



SINAI TEMPLE

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT





1. President
2. Administration
3. Development
4. Education
5. Beit Bracha
6. Sinai Akiba Academy
7. Sinai Temple Religious School
8. Finance
9. Social Action and Programming
10. Membership
11. Ritual
12. General Counsel/Corporate Secretary
13. Teen Center and Atid
14. Sisterhood
15. Men's Club
16. Board of Governors
17. Mount Sinai Mortuaries and Memorial Parks



SINAI TEMPLE

Annual Report: President's Report

Submitted By: Jamie Berman, President

It has been over a year now that our synagogue business and ritual practice has been conducted by Zoom due to COVID. We have come a long way from last year and have made tremendous progress on our providing more services and classes online and a much improved streaming technology.

The ever-changing guidelines from the state and county have been a challenge but as of this writing, we are on the cusp of opening in person for ritual practice. It is a reopening which we are doing carefully as we strive to take all necessary precautions to protect our congregants.

Our community has struggled with losses of family and friends due to the pandemic. We provide comfort and support for those in our community that the pandemic has most severely affected. But we remain strong as a community.

Our membership was significantly affected by COVID as well and we hope that those families who left us will return. We suffered a loss of 385 family units. To those who stayed a part of the community this last year and supported us during this difficult time, thank you for being there for us and for your commitment to Judaism, Sinai Temple and the rest of our community. We will forever be grateful to you for keeping us strong and viable.

The loss of so many member units had a massive impact on our budget. We were able to cut significant costs by not physically being in the building, but it wasn't enough to balance the budget. Due to the hard work of the budget committee we were able to make monumental cuts and will continue to do so as we move into the next fiscal year.

It's amazing that through all the difficulties of the last year, we have managed to thrive as a community and accomplish so much.

Our YouTube channel has close to 5,000 subscribers and we are continuing to reach out to them with online programs and services.

With the help of so many committed volunteers, Sinai has reached out to every member throughout this pandemic, by phone or Zoom, to check in, to offer assistance, and build community. Thank you so much to all of you whom volunteered. We have received some wonderful feedback from our congregants appreciative of the outreach.

Renewal of membership presented us with a dilemma. After months of meetings and discussion, the budget committee knew that we needed to increase our dues for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. With the pandemic in full swing, it became clear that our members would find the dues increase difficult to accept since we were not in the building. We were so fortunate that a donor stepped up and covered the amount of the increase that we would have seen from our membership.

What outstanding High Holiday Day services we all experienced! Once it was clear that we would not be in our own building to gather for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we began the process of creating a HDD production despite never have done so before. A tremendous amount of gratitude goes to Roz and Abner Goldstine, Younes and Soraya Nazarian, and Parviz ^{z'l}, Pouran Nazarian and Ruth Pilot who sponsored the streaming of those services and allowed us to present the best online services ever produced. I hope everyone enjoyed the temple drive by to pick up their High Holiday gift bags. What a treat to see all of you and wish you all a Shana Tova as we handed you a High Holiday bag filled with the essentials to have a meaningful holiday at home.

Speaking of our dear members, the Goldstines, Roz and Abner have graciously agreed to sponsor the Abner and Roz Goldstine Scholar in Residence program for another year. This last year we were treated to three seminars with legal scholar Dalia Lithwick. I can't wait to participate in next year's Scholar in Residence program. Thank you for your continued support of this educational program.

I don't know how many of you were as thrilled as I was to see Sinai Speaks return this year. It has a different format but will provide our congregants greater connections to our shul. Sinai Speaks will be sent out every other month now and hopefully will become again a monthly newsletter.

On the administration front, the office has worked very hard during the pandemic to clean up Razors Edge--our temple database--so that the information is accurate and up to date. I can safely say that the database now mirrors the same information as the accounting information.

Further administrative work was done with uploading all temple documents to the cloud. There is still much more work to be done but we have made a huge dent in making sure that we digitize all information for future generations.

It gives me tremendous joy to announce the creation of the Sinai Temple Mental Health Center. This center will provide mental health skill and resources for Sinai Temple members through ongoing group counseling, one on one consultations, community and school lectures/workshops and awareness of established local and national mental health organizations. We will provide more details as we get closer to opening, which is projected for this year.

After quite a few years without a Development Director, the Board of Directors has approved the hiring of a Development Director to fill this long vacant position. We are excited to announce that we have chosen a new Development Director. A formal announcement will be forthcoming shortly.

As most of you may know by now, our beloved Executive Director Howard Lesner will be retiring in June after serving this congregation for over 24 years. No one can replace Howard, but a search committee was established to find a new Executive Director to succeed him. We are close to announcing who will fill this role soon. Howard, I can't thank you enough for your service to our synagogue and even though we have worked closely for many years, I am lucky that I had the opportunity to work with you during your last two years. Good luck in your retirement and may you look back on you years at Sinai with great fondness, accomplishment, and joy.

I also want to acknowledge Aryell Cohen who has graced us with sacred organ music for the past 50 years. Aryell—thank you for enriching our services with beautiful music for the past 50 years.

One aspect of being President that I missed most this last year is being able to meet more congregants throughout my work at the Temple. While we all got Zoom fatigue, I really enjoyed some of those zoom calls because it gave me occasion to put a name with the face. Someday soon I will be able to meet you in person.

One of the great joys I have as President is working with our awesome staff who are so dedicated to our community. I will miss you all and thank you for your service.

Our clergy put in so much time and dedicate their lives to ensuring our congregants needs are met. It has been my absolute pleasure working with them and I thank them for all the support they have given me.

Thank you to our Temple board who pondered and debated many crucial policy issues these past two years. It is my hope that we continue to have these very important discussions as we continue to face more challenging times ahead.

To our members who make up the diverse tapestry of our synagogue, I wish I could have met more of you in person. This pandemic put a halt to our in-person gatherings and my biggest regret is not interacting with more of you.

I am blessed to have had my family by my side every step of the way. To Joel, Alex and Ari: you have been a wealth of advice, encouragement, and wisdom as well as my inspiration. I am eternally grateful.

It has been a privilege to be your President these last two years. This experience has left a handprint on my heart and enriched my life in so many ways.



Annual Report: Administration

Submitted By: Leon Biederman, Vice President of Administration

The Vice President of Administration oversees all activities related to the administration of Sinai Temple, the operations of all Sinai Temple grounds and properties owned by the synagogue, the art and décor of the grounds, training and development of new and current board members, the relationship with the Temple caterer, the administration of all public relations, advertising, print material, and other communications originated by Sinai Temple, the information technology infrastructure, the non-MSMP personnel policies, and Temple security.

Committees: The Administration portfolio committees include House & Grounds, Art & Décor, Board Development, Catering, Communications, Information Technology System, Personnel Policy, and Security.

The mission of these committees are as follows:

1. **House & Grounds Committee** is responsible for (i) overseeing the use and configuration of the Temple/School building, and (ii) capital improvements and repairs of the grounds.
2. **Facilities Committee** focuses on the use and maintenance of the non-Temple/School properties owned by Sinai Temple.
3. **Art & Décor Committee** is responsible for the art displayed around the Temple building.
4. **Board Development Committee** oversees the training and development of new and current board members, as well as the tools used by the Board to manage information exchange.
5. **Catering Committee** oversees relationships between caterers, clients, and Sinai Temple.
6. **Communications Committee** administers all public relations, advertising, print material, and other communications originated by Sinai Temple.
7. **Information Technology System Committee** has oversight responsibilities concerning the role of technology in supporting the mission of Sinai Temple and its schools.
8. **Personnel Policy Committee** supervises all non-Mount Sinai Memorial Parks and Mortuaries employee relations, except Sinai Akiba teachers. In consultation with the Executive Director/COO, the Committee participates in preparing job descriptions, establishing performance criteria, conducting performance reviews and making recommendations regarding the terms and conditions of employment, as well as evaluating the employee termination process.
9. **Security Committee** oversees the physical security of non-Mount Sinai Memorial Parks and Mortuaries facilities.

