To be added to the Sisterhood email list, please contact monaepstein@gmail.com



PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

By Lori Siegel, Board President



As we close the 2023-2024 fiscal year, I am filled with a sense of gratitude and excitement for what we have accomplished. Our synagogue has seen membership growth, resilience, and positive change. At the Annual Meeting, we approved the 2024-2025

CBT budget, the 2024-2025 Religious School budget, the slate of Board Nominees, and amendments to CBT’s Bylaws. Below is some information regarding the approved CBT budget and the amendments to the Bylaws.

This past year, CBT has thrived in many ways. We have come together in prayer, community, and solidarity to support one another through the rise of antisemitism and the war. We have shown up for each other in the joyful and painful moments. We have deepened our connections, forged new friendships, and welcomed new members with warmth and community.

Our projected deficit for this past 2023-2024 fiscal year is approximately \$8,000 less than planned. We are thankful that our annual gala was successful and brought in revenue to reach our fundraising goal. A big thank you to Amanda Regenstein, Andrea Slavet, and the entire gala committee for all their hard work in making this year’s gala a success!

The Board looks forward to a new year ahead as we focus on being fiscally responsible. One of the most significant milestones we have reached this year is the achievement of a balanced budget, free from deficit for the first time in years. Presenting a realistic budget to our congregation was one of my first goals when I became President. The Board presented our community with two 2024-2025 budgets. The first showed a deficit of just under \$130,000 and was in the spirit of transparency regarding CBT’s financial situation. The second was a balanced budget which was approved at our annual meeting. The difference between the two budgets is hiring an Executive Director. For the next year, we will operate under the balanced budget because I will continue in my dual roles as President and Executive Director as a volunteer without pay. I have been serving as the Executive Director since October 7, 2023, and am giving my time to ensure our

CONTRA COSTA MIDRASHA

By Devra C. Aarons, CCM Director

We are SO excited to start 2024-25 at Contra Costa Midrasha. Before we dive into our new year, I want to share some of the biggest accomplishments of this past year, 2023-24.

- Our overall student enrollment was up by 20% with a class of 23 teens graduating this May.
- CCM's retreats program now called "Bay Yachad" included over 9 teen-serving organizations from all over the Bay Area with 116 teens attending at least one retreat. (Though 60% attended two or more.)
- The Hamsa Fund teens raised \$4000 which they donated to the Jewish Community Relations Council, Youth Homes and CASA.
- Impact Builder dedicated their whole year to working with Tiny Village Spirit and hope to help them move into their facility early next year.
- Better Together's intergenerational programming bonded 19 elders and 25 teens, ending their year with a pickle making party!

Numbers don't tell the whole story. Here are my favorite quotes from some of our graduating teens telling why Midrasha was so meaningful and memorable for them:

"Midrasha is not just a weekly event for me: it's my home, my haven, where I truly feel alive and a place where I've formed deep connections with amazing friends." -Noah

"During my time at Midrasha, I discovered a vibrant Jewish community for teens just like me. Every Wednesday night, I looked forward to a place where I knew I would be accepted and loved for who I am. I learned what it means to be included, uplifted and unconditionally supported by a whole community. Midrasha also solidified my connection to Judaism. May we continue to learn and grow together, carrying the light of Midrasha wherever we go." -Avria

"Every single retreat I went on it felt like my soul was getting glued back together - back to its fullest potential because each retreat was filled with so much love and enjoyment that it truly was a healing experience." -Allison

"Having a place like Midrasha is so incredibly special - getting to connect with other teens that understand what it's like to be Jewish. Midrasha has helped me to

embrace my Judaism and I am so grateful for that." -Liza
"It's the moments during the retreats that I find most memorable: staying up all night in the cabin, going on hikes and experiencing nature, participating in the talent shows or singing Birkat after every meal, it's those moments that define my experience with Judaism thus far." -Elliot, Class of 2024

We hope 2024-25 will be just as impactful with our continued Wednesday nights, Bay Yachad retreats and bevy of Sunday Tikkun Olam (repair the world) programming. Registration for 2024-25 is now open. We also invite you to nominate a teen for Hamsa Fund and sign up for Better Together. Here are all the links:
CCM's 2024-25 Registration: <https://tinyurl.com/4t76szrh>
Hamsa Fund Application: <https://tinyurl.com/mr3t8ytf>
Better Together Registration: <https://tinyurl.com/aune7ueu>

Finally save the date for February 22, 2025 - CCM's Annual Gala happening at the San Ramon Marriott where CCM will honor our Executive Director, Devra Aarons for her 18 years of service, creating impactful Jewish teen community and connection.

Please spread the love about Contra Costa Midrasha! Let the teens in your life know about Midrasha and our myriad of programs. Schedule a time to talk with our Director, Devra Aarons at devra.aarons@ccmidrasha.com or check out our website at ccmidrasha.com. There's something for every teen and enrollment is always open!



contra costa
midrasha

Join us for 2024-25!
...where Jewish teens build
community, connection
and friendships!

ccmidrasha.com

REFLECTIONS...

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know how we want to grow if we don't hear from you all. This is the time for the members of our community to step up, amidst your busy lives, to help guide us into the future.

CBT was founded by visionaries. They imagined our community and dreamed it into being. Now it is our chance to be the dreamers. Please join us in envisioning who we are meant to be.

May we go from strength to strength.

EDUCATION

Continued from Page 3

possibilities for the future. We are now at the hardest part of the journey, the part where we decide on a new direction and make a commitment to change.

Listening to the podcast *On Being* recently, I heard philanthropist and social entrepreneur Azita Ardakan Walton talking about applying nature's principles to economics, social organizations, and design (a field called biomimicry). She noted, "In the natural world ... there is replication of things that work until they don't. [...] There might be a strategy or a response type that works for a million years. But million year day two, if it doesn't work anymore, i.e. doesn't serve the collective vitality, [nature] will respond otherwise. And it's not attached to the thing that used to work before."

The religious school as an institution is just over 100 years old in America. B'nai Tikvah's religious school dates back to the 1980s with the inception of our community. We are nowhere close to million year day two but we do have a model that no longer serves the "collective vitality" here at CBT and in the larger Jewish community. According to a recent study by the Jewish Education Project, Hebrew school enrollment across the U.S. dropped by 40% between 2006 and 2019 and more than a quarter of religious schools closed. That was before the pandemic, and we believe these numbers are higher now.

"Nature's not attached to the thing that used to work before." Not because it never worked, wasn't a great idea, or didn't serve a purpose, but because it's not serving the "collective vitality" now. What will serve our collective vitality now? What will make us come alive in new ways? Let's look into the future and find out.

High Holidays 5785

Rosh Hashanah

Begins sunset of Wednesday, October 2

Ends nightfall of Friday, October 4

Community Tashlich is Sunday, October 6

Yom Kippur

Begins sunset of Friday, October 11

Ends nightfall of Saturday, October 12

CBT will be at St. Matthew again this year.

Member tickets will be mailed. For guest tickets, please contact the office.



A Midsummer Night's Shabbat & Tacos
Friday, July 19, 6:30 pm

Let's gather for easy Friday night dinner, ice cold drinks, time and space to visit and play together, and Shabbat singing around the campfire. It's a festive summer Shabbat evening for all ages. Register & pay for dinner (made on the spot tacos) by Friday, July 12. Links to come in the weekly emails.

Tikvah Talk is going quarterly!

For the most up-to-date information check your weekly emails. If you are not receiving emails from CBT, email comms@tikvah.org to ensure you're on the mailing list.

Want to go paperless? To change your Tikvah Talk delivery preferences email kathy@tikvah.org.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from Page 4

doors stay open. As much as we would like to hire an Executive Director, it just isn't fiscally possible or responsible to do so this year. The Board and I are working to improve CBT's finances so we can hire someone next fiscal year. Transparency is something I promised from day one, therefore, the Board and I felt strongly that you should see both budgets so as not to mislead you regarding where we stand financially.