Committee members include:

House & Grounds Committee

Chair: Frank Pournazarian **Members:** Jackie Ahdout, Leon Biederman, Joseph Gabbaian, Cary Lerman, Howard Lesner, David Matloob, Michael Nazarian

Facilities Committee

Chair: Leon Biederman **Members:** Michael Arnall, Leon Biederman, Tom Flesh, Joseph Gabbaian, Kam Hekmat, Allen Kamrava, Cary Lerman, Sam Parsi, Eric Swanson

Art & Décor Committee

Chair: Paul Herman **Members:** Sandy Croll, Bart Kogan, Marilyn Stern

Board Development Committee

Chair: Sheila Bolour **Members:** Jamie Berman, Leon Biederman, Linda Camras, Kerry Miller, Marci Maniker, Jimmy Taus, Jason Cosgrove

Catering Committee

Chair: TBD **Members:** Jamie Berman, Leon Biederman, Rachell Marcus, Howard Lesner, Lina Pournazarian

Communications Committee

Chair: Leslie Wachtel **Members:** Sam Parsi, Rabbi Erez Sherman, Jamie Berman, Jason Cosgrove, Ashley Waterman, Andre Leb. **Staff:** Roy Regev, Gary Fayman.

Information Technology System Committee

Chair: Eric Mamos **Members:** Leon Biederman, Daniel Delshad, Allen Kamrava, DJ Simhaee, Jessica Wacht

Personnel Policy Committee

Chair: Linda Camras and Frank Melton **Members:** Jamie Berman, Leon Biederman, Shirley Bilfield, Michael Bordy, Tom Lane, Howard Lesner, Peter Rothholz, Kurt Smalberg, Rick Richman

Security Committee

Chair: Leon Biederman **Members:** Jamie Berman, Howard Lesner, Ilan Shapiro

Top achievements for 2020/21 include:

House & Grounds Committee. The H&G Committee was not active this fiscal year due to the Temple's closure. One issue that emerged related to H&G has to do with Temple's electrical system. The electrical system in the Temple's old building is old, and as a consequence, it is unstable and subject to sudden surges. The surges and power failures affect the electronic equipment we have deployed this fiscal year to support video streaming. We are in the process of obtaining bids to upgrade our electrical system.

Facilities Committee. The Facilities Committee was deactivated once the Board decided to obtain bids for the Beverly Glenn property sale.

Art & Décor Committee. This Committee was not active this fiscal year due to the Temple's closure.

Board Development Committee. During the first half of the fiscal year Marci Maniker was the chairperson of this Committee. The BD Committee conducted the Board Orientation for new Board members, formalized Mentor relationships for new Board members with more tenured members and reactivated the "Getting to Know You" meetings among small groups of Board members, developed online New Board member orientation and systems to help committees recruit new members. Recruiting congregants to join committees is one of the key goals of the BD Committee for the coming year.

Catering Committee. This Committee was not active this fiscal year due to the Temple's closure.

Personnel Policy Committee. The Committee met only once during the fiscal year to discuss a personnel compensation issue. The Committee reached a conclusion and advised the Temple's President of its decisions.

The recent changes to the Temple Bylaws require the Executive Director to notify the chair of the Personnel Policy Committee and the Vice president for Administration of the hiring and dismissal decisions. The Executive Director provided these notifications in a timely fashion.

Communications Committee. With support from the lay committee and clergy, our talented staff provided our congregants with access to meaningful and high-quality ritual and educational programs via live-stream and pre-recorded video. These included High Holiday, Shabbat, Pesach and Hanukah services, our annual Scholar-in-Residence and dialogues with many renown experts. These virtual programs were accessed by congregants, as well as the worldwide Jewish community. At the same time, virtual B'nai Mitzvot and other lifecycle events were provided for our Sinai Temple families. We continued to distribute timely information via email to both our community-at-large and our affiliate communities, while delving deeper into use of new products and trends in social media, such as stories and campaigns. Creating the virtual environment for our congregants was made possible through the deployment of new PTZ cameras and state of the art audio equipment in the Main Sanctuary, Kohn Chapel, and Barad Hall. The cost of this equipment, its deployment, and control was paid with monies donated by generous members of our congregation.

All of these strategies will continue to be important in 2021-22, where we anticipate further development of our hybrid model for in-person and virtual modes and further use of social media allowing us to increase reach and inclusivity.

We are grateful to our generous donors who funded the new audio and video technology and production projects required to bring Sinai Temple together throughout this challenging year and into the future. Again, many thanks to our excellent staff and lay team.

Security Committee. This Committee was not active this fiscal year due to the Temple's closure.

Information Technology System Committee. The ITS committee was very active during fiscal year. The projects undertaken by this committee include: The installation of a full security alert system throughout the campus called Alertus. The Installation and deployment of this system was made possible through a generous donation of Roz and Abner Goldstine. Deployment of WiFi access points throughout the building and the parking garage. Rewire the Main Distribution Frame (MDF) which is at the heart of our network cabling system. Split the Temple and the SAA networks. Move the Temple's IT infrastructure to the cloud. Recabling the Intermediate Distribution Frame (IDF) on the first floor of the building. Deploy video and audio streaming equipment for Ziegler/Main Sanctuary, Kohn Chapel and Barad Hall - Replace our current ISP whose contract is expiring with Spectrum Business Class Service leveraging the School's e-Rate discount program. These projects were made possible due to expertise and contributions of Eric Mamos.



Annual Report: Development

Submitted By: Robert Galperson, Vice President Development

As I began my first year as Vice President of Development, it was apparent that our fund-raising goals would be very challenged given what our congregation, community, country, and the world was dealing with due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. There was major concern about our ability to be able to raise funds, let alone meet our budgeted goals in a year that was anything but “normal.” But as many times in the past, the Sinai Temple Congregation stood up and met the challenges and I am very pleased to report on a successful fund-raising year.

Annual Appeal

During the summer we kick started our Annual Appeal with a pre-solicit letter writing campaign to all past donors of \$500 or more. Given the circumstances and since High Holiday services were going to be virtual, we felt that the need to connect with our valued donors before the high holidays was essential. As a result of this endeavor, we received commitment gifts and pledges much earlier than in past years. Rabbi Wolpe’s passionate Yom Kippur sermon about closing synagogue doors received accolades and many of our members renewed, increased, or donated for the first time to the Annual Appeal. We incorporated “text-to-give” donations for the first time this year which allows the donor to make a payment by using their cell phone. This new option was well received and will be used in the future.

As of April 9, 2021, the Annual Appeal raised \$1,298,644 from a total of 634 unique donors. This signifies both an over performance of budget as well as an increase in donor participation than previous year. This year we also received a meaningful amount of donations from non-Sinai Temple Members, these donations were accompanied with letters of appreciation that we had streamed portions of our high holiday services and our weekly shabbat services to the entire Jewish community.

Donation Breakdown by Venue:

Main Sanctuary / Ziegler Hall – \$1,035,402

Barad Hall - \$35,416.00

Un-Reserved Membership - \$140,477 (includes Torah in the Round and Family Minyan)

Non-Member - \$87,319

An additional \$103,229 in general donations were received between July 1, 2020 and April 9, 2021, for total of \$1,401,873 general (un-restricted) donations.

High Holiday Streaming and Upgraded Technology Underwriting

We are very fortunate to have Roz and Abner Goldstine, The Parviz and Pouran Nazarian Foundation, The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Foundation and Ruth Pilot as beloved members of our synagogue and we thank them for underwriting the cost of producing this year's High Holiday Services and upgrading our technology. Our appreciation to Judy Fischer who covered the additional costs of upgrading our sound system needs post high holidays.

New Donor Funded Programing

In March of 2021, the Sinai Temple Board of Directors approved the establishment of the Sinai Temple Mental Health Center which is being underwitted by the Fredric D. Rosen and Nadine Schiff Family Foundation. We are very grateful to the Rosen Family for their continued dedication to our synagogue.

Director of Development

In January, the Board of Directors approved the hiring of a full time Director of Development who will be responsible for advancing our fund-raising capabilities. We are currently in the process of meeting with the final candidates and expect to have this position in place before June 1st. We established a Director of Development Search and Advisory Committee to interview and select the candidate. This committee will also serve as mentors to the Director of Development during their first year. The committee consists of Jamie Berman, Sinai Temple President, Michael Arnall, Eric Diamond, Rob Galperson, Sindy Paikal, Laura Reader, Rob Strauss and Anna Tenenblatt. I am extremely grateful to this committee for their hard work and continued commitment to our synagogue.

Annual Gala

Due to the pandemic, we had to postpone our June gala once again but as Los Angeles County begins to lessen restrictions, we look forward to announcing a new date soon.

In closing, I would like to thank Jamie Berman, our outgoing President for giving me the opportunity to lead the development efforts this year. My deepest appreciation and respect to Rabbi David Wolpe for all his efforts in making this year's Annual Appeal something to be proud of. Rabbi Wolpe was the driving source and inspiration for many of the major gifts we received this year. I would also like to thank the other members of the clergy, the entire Finance and Communications Department, Adina Miller and our Executive Director Howard Lesner for their support during the past twelve months.



Annual Report: Education

Submitted By: Richard Weston, Vice President of Education

Only a few days have passed since Passover has ended as I began to write this report. Reflecting on those eight days, I recall that each of my three daughters maintained a kosher l'Pesach home. In part that practice can be attributed to growing up in a home that followed the special laws of kashrut for Pesach. However, there is no doubt in my mind that what my daughters learned at home was indelibly reaffirmed to them by the superior Jewish education they each received at Sinai Temple.

That recent memory brings me to the issue at hand: the importance of a Jewish education. Study after study confirms that a Jewish education can be the most effective and impactful way to increase Jewish identity. And after all, what is the purpose of a synagogue if not to increase and maintain Jewish identity? We regularly read that the continuity of North American Jewry is threatened and depends greatly on our generation to ensure Jewish identity in the coming generation.

The single greatest opportunity we have to ensure the continuity of Jewish identity, lies in the hands of the professionally trained Jewish educators and administrators at Sinai Temple's schools – the Religious School, Sinai Akiba Academy, and Beit Bracha, Sinai's unique program to enable every child with special needs or learning differences to have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah and a Jewish education. Teachers are the backbone of any educational institution and at Sinai's schools only the best Jewish and general studies teachers are recruited and retained.

As you will read below, despite the unprecedented challenges presented by a devastating pandemic, our schools and teachers have more than risen to the occasion and through their dedication and creativity have initiated unique and engaging learning experiences.

Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, world renowned rabbi and scholar, defined a Jew not as someone whose grandparents are Jewish, but rather as someone who wants his or her grandchildren to be Jewish. The teachers and schools of Sinai Temple are our best bet to make that happen.



Annual Report: Beit Bracha

Submitted By: Rabbi Nicole Guzik

October 2020

The start of the religious school year was very successful for Beit Bracha. In October, our students had the advantage of backyard learning. The majority of our students sat in their yards with their aides and “attended” zoom class together. Some of our aides took it upon themselves to serve as our students’ teacher when the kids were zoomed out. The student and aide would take walks, learn, and spend religious school connecting through a Jewish lens.

One student was able to meet on Pilot Plaza with his aide, while zooming into class. We have a few students who did not want to engage in zoom classes at all, even at the start of the pandemic. Our numbers went down to 9, but we continued to reach out and support these families. We are hopeful these students will return to the classroom in Fall of 2021.

December 2020

Sinai Temple shut down due to a Covid outbreak. With the day school and synagogue closed, Beit Bracha did not find it prudent to send Beit Bracha aides to students’ homes. Our program quickly shifted. Each student learned how to work with their aide in a different way. Some arranged phone calls before their zoom classes, other aides attended zoom class with their student, and some were on Facetime together while zoom class took place. It was remarkable watching our Beit Bracha aides remain committed to our religious school and Sinai Temple students.

March 2021-present

As religious school opens and brings students back to in-person learning, Beit Bracha is pivoting. Our students are returning with their aides, happy to be with their teachers and peers. We are thrilled this program withstood the horrors of this pandemic and continues to offer Jewish education to children with learning disabilities and special needs.



Annual Report: Sinai Akiba Academy

Submitted By:

Dr. Marc Lindner, SAA Head of School and Rebecca Kekst, SAABoard Chair

SAA Committee members: Sari Arnall, Samantha Auerbach, Jamie Berman, Desiree Bleet, Sheila Bolour, Tarryn Breskal, Linda Camras, Rachel Farahnik, Linda Freidman, Mayrav Gaslin, Abigail Goldman, Liraz Hirari, Lisa Mamos, Sharon Meron, Meyer Nazarian, Hezy Shalev, Bitá Shalom, Lori Goldstein, Brad Smeidt, Andres Terech, Mark Urman, Pam Weisberg, Richard Weston and Parham Zar

Top achievements of 2020/2021 include:

Response to COVID-19

Following Sinai Akiba's swift and successful transition to online learning last spring, our K-8 program began the school year in that same mode. Faculty implemented new and improved strategies, and while certainly not equivalent to in-person learning, the online experience this year has been consistently praised by our families.

The ECC began the year with in-person learning in September, Kindergarten started in October; and 1st and 2nd grades began in November--all with permission from the LA County Department of Public Health (LACDPH). Between Thanksgiving and Winter Break was a difficult period for the School, during which time it was mostly closed due to cases of COVID-19. After Winter Break, gradually, ECC students returned to in-person learning, followed by all Lower School grades, with the 8th grade returning as of the day of this writing, and 7th grade about to return at the end of the current week.

Students are ecstatic about being back in the building, and the core educational program is being implemented by our faculty with care and ingenuity. With the improving situation around COVID-19 in LA County, we are optimistic about having a relatively normal school year next year, beginning on August 30, 2021.

Hiring of new Lower School Director

In January, Sinai Akiba Academy embarked on a successful search for a new Lower School Director. Working with a national educational search firm, in addition to tapping personal and professional contacts in the Jewish community, our goal was to attract a dynamic and highly qualified professional to lead our Lower School into the future.

The successful search led to the recent announcement that Lauren Dolinka will become Sinai Akiba Academy's next Lower School Director, effective in July. Throughout the search process, Lauren impressed representatives of all constituent groups-- faculty, administrators, parents, board members, and clergy. Those who met Lauren were particularly struck by her thoughtful answers on a broad range of educational topics, her deep knowledge of cutting edge elementary education, her commitment to the social emotional development of our students, her deep commitment to Jewish day school education, and her warm and authentic interpersonal skills.

Lauren brings a wealth of exemplary experience in the classroom, in student and family programming, and as an educator and supervisor of teachers. Educated at UC Santa Barbara (BA in English) and Bar Ilan University (MA in Education), Lauren holds a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential from DeLeT at Hebrew Union College and a Preliminary Administrative Services Credential from USC's School Leadership Academy. Lauren is currently completing her eighth year at San Diego Jewish Academy, where she has taught in both Lower School and Upper School grades, and served as Faculty Coach, Teacher Leader, and Co-Principal of the summer program. She also initiated annual grade-level Shabbat programming, facilitated Family Camp, and coordinated faculty observations focused on growth in teaching practices.

Promotion of Sarah Klinger to ECC Director

Having worked at Sinai Akiba Academy for 17 years, formerly in the role of Assistant ECC Director, currently in the role of Parenting Center Director, Sarah was the natural choice to lead our entire ECC program. She is nearing completion of a Doctoral degree in psychology, and is highly sought after by our families for her expertise in early childhood development. To provide a glimpse into her expertise, following is an excerpt from her Educational Philosophy Statement:

During the critical period of early childhood, when children are forming their foundation of lifelong inquiry, it is the educator's responsibility to respect each child as an individual, while considering their temperament, remaining curious about their mind and behavior, being mindful of their attachment relationships, and how these key factors present in the school experience.

Sarah plans to grow the current ECC program with a more cohesive and consistent curriculum, with regular parent programming, with regular parent communication, and by continuing to make herself available for expert, individual consultation. The response to Sarah's appointment has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic and positive.

Admissions

Applicant decisions for the current school year (20-21) were released March 13, 2020, the day LA County went into Shelter in Place. The acceptances landed in parent in boxes with mixed feelings of elation and great fear. How could any family commit to enrolling their child in a school when no one knew if sending kids to school would be safe? It became very clear as the days passed and the pandemic worsened, that we were not opening the school for the remainder of the year. Over the summer, we had endless conversations with parents, reminding them of our mission to support our community and partner with them. As such, the SAA Board unanimously voted to refund tuition for days of online learning, to the tune of 30%

in K-8 and 50% in the ECC. Additionally, we rolled over all paid deposits to the 21-22 school year to secure future enrollment.