Our biggest source of income is membership dues. This year, the Board voted to increase membership dues by 5% and to implement a new level of membership, Kehilah. Full dues for 2024-2025 will be \$3230. Kavod membership will increase to \$4,000 and Kehilah our new inclusive membership level is \$5400. This level includes the building fee, oneg fee, guest High Holiday Tickets, Shabbat dinners, and anything offered at CBT. It just excludes fundraising events. For those who cannot pay full dues, I invite you to have a conversation with me to ensure we are at a level that is comfortable for you. We are taking steps to increase our membership and developing new fundraising opportunities so we can continue to offer programming that is meaningful to our community.

Security continues to be a priority. Our gate is almost functioning, I hope to update you very soon once we have the green light! We recently were awarded \$10,000 from the SF Federation Micro Grant Program. We will use this money to upgrade the lighting outside and in our amphitheater. In addition, we received \$250,000 from the California Office of Emergency Services which will provide us additional security upgrades to our building. The OES awarded money to only 15% of those who applied and awarded 100% of the requested funds to an even smaller group of grantees. We are very thankful to have been one of the fortunate grantees to receive 100% of our requested grant. We owe a big thank you to Susanne Revutsky who supported our community by writing this grant with me.

In your Annual Meeting packet, you received proposed amendments to the Bylaws. There are two main purposes for these amendments. The first is to add two additional At Large Trustees to the Board. As you may recall, when we rewrote the Bylaws in 2021, we went from a Board of over 20 members, down to 11 members. Since then, the Board has realized that more Trustees

are needed to do all the work and to have a reliable succession plan for officer roles. At the annual meeting, we approved to move forward with adding two additional positions to increase the size of the Board to 13 members. The other main revision concerns the Executive Director position. To give the Board flexibility in hiring someone to be the chief administrator of our congregation, we have proposed amending the Bylaws to allow the Board to hire a chief administrator and tailor that position to the organization's administrative and fiscal needs.

At our annual meeting I shared that we recently sold our domain name, Tikvah.org, and will change our website to tikvaheastbay.org. Another organization had a compelling offer for our domain name and support in designing and building our new website. We are excited to offer our community an improved user experience on our new website. I hope by the High Holidays - or shortly after - we will be up and running.

I want to thank each of you for your ongoing support, dedication, and partnership. I also want to thank our Nominating Co-Chairs, Jenn Leeds and Chanel Benhamou along with Glenn Gould, Scott Regenstein, and Idelle Lipman for providing us with our board slate for this fiscal year. Together we are building a stronger, more vibrant, and more inclusive synagogue community that serves as a beacon of hope and light in an often dark world. My wish for the next year is that we all show up to support our community. It takes a village to keep CBT what we want it to be. So please get involved, join a committee, volunteer, come to services, and show up for your community.

Follow us on instagram and facebook
[@congregationbnaitikvah](https://www.instagram.com/congregationbnaitikvah)



IN GRATITUDE TO OUR COMMUNITY

BUILDING FUND 23-24

In Memory of Alan Gould
Arlene Gould

GENERAL FUND

In Memory of Ilene Applebaum
Todd & Randi Goldman

In Memory of Hattie Arnett

In Memory of Milton Sloban
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In Memory of Lawrence Berger
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In Memory of Ted Kaplan
Richard & Rayna Ravitz

In Memory of Howard Goldin
Jared & Trish Goldin

In Memory of Rev Alan Greenbat

In Memory of Brittany Morgan Stout
Bernadette & Nathan Bitton

In Memory of Bernard Hochhauser
Marcie Hochhauser

In Memory of Edgar Kornhauser
Norman & Nancy Friedman

In Memory of Rosa Krysz

In Memory of Frances Weiner
Jeffrey & Shirley Weiner

In Memory of Louis Latona
Jerry Nadler

In Celebration of Hana Moran's Bat Mitzvah
Robin Gordon

In Memory of Frieda Oestreicher
Ken & Nancy Oestreicher

In Memory of Dora Potuto
Joseph & Julie Patute

In Celebration of Herb & Cynthia Scher's granddaughter, Zoey
Joan Weinstein

In Honor of Lori Siegel
John & Susan Rubinfeld
David Ratner & Claire Bernardo
Perry Jurow
Robert Hess & Jennifer Leeds