The rest of enrollment management happened virtually. With the changing mandates to have fewer kids in Pods across grades, and limited space to expand to accommodate a Tuition Setting Budget enrollment of 618, we opened in September of 2020 with 504 students. This left a gap of 114 students. The majority of the attrition was forced by ECC licensing's mandate to have only 10 kids per pod instead of the 16-20 we normally have, by very limited space to spread out in our building, and by timid parents who were unsure if it was safe to send their kids to school.

Here is where we landed:

- We opened the ECC in September, maxed out with full classrooms, but it only filled 62% of pre-Covid capacity of 144 students. K-8 enrollment was 360.
- 89 students, Toddler-8th grade, withdrew by August 2.
 - Of the 89, 64 rolled over to 21-22.
 - Of the 15 who fully withdrew, 10 have re-applied and enrolled to return for 2021-22.
- In mid-August, 16 more kindergarten enrollees wanted to withdraw with news that Isaiah committed to opening a K class, and also with other parents forming their own pods for at home learning. In response, we formed Pre-K 2.0 (essentially a Pre-K class for K age children), and retained 7 of those students; the rest rolled over to 21-22.
- Enrollment for the 21-22 school year is looking promising.

Development/Fundraising

While this has been an unprecedented year, the Sinai community has been extremely supportive of the School and Sinai Akiba's fundraising has remained exceptionally strong.

As of mid-April, we have raised nearly \$1 million in our combined fundraising to support our annual operating budget. These efforts include the Sinai Akiba Fund, the Annual Event, Major Gifts, and a variety of Tuition Assistance grants. Additionally, we received two extraordinary donations from Anna and Bill Tenenblatt and Mount Sinai Memorial Park which added an additional \$4.5 million to Sinai Akiba's Endowment Fund.

Our fundraising efforts began with the launch of the Sinai Akiba Fund in October, with a new *60 Days to Raise* campaign. While we continue to fundraise for this effort throughout the year, the majority of the gifts were secured by Giving Tuesday, a national day of giving in December, and as of this writing we have raised \$381,820, which is a 9% increase over where we were last year at this time.

Our Annual Event in January moved online this year and approximately 550 members of the Sinai Akiba community came together on Zoom. It was a memorable evening that celebrated our exemplary faculty for their tremendous efforts during this challenging year, and Rabbi Andy Feig received a special award for his 13 years of dedicated service as our School's Rabbi.

Other elements of the evening included heartfelt tributes to our honorees and lots of laughs with comedian MODI who joined us live from New York. Following the main program, guests had the opportunity to engage in different entertainment experiences including a cooking class with Nancy Silverton of Mozza, Puzzles & Games with David Kwong and a mixology class. Although we could not gather in person, the Annual Event was still a wonderful evening that raised close to \$200,000 in support of the School.

Sinai Akiba's endowment experienced significant growth this year, thanks to the gifts mentioned earlier in this report, and the substantial market gains in our invested portfolio that is managed by the Sinai Investment Committee. The endowment has holdings of over \$28 million and is one of the largest endowments among Jewish day schools nationwide. We are enormously proud of the endowment and it is a tremendous source of strength for our School. And we are grateful to the visionary leaders who helped to build and contribute to the endowment over many years.



Annual Report: Sinai Temple Religious School Submitted **By: Danielle Kassin, Religious School Principal**

Committee Members: Religious School Committee Chair-Talia Pouratian
Parent Chair-Carolyn Arshadnia
Task Force-Amanda Kogan, Ashley Waterman, Carolyn Arshadnia, Negeen Ben-Cohen, Rebecca Houriani, Talia Pouratian, Susanna Grant, Rabbi Rotenberg, Tessa Lydic
Chesed Cards, Staff Breakfast Coordination-Ella Omidi
Staff Appreciation Gift Cards-Dora Khoubian

Points to Kvell About:

1. The entire school converted to virtual learning!
2. Teachers were trained and worked with families and students to create individualized programs.
3. Outreach was utilized in ways we never have before and on an unprecedented scale, calling, emailing, visiting families, and using social media to engage our families.
4. Individualized tutoring programs were created, approximately 1,600 sessions since January, providing individual attention for students, with a focus on reading Hebrew.
5. A new K-7 curriculum was developed to accommodate a virtual learning environment.
6. Training was provided for teachers unfamiliar with Zoom and other programs used to facilitate virtual learning, such as JiTap, Padlet, Kahoot! and others.

What a year!

STARS Highlights Through and Beyond the Pandemic

Summer programming – for the first time we ran programming all summer to keep connected to our families including:

- A series of videos we called “STAY” –to inspire families to register in Sinai Temple Religious School, to maintain a connection and to remain hopeful about the upcoming year.
- Different slideshows and videos, such as:
 - Father’s Day video to highlight our dads in religious school
 - Mensch of the month slideshows to show off our awesome students
 - a Talent Show video
 - grade-specific videos for STARS Shabbat and other events
 - An Edith Singer z”l Kindness Award slideshow in honor of a Holocaust survivor

- Car parades throughout the Summer with teachers and administrators visiting our students in person.
- Virtual services each Sunday throughout the summer
- Mensch Awards, Rosh Chodesh packets and materials for programs delivered to each student's home with notes to let them know we miss them.
- Summer tutoring organized by Sinai's Cantors.
- A Torah selfie drive-by where students took pictures with the Torah in Sinai's "backyard".
- Virtual programs for parents, including meditation and yoga.

Mitzvah Opportunities for our Students

- A letter-writing campaign to Better Together Seniors
- Flowers sent to Holocaust Survivors
- Visits to Holocaust survivors
- A social action opportunity called Hearts for Healers (which an alumni student created for frontline workers)

Virtual Programming (yes! Lots of great things going on!)

- "Eye Spy" during Tefillot, where students identify places at Sinai through small pictures
- Our Shinshinit Hilli created an Israeli workbook that we shared with students.
- Yom Yerushalayim program
- Lag B'Omer program
- Shavuot party
- Ariel Keren joined via Zoom
- 3rd Grade Friday night family Siddur Program
- Monthly STARS Shabbat via Zoom every Saturday
- Friday night services via Zoom
- Regular All-Family Havdallahs
- 6th Grade Seder Bootcamp
- Opportunities for students to do Hevruta
- Teachers emailed homework to students, wrote cards to students and called families to remain connected

2020-2021 School Year

New Programs

- Fall Friends / Buddy System - four days a week
 - A mentoring program to pair students in 5th – 7th grade with students in 1st – 4th grade
 - Students will work together in Zoom playing Jewish games, learning Hebrew, and connecting to one another.
- Bikur Cholim Committee
 - Calling sick and elderly members of our synagogue, sending cards and making challah for them

Staying Connected

- STARS Swag Bags containing “Fandanas”, STARS pens, STARS hand sanitizers, student books and tzedakah boxes prepared for pick-up by parents.
- Persona emails created for our 5th - 7th grade students to communicate with them more easily.
- Goody bags for Hanukkah were hand delivered to current families and families who did not re-enroll, to let them know we had not forgotten them.

Live, Socially Distanced Programs

- Tashlich at the Beach
- 5th Grade live Shabbat family event
- Interactive Sukkot program
- Simchat Torah Tour – we laid out the whole Torah for families to see!
- 6th Grade Tefillin Workshop – 6th Grade laid tefillin outdoors – was extraordinary!
- 6th Grade Preparatory Program for the Virtual Seder Bootcamp.
- Honk’n’Hanukkah event where families stayed in their cars and honked along to a script while Rabbi Rotenberg sang Hanukkah songs

Communications

- Grateful Corner where students and parents shared what they are grateful for.
- Trivia Tuesdays on Instagram
- Sunday Spotlight (one student in the school spotlighted on Instagram).