In Honor of Lori Siegel's service to our community
Mary Ann Wittenberg

In Appreciation of Lori Siegel
Scott & Amanda Regenstein

In Memory of Benjamin Slavet
Andrea Slavet

In Memory of Charles David Unger
Judith & Scott Barrall

In Appreciation of the Chesed Committee
Joan Weinstein

JAMES COHEN MEMORIAL FUND

In Celebration of Hana Moran's Bat Mitzvah

Idelle Lipman

In Memory of Betty Blum
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In Memory of Sam Molho

In Honor of Hana Moran's Bat Mitzvah
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PRAYERBOOK FUND

In Memory of Leo Brandess
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In Memory of Sarah Brown
Ron & Sharon Brown

In Memory of Morris Devins
Joan Weinstein

In Honor of Rabbi Jennie Chabon for Shane Fox's Bar Mitzvah
Tammy Fisher & Greg Fox

In Memory of Rita Spector
Marcie Hochhauser

In Memory of Saul Nadler

In Celebration of Hana Moran's Bat Mitzvah
Jerry Nadler

In Memory of Myrna C Ostrov
Aerica Ostrov

In Memory of Beverly Pinsel

In Memory of E. Melvin Pinsel
Monica Pinsel

In Memory of Arthur Scharlach
Lynette & Alan Scharlach

In Celebration of the Mah Jongg group
Judy Weil & Sanford Weitzner

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In Memory of Harvey Hauchhauser
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In Memory of Arthur Klatsky
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In Memory of Allen Teitelman
Carol Teitelman

In Memory of Elaine Unger
Judith & Scott Barrall

SISTERHOOD FUND

In Memory of Samuel Goldenberg, father of Larry Goldenberg
Ruthie & Larry Goldenberg

SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION FUND

In Memory of Gerald Applebaum
Todd & Randi Goldman

STEPHEN JASPAN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FUND

In Celebration of Sue Boj dak and her incredible work this year at CBT!!! Words truly cannot express how blessed we are to have you on the team. Your energy and commitment to the work is outstanding and does not go unnoticed. Thank you, Thank you!! Can't wait to see what you re-imagine :)!
Holly, Joel, Avi, Ezra and Ayla Grossman

THE HARRY WITTENBERG SOCIAL ACTION, JUSTICE, AND INTERFAITH FUND

In Memory of Leo Brandess
Cookie Svingos

In Celebration of David Ratner & Claire Bernardo's grandson, Hugh
Joan Weinstein

HELP US GROW OUR CULTURE OF GIVING

There are so many ways to honor loved ones celebrate a simcha, or acknowledge a yahrzeit, including leaves on the Tree of Life and bricks on our Simcha Walk. Another opportunity is contributing to our various funds. These are a few of our funds.

General Fund: Where we always need it the most to do what we do best.

James Cohen Scholarship Fund: Assists young people with camp programs of Jewish content.

Stephan Jaspán Religious School Fund: Funds special programs & projects in our religious school.





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K-5th Grade

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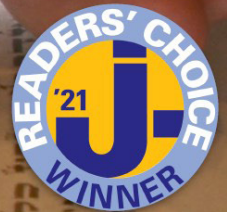
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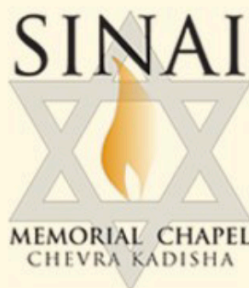
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

For membership information, please contact the temple office at (925) 933-5397.

Gan Gani

Our Weekly PreK Program is back!
Registration is OPEN

Our weekly Sunday class for children who are 4 (by September 1) reboots this fall, providing we reach the minimum enrollment number of 8 students (nearly there!). Tell your friends and family. Gan Gani will be play-based and set in the usual religious school hours, 9:30 am-noon on Sundays. Follow the Religious School Registration instructions or contact Sue for more information.



CONGREGATION
B'NAI TIKVAH
Religious School

Register for the 2024-25 school year!

If your child is a continuing student or if you have a new student, scan the QR code for the updates on next year and the registration form link.

If you have questions about registration or about next year, please reach out to Sue.

First day of Sunday School is September 8.

Religious School Registration instructions