Grade-Specific Programming

- 1st Grade
 - Students created their own mini-shuls to be shared with their class and parents
- 2nd Grade
 - A teacher hosted cooking program with baking ingredients delivered to student homes, to make Aleph Bet cookies.
- 3rd grade
 - Tthe Jerusalem Café – where students must be waiters and speak only in Hebrew!
- 4th grade
 - Students created virtual City of Israel projects.
- 6th Grade
 - One of our sixth-grade classes participated in a Better Together program, linking students with seniors in the community to build intergenerational connections, thanks to an amazing grant we wrote and were awarded.

Virtual Services

- Themed monthly Shabbat Services
 - One grade was highlighted each week
 - Slideshows were created to show our students in the specific grades
 - Each Shabbat service was assigned a Hebrew letter, a number, a color, and a themed snack.

- Special guests were invited, some attending from around the world. On one Shabbat, we had people who came from seven different states and another had lots of guests join us from Israel!

Teacher Enrichment

- Theater Dybbuk
 - “Filling Your Toolbox” which gave teachers useful strategies for virtual and in-person teaching
- JiTap
 - Selected teachers participated in a workshop given by JiTap focused on creating virtual content for students through the lens of Kehillah.

Challenges of 2020/2021 included:

Planning for a year of unknowns – whether we will be live, how many students will enroll, what type of schedule will work best for students and teachers, how to keep students engaged in learning, how to continue to build community.

We had to recreate our curriculum to accommodate the virtual component, adapting programs and projects, as well as creating new opportunities for learning.

Another challenge we faced was attendance and engagement. Our teachers and staff had to think creatively to effectively maximize our new online learning platform.

Metrics:

Student enrollment has decreased this year due to the pandemic. We had a total of 431 students enrolled last year and this year we have 281.

Enrollment

We spoke with every family, calling, emailing, and visiting their homes. Most of those who did not enroll did not want their children on zoom for even one more hour per week, in addition to the regular school. We are hoping many will re-enroll this year as we return to in-person learning.

Goals

1. Continue finding ways to be in touch with individual families on a regular basis.
2. Continue providing tutoring for students to enhance their Hebrew skills.
3. Continue reflecting on our curriculum, creating ways to be relevant to our community and our students.
4. Giving support to our teachers to continue showing our gratitude and appreciation.
5. Keeping our families connected with Sinai Temple in our new post-pandemic world and bringing them back into the Temple in the safest way possible
6. We are looking forward to bringing a Shinshinit back to enhance our Israel education.
7. We are preparing to transition back into full-time live programming and to use all that we've learned to create a improved live program for our students.
8. Creating an amalgam of what we used to do with what we do now, to create a strong, in-person, high tech Hebrew and Judaic Religious Studies program.
9. Rebuilding our community to be even stronger than before.



SINAI TEMPLE

Annual Report: Finance

Submitted By: Michael Arnall, Vice President of Finance

The Vice President for Finance of Sinai Temple oversees all of Sinai Temple's financial matters.

Portfolio/Committees: The Finance portfolio includes oversight of the Audit, Budget, Insurance, and Investment Committees.

The mission of these committees are as follows:

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee, chaired by Kam Hekmat, oversees the formal examination and analytical review of the financial accounts of the Synagogue, and its affiliates, by an external independent certified public accounting firm.

Budget Committee

The Budget Committee chaired by Dr. Allen Kamrava, oversees all non-cemetery financial operations. The Committee and lay leadership have worked tirelessly to create more accountability and fiscal responsibility within those departments.

Insurance Committee

The Insurance Committee, chaired by Robert Moktarzadeh, oversees all insurance coverage matters for the Synagogue.

Investment Committee

The Investment Committee, chaired by Howard Brandes, oversees all non-cemetery investments. These oversight responsibilities include the selection of professional advisors, the determination of appropriate types of investments, and the allocation of assets between appropriate investment types.

Committee Members include:

Audit Committee

Chair: Kam Hekmat,

Members: Keyvan Abselet, David Amsterdam, Leon Biederman, Eric Diamond, Tom Flesh, Joseph Gabbaian, Abner Goldstine, Allen Kamrava, Rebecca Kekst, Angela Maddahi, Frank Navi, Shervin Rashti, Kurt Smalberg. Jamie Berman, President. Clergy/Employee: Howard Kaplan, Howard Lesner, Kay Maurren, and Mike Bridge.

Budget Committee

Chair: Allen Kamrava

Members: Judy Fisher, Tom Flesh, Joseph Gabbaian, Rob Galperson, Kam Hekmat, Rebecca Kekst, M Milo Mandel, Sharona Nazarian, Frank Pournazarian, Jina Rezvanpour, Mehrzad Roshan, Michael Silberstein, Anna Tenenblatt and Richard Weston. Jamie Berman, President. Clergy/Staff: Howard Lesner and Kay Maurren.

Insurance Committee

Chair: Robert Moktarzadeh

Members: Jeff Berkett, Eric Diamond, Kam Hekmat, Cary Lerman, Frank Pournazarian and Kurt Smalberg. Jamie Berman, President. Clergy/Staff: Howard Kaplan, Howard Lesner, Kay Maurren and Jessica Wacht.

Investment Committee

Chair: Howard Brandes

Members: Leon Biederman, Rebeka Kekst, Roxanna Maddahi, M Milo Mandel, Amos Meron, Jamie Resin, Hezy Shalev, Anna Tenenblatt. Jamie Berman, President. Clergy/Staff: Howard Lesner and Jessica Wacht

Top Achievements of the 2020-2021 include:

More Fiscal Responsibility. As reported in our 2019-2020 Annual Report, one of our goals was to provide better reporting of school revenues: specifically, for tuition, donations, and endowment deposits. The Finance Department, in coordination with Sinai Akiba Academy, has executed on that vision and has made data more transparent and coordination more efficient. We have also started the process of making changes to payroll transmission and reporting.

First Draw, Paycheck Protection Plan Loan (“PPPL”). Sinai Temple applied for and received funds, in April 2020. The PPPL is “designed to provide a direct incentive for small businesses to keep their workers on payroll”. All funds were used for payroll expenses and utilities, as required. We are currently in the process of applying for loan forgiveness, as provided for by the CARES Act. It was determined that Sinai Temple was not eligible for a second draw.

Challenges of 2020-2021 include:

The pandemic brought on significant challenges for the finance department. Facing state-mandated restrictions, building closures, and declining membership, the Budget Committee took on the arduous task of identifying and making significant budget cuts without affecting Sinai Temple's core programming. We continue to monitor the economic environs; and, with guidance from our Budget Chair, Allen Kamrava, we remain steadfast in our commitment to providing value to our members and the entire community.

Metrics:

Information from the most recent Audited Financials is available upon request.

Goals:

- Better ProForma Budget Compilation
- More accountability as it relates to programming and the corresponding budget implications
- More collaboration among team members
- Creation and adherence to policies and procedures



Annual Report: Programming and Social Action Submitted

By: Anna Tenenblatt, Vice President of Programs and Social Action

The Vice President of Programs and Social Action oversees Social Action and Programming at Sinai Temple, this includes Temple programming, Scholar in Residence, Atid and Youth Dept.

Committees: The Programming and Social Action portfolio committees include Social Action, Music, and Program.

Committees involved:

Social Action Committee, Sindy Paikal, Chair

Members: Niki Cohanim, Michelle Taus, Marilyn Stern, Ariela Weston, Laura Reader, Deborah Brandes, Nikki Sieger, Rabbi Andy Feig and Rabbi Sam Rotenberg.

This committee is responsible for coordinating and implementing temple-wide social action events.

In past years, we have concentrated on Packing with Purpose events for the various constituencies in the Temple and benefitting several worthwhile organizations. Unfortunately, this year events have been seriously impacted by COVID.

We were able to run a blood drive in October and participate on an ongoing basis with the Church of the Good Shepard in Beverly Hills. Families were encouraged to drop off travel sized toiletries for the Church's weekly lunch drives for the homeless.

On March 14, School families made 100 lunches and drove them to KEEN headquarters for distribution to families in need.

We hope that next year we can rebuild the participation and number of events.

Music Committee, Jane Z. Cohen , Chair

Members: Richard Greenberg, Linda Camras, Caroline Delijani, Judy Fischer, Tom Flesh, Harry Green, Ros Berman Ruder, Cantor Marcus Feldman, Aryell Cohen

This committee is responsible for working with the Cantor regarding the music program and ideas for enhancing the program. This year has been challenging because of COVID and not having live events.

Program Committee

Programming has been done by the programming team, Israel Center and Membership. Rebeka Small, Rabbis Guzik and Sherman have been organizing and running the programs with volunteers. During this challenging COVID year, we have had to come up with ideas to keep our members engaged and entertained. We have had authors and academics as well as wine tasting, comedy night and a fun game called "who knows one." A programming Advisory Committee was formed. Members include: Brian Ghodsian, Sam Yebri, Linda Camras, Sara Aftergood, Shervin Rashti, Sharon Gitman, Marci Maniker, Ashley Waterman as well as Rebeka Small, Rabbi Sherman and myself. Thanks to the group for great advice and feedback.

A highlight of the year was the Scholar in Residence program featuring noted legal scholar Dahlia Lithwick. Our thanks to Abner and Roz Goldstine for their continued support.

Atid

Briana Monkarsh Benaron is the new Atid Director, and she has worked hard to engage our Atid age members in programs and events throughout the pandemic with classes, cooking, yoga and other opportunities.

Youth

With no school or Religious School, we have not been able to have events. Rabbi Rotenberg has tried to maintain some engagement at various times of the year.

Many thanks to the staff and clergy for all their support and hard work. I would like to particularly acknowledge Rabbi Sam Rotenberg who will be leaving our community for a pulpit in Chatanooga, Tennessee. We wish you all the best!



Annual Report: Membership

Submitted by: Marci Maniker, Vice President of Membership

The mission of the Membership Committee is to oversee Sinai Temple activities to recruit and retain members. Our approach to achieving that has been through:

- Outreach to the non-member viewers,
- Analyzing the non-renewals,
- Reviewing the High Holiday Survey for what would make a better experience for current members and
- Creating content/programming to deepen all member engagement.

Under normal circumstances, the committee also oversees the Ushering and Bimah committees. In this year of Covid, ushering and bimah-sitting did not occur.

We thank Rebeka Small for her great service to Membership at Sinai and are pleased to welcome Jordan Freedman to the role of Director of Membership. We also thank Rabbi Erez Sherman for his liaison and guidance roles.

Congregant Committee members include:

1. Andre Leb
2. Anna Fogleman
3. Faith Gershbock
4. Farideh Rafii, Chair subcommittee on Member Survey
5. Frank Navi
6. Gail Rollman
7. George Eshaghian
8. Glenn Gaslin, Chair subcommittee on non-renewals
9. Golda Mendelsohn
10. Randi and Jerome
11. Jamie Berman
12. Jason Cosgrove, Chair subcommittee on captured emails
13. Kerry Maller
14. Laura Reader
15. Lauren Miller
16. Linda Camras
17. Mehrzad Roshan
18. Michael Nazarian
19. Carole and Richard Greenberg
20. Rosa Berman Ruder

21. Sam Parsi
22. Sherry Weinman
23. Talia Pouratian , co-Chair Membership, chair subcommittee on Retention and Technology
24. Tom Flesh

Through our monthly meetings here are a few things we've achieved:

HIGH HOLIDAY SURVEY, headed by Farideh Rafi

We conducted our High Holiday Survey in October 2020 with 415 responses.

- The survey confirmed that of the survey respondents, 61% of members were completely satisfied with our online High Holiday and Shabbat services.
- Fifteen members had specific concerns, and the clergy contacted them directly.
- We identified areas of interest for planning future events.
- We shared the survey feedback with each member of the Executive Committee and each department head.

RETENTION SUB-COMMITTEE, headed by Talia Pouratian

We brainstormed ideas for programs that we could do to retain members. The committee came up with ideas that ranged from "Adopt a Bubby" to wine tastings and virtual origami classes. Rebeka Small was present at the sessions and was able to implement some of the programs a wine tasting and a Jewish Geography Trivia Game. We ran a blood drive that helped 35 recipients and a few committee members are also working on a virtual marathon. Another idea has been to create a networking group where older members mentor younger members. And Atid is reaching out to other local Synagogues to create an L.A. Conservative Jewish dating data base.

OUTREACH SUB-COMMITTEE, headed by Rosa Berman Ruder

The Member-to-Member Call Initiative

In order to keep a connection with all our members during pandemic times when we couldn't meet in person, we embarked on an ambitious project to personally call all our members. We sought volunteers to make calls not only from our Temple board and the members of the Membership Committee, but also from members of the congregation.

Volunteers were assigned ten names each and were asked to give feedback. Thanks to Rebeka Small, Judy Begin and Jordan Freedman, Membership Director, for their tremendous help with this project. The feedback has been amazing, and the project has been very rewarding for both the volunteers making the calls, and the members receiving the calls. Some volunteers asked for more names to call. We also paired the calls with offers to help getting appointments for the Covid vaccination, which was spearheaded by Deborah Weinstein on behalf of Sisterhood. Members liked to receive calls on behalf of the Temple, not asking for money, but to find out how they are. Some shared stories about themselves, what they liked about the Temple and services, and what was on their mind. We routed questions and concerns to appropriate staff and clergy. Member-to-Member calls are a great way to reach our members and we have encouraged repeat calling several times a year. We thank our many volunteers for their dedication.

EMAIL LIST SUBCOMMITTEE, headed by Jason Cosgrove

- Scrubbed and validated the data in 4,000+ email address list collected over High Holy Day services.
- Conducted second round of outreach to email list, soliciting 2.5% in incremental donations beyond \$80K collected from non-members over Holidays and inviting them to join Scholar In Residence programming.
- Identified & Made personalized outreach to 11 warm leads in the Los Angeles area identified from that second outreach.
- In midst of formulating the structure for a customer/member acquisition funnel for all new email addresses collected from online/virtual programming.

RECRUITMENT

Rabbi Sherman is teaching Introduction to Judaism to Jews by Choice to 40 students on a weekly basis via Zoom. As part of his program, he encourages attendance at services and programs with the hopes of ultimately recruiting new members.

We have also created space for more pre-school students, a successful path for bringing young families into the Temple.

METRICS, submitted by Membership Director, Jordan Freedman

We currently have **1375 total paying membership** units for 2020/2021.

380 total resignations (of paying memberships) in 20/21.

- We acquired 69 new memberships in 20/21.
- Plus we have 26 Virtual Friend paying memberships.

Call Initiative:

Over 80 volunteers making calls. Over 800 members called

Clergy Gift Distribution: High Holiday packages and Passover Bedikat Chametz kits
Special thanks to our staff and clergy for their tireless efforts to reach out to members in a meaningful way. Clergy has made a couple of rounds of calls to every member in our community. Thanks also to Rabbi Sherman for providing guidance to the Membership Committee.

In Summary:

In this unusual year where we have not met in person for over a year, the sense of community is more important than ever. We plan in the coming year to reach out to the family units who took a break from Temple membership to remind them that we are still here and welcome them back with strong hands and open arms.

For all members, we will continue to focus on connections between members in as many ways as possible: by age demographics, by work industry through clergy lunches at workplaces and by using technology to keep congregants in touch with each other.



Annual Report: Ritual

Submitted by Mehrzad Roshan, Rosa Berman Ruder and Faith Gershbock
Vice President and co-chairs of Ritual

The VP of Ritual oversees all of Sinai Temple's ritual matters.

Committees: The Ritual portfolio committees include B'nai Mitzvah, Bikkur Cholim, Ritual, Shiva and Tahara

The coronavirus pandemic caused the synagogue to close its doors for in-person services, as well as meetings, programs and classes, on March 15, 2020. The clergy, staff and lay leaders adapted quickly with the help of technology to provide services in innovative ways to maintain a connection with our members. Sinai re-opened its doors on April 10, 2021 for Shabbat services under the guidance of local health authorities and its own physician advisors. The services will continue to be streamed so that people who can't attend can still be inspired by our clergy. We are grateful to our dedicated clergy and lay leaders and hardworking staff during these difficult times.

High Holy Days

High Holy Day services were streamed from the Main Sanctuary via new audio and video equipment recently installed. Generous donors covered the cost of production and most of the equipment which will remain permanently installed for future streaming. Many thanks to Leon Biderman and his ad hoc committee for their guidance selecting and overseeing the installation of the equipment. Rabbi Wolpe described the HHD as an experience unlike any other, a mixture of production and live services that took coordination, rehearsals and technical skills. Thousands of people across the world viewed the services and received the benefit of Sinai Temple's inspirational clergy.

Torah in the Round and Family Minyan services were streamed, ATID and children's services were pre-recorded. There were no Barad Hall services this year.

Daily Minyan

At the start of the pandemic, our daily minyan was transformed to on-line only service. On-line attendance has been fairly stable during this year, including local and more remote participants, members and non-members. Starting around November, we were able to resume inviting members to lead services online, which was well received by those who lead as well as those who participated. About two weeks before Passover, we reopened for in-person services, as we

did on several earlier occasions. At present, as in earlier attempts, we have not succeeded in garnering more than a handful of attendees in person, unless someone invites guests to observe a Yahrzeit, Shiva or B'nai Mitzvah. The return to in-person services has impeded our members from leading the service.

Shabbat Services and B'nai Mitzvah Ceremonies

Shabbat services never ceased during the pandemic. From regular Shabbat services, Dor Chadash Shabbat programs, STARS, Friday night live sponsored by Ted and Hedy Orden family and Shabbat live sponsored by the Feit family, we never missed a beat. However, we broadened congregational participation by offering honors through zoom and hearing the Torah read all over the city. B'nai Mitzvah families created mini sanctuaries in their backyards and during the surge, clergy replicated the chapel within their living rooms. As we returned to the Sanctuary on April 10, we take to heart that Shabbat held Sinai Temple together through one of the most trying times in human history.

We are thankful to Roy Regev, Gary Fayman and Jorge Garcia for their technical support.

Bikur Cholim

The Bikur Cholim committee is an integral part of our caring community. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have not been able to visit those who are ill and homebound, but we have been in touch with them via phone calls, emails and cards. This committee is chaired by Angela Maddahi.

B'nai Mitzvah Committee

This B'nai Mitzvah committee reviews B'nai Mitzvah eligibility for students with special circumstances. This committee is chaired by Ellie Pourbaba.

- In 2020 we had approximately 72 B'nai Mitzvah services
- In 2021 we gave 132 dates in which 45 of those dates were cancelled due to members resignations or moving out of state.
- In 2022 we have approximately 83 B'nai mitzvah dates on the calendar.

The Ritual Committee

This year, among other things, the Ritual committee has focused on enhancing knowledge of Jewish Rituals and has sponsored two programs focused on learning.

The first program was an informative and meaningful dialogue between Rabbi Judith Hauptman of the Committee of Jewish Law and Standards and Rabbi David Wolpe. The program focused on the process to formulate new laws dealing with the use of technology on Shabbat and Holidays.

Use of technology allowed us to reach members of our community when in-person gatherings, services and classes were not possible.

The second program was with Rabbi Chaim Seidler-Feller focused on *What will your Haggadah look like this year?* Rabbi Seidler-Feller was the Executive Director of Jewish Life at UCLA and for

40 years he was the Director of UCLA Hillel. The evening consisted of two parts. First, was a discussion and learning with sources about the Seder and what is important to include. The second part was a virtual tour of the Rabbi's personal collection of Haggadot and Passover artifacts.

One of the subcommittees of the Ritual Committee engaged in the process of updating the Web Parashah APP. This app is designed for the members of Sinai to sign-up to read Torah and Haftorah for Shabbat and Holidays. Working with Cantor Feldman and Rebeka Small, Faith Gershbock and Jacob Gershbock reviewed the list which included names accumulated over the past ten years and eliminated names of people who are no longer members of Sinai. The Cantor is now able to send messages to account holders with information of available dates to read.

Ark and Sukkah Project

In order to provide connection to our members during the pandemic closure, the temple opened its doors on two occasions, Rosh Hashanah and Sukkot.

We invited members to come to Kohn Chapel from September 13-17, 2020 to say private prayers before the Ark right before Rosh Hashanah. Volunteers welcomed members during their visits and those who were able to attend expressed a feeling of great emotion to be able to be inside the synagogue after six months of absence and say prayers.

Based on the successful Ark project, the Temple opened the Wilshire sukkah for members to say blessings over the Lulav and Etrog during the week of Sukkot. The clergy were present to welcome members and helped them with saying the prayers.

Shiva Committee and Tahara Committee

Due to the Corona Virus pandemic these two committees were not active.

I like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the hard working co-chairs of the committee, Rosa Berman Ruder and Faith Gershbock and all the other chairs and members of the subcommittees. Special thanks to Rabbi Guzik, Rabbi Rosenthal, Angela Maddahi and Ellie Pourbaba for their reports and to Jason Cosgrove for his contribution.

Members of the Ritual Committee

Elie Alyeshmerni, Leon Biderman, Sheila Bolour, Jason Cosgrove, Daniel Delshad, George Eshaghian, Mansoor Eslamboly, Alice Gold, Abner Goldstine, Roz Goldstine, Carol Greenberg, Richard Greenberg, Mark Haloossim, Paul Herman, Jerry Janoff, Abe Knobel, Linda Knobel, Lisa Lainer, Angela Maddahi, Rachelle Marcus, David Matloob, Golda Mendelsohn, Kerry Maller, Frank Navi, Michael Nazarian, Sharona Nazarian, Sam Parsi, Lisa Pompan, Ellie Pourbaba, Jina Rezvanpour, Peter Rothholz, Rica Sabah, Lili Shafai, Michael Silberstein, Fran Stengel, Ebby Tabariai, Joel Weinstein, and Jamie Berman. Staff/Clergy: Judy Begin, Aryell Cohen, Rabbi Andy Feig, Cantor Marcus Feldman, Rabbi Nicole Guzik, Danielle Kassin, Howard Lesner, Rabbi Adam Rosenthal, Rabbi Sam Rotenberg, Rabbi Erez Sherman and Rabbi David Wolpe.



Annual Report: General Counsel/Corporate Secretary **Submitted By: Ira M. Friedman, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary**

The role of General Counsel provides counseling and advice for the corporation, both Sinai Temple and Sinai Akiba Academy, and work with all outside lawyers representing the corporation or providing services to the corporation. The role of corporate secretary is to certify when actions are required of the Board of Directors.

Committees: Bylaws, Contracts, Legal

Committee members include:

Bylaws Committee

Chair: Cary Lerman, **Members:** Jonathan Anshell, Shervin Behnam, Tom Flesh, Abner Goldstine, Kam Hekmat, David Kekst, M Milo Mandel, David Matloob, Jina Rezvanpour, Rob Strauss, Jimmy Taus, Pam Weisberg and Joel Weinstein.

Contracts Committee

Chair: Ira M. Friedman, **Members:** David Ascher, Shervin Behnam, Michael Bordy, Linda Camras, Tom Flesh, Abner Goldstine, David Kekst, Cary Lerman, David Matloob, Sam Parsi, Julie Platt, Jina Rezvanpour, Saul Rostamian and Kurt Smalberg. Jamie Berman, President.

Legal Committee

Chair: Jimmy Taus, **Members:** Shervin Behnam, M Milo Mandel, Jimmy Taus, Joel Weinstein, Michael Akiva, Cary Lerman.

Top achievements of 2020- 2021 include:

Our top achievements included continuing to work with outside labor attorney to have uniform contracts for those under contract consistent with ever changing legal landscape in labor area work with various departments in reviewing and/or revising contract with third parties or vendors.

In addition, the various members of the legal committee have provided an ad hoc basis counseling to the General Counsel on a number of legal issues as they occur.

The General Counsel reviews all contracts between Sinai and/or SAA and third parties to insure that our interests are protected.



Annual Report: Millennial Department

Submitted By: Rabbi Sam Rotenberg

Top 3 achievements:

Teen Center:

- 1) Successfully subsumed teen center into my portfolio after laying off Teen Center Director in July 2020.
- 2) Programs have been consistent, teen led, and well attended.
- 3) Real leadership skills have been developed in teens on the leadership council, and especially on the teen executive council.

Atid:

- 1) Successful onboarding of new Atid director.
- 2) Consistent and engaging programming despite being virtual due to covid.
- 3) With my leaving, successfully imparted information for Atid director to be able to navigate in person programming once it resumes.

Challenges:

The challenges in the Millennial dept were as follows:

- 1) Losing our teen center director, and not having the budget to rehire.
- 2) Not being able to continue in person programming due to Covid.
- 3) Having to onboard an Atid director during Covid.

It was difficult to overcome this. As far as the teen center, I just took on the teen center director's responsibilities of running the meetings for the teen leadership council, planning Chai School, and organizing events. This works really well this year but was a short term solution. Once I leave, there is nobody set to take ownership of the teen center.

As far as Atid, I credit Brianna's competence as to the success of her onboarding. She was not afraid to ask questions, reach out, try all kinds of virtual programs to ensure she adequately enmeshed herself in the community.

Metrics for success:

We had 30 kids on the Teen leadership council despite being virtual. 12 teens on the executive council. We had about 30 programs including a full Chai School offering. All of this despite a \$1000 program budget and no teen center director.

Goals for the next year:

For the Teen Center, my goal is to leave the Teen Center knowing who is going to take over. Without knowing who is next in line to take on the Teen Center, it's hard knowing how to ensure its success. I have set up the teens with a new president and exec board, but they will need an adult to supervise and ensure success.

For Atid, we need to get back to in person Friday Night Lives and in person programming. Not sure how it will look, but online programming has hit a plateau, and our constituency needs to get together in person to grow the program.



Teen Center: Writing Hanukkah Letters to ALL Sinai members 80 and older, Dec. 2020



Teen Center: After helping to pack bags for the high Holidays, Sep. 2020



SINAI TEMPLE

Annual Report: Sisterhood

Submitted By: Lina Pournazarian and Marcy Melton, Co-Presidents

The Co-Presidents of Sinai Temple Sisterhood's guide the Sisterhood to meet their mission with active participation by the Officers and Board of Directors Committees: Sisterhood. The **mission** of these committees are as follows: 1. The Sisterhood Committee empowers a diverse group of women of varying ages to observe and promote Jewish values and traditions, enjoying warmth and friendship in the process. While enriching our lives through our many activities, we support Sinai Temple, Conservative Judaism and the greater community through our social action programs and fundraising efforts. We value the energy, ideas, and participation that our members bring.

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the programming for Sisterhood was very challenging. Our 2020 Young Professional March of the Living Mission was canceled. We are planning to reinstate the March of the Living program for 2022. Since we were not able to conduct in-person programming, all Sisterhood programming was done on Zoom. We held cooking classes, book club discussions, movie and television show discussions, and our annual Shabbaton. We also held a scheduled social hour every month, where the ladies came together just to talk. As Social Action projects, Sisterhood partnered with the Church of Good Shepherd to deliver food for the needy, and we organized a program to assist with vaccination scheduling for Sinai Temple members.

We are looking forward to going back to in-person programming for the upcoming fiscal year. We would like to broaden our program content to engage women with varied interests. Our goal is to add more evening programs to include women who work fulltime, and we continue lunchtime programs for women who are available during the day. Metrics: Sisterhood Catering provides delicious and beautiful food for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, wedding and new baby celebrations while serving as our largest fundraiser. Our Judaica Shop provides beautiful candlesticks, Kiddush cups, tallitot and more. The main beneficiaries of all funds raised are our schools, Temple and Temple families. We will continue to offer new and innovative educational, spiritual, social action and social programming to meet our mission.



Annual Report: Men's Club

Submitted By: Michael Silberstein, President



I think we can be excited to say that we all see the light at the end of the tunnel with the Pandemic. Shehechianu! We are healthy, alive, and enjoying all of GD's creations in this beautiful world. We have food on the table, clothing on our backs and able to give tzedaka. Life is beautiful no matter how hard this pandemic is.

The Men's Club wants to thank Farshad Raffi for being our President and Leader. He stepped into the leadership role when I fell ill and I am grateful for his flawless execution. Kol Kavod to Farshad!

As of November 2020, I gained back my health and took over in the big shoes that Farshad had filled. But make no mistake, I am so grateful to be partnered with an Executive VP, Jeff Kichaven. Jeff is an amazing mind, thinker and compassionate Sinai Temple Member. It is a privilege and honor to work along with Jeff to reimagine the Men's Club and take it to its next level.

We are spending time listening to the Dads at Sinai Temple, the fathers who have children in Sinai Akiba and in our Religious School, to put together programming and events that appeal to Men, Dads of all ages and Grandparents who want to grow their Jewish souls and knowledge of world events while having deep, lifelong friendships.

The direction of the Men's Club with our content, programming and events, includes the following:

Focus on Current Issues/Current Events/Health issues.

We have had the following wonderfully attended discussions:

- a) Men's Sexual Health with Dr. Justin Houman, Urologist @ Tower Medical at Cedars Sinai
- b) How Israel will Fare In The Biden Administration with Benjamin Anthony, Miryam Institute
- c) How Medicine is Molecules and Medicine with Dr. Phil Zakowski and Medical Scientist Aaron Nazarian
- d) How To Navigate the #Me Too Era with Wisdom and Jewish Values with Ivy Kagan Bierman and Rabbi Nicole Guzik
- e) Hearing Men's (and Women's)Voices: My Journey to Faith with Gary Katz

We have events coming up that will discuss "Cancel Culture" with Professor Alan Dershowitz, Dan Adler and Frank Melton, and The Harvard Admissions Case with Berkeley Law Dean Erwin Chermerinsky, UCLA Law Professor Richard Sander, and Ariel Neuman.

We just had our Men's Club Shabbat where over 20 Men's Club members added our fingerprints and souls to this special Shabbat service. If you haven't watched it live, please watch it on YouTube (Insert Link Here). You will not be disappointed!

Also, a little teaser, our goal, once we get past the pandemic and can travel once again, is to lead a trip to Dubai, visit its Jewish Community, and donate a Sefer Torah to this special group being embraced by the UAE. This will be a bucket list trip. If it is anything like our past president, Cary Lerman, arranged when we went to Azerbaijan, we will all be in for a beautiful and enriching life experience!

Our focus is also to have more events in person when it is safe to do so. The Men's Club is focused on bringing together the community. We hope to have Tequila and Scotch tastings, picnics, Hollywood Bowl events, and hiking. We hope you consider joining this amazing group of Men and growing your souls with us!

In addition, Farshad Raffi has set up an amazing Book Club. Make no mistake, even if you DO NOT READ THESE BOOKS, these discussions are nothing short of amazing and enriching. Farshad has the amazing ability to attract the authors of these books to come into dialogue with us and these conversations have been quite enlightening.

Below is a recap of the Book Club's activities provided by Farshad, and I so encourage you to join this sub-group of the Men's Club.

Reaching Across the Divide

Sinai Temple Men's Club

Book Club Insights

September 2020

For the last few months, the Sinai Temple Men's Club has hosted a book club with a singular focus: how to reach across the political divide that is poisoning so many personal relationships, making respectful dialogue difficult and preventing us from working together to heal the society's wounds.

We alternated each month by selecting a book with a conservative perspective and then one with a liberal perspective. We then discussed the books and the ideas and did so in a very constructive and informative manner. Our most recent book was *Union: A Democrat, A Republican, and a Search for Common Ground* by Jordan Blashek and Christopher Haugh. Both authors were our guests at our book club meeting on September 10, 2020. Based on the books we have read (see attached list), conversations among our participants, and our dialogue with Jordan and Chris, **we put together a non-exhaustive list, in no particular order, of suggestions for how to make it possible to have constructive and respectful conversations about controversial and sincerely-held divergent views.** We hope these suggestions will play a small part in making the New Year one that restores respect through effective dialogue.

1. **Embrace uncertainty.** Let's face it. We are uncertain beings. Our knowledge is pathetically limited. We don't know all the facts or the full context that motivate people to form their own views. Voltaire observed that, "doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is absurd." We know only that we do not know everything. That insight is the beginning of wisdom. Once we approach conversations with a bit of humility about the limits of our own knowledge, we will be more respectful and open to learning.
2. **Presume good faith.** It is easy to ascribe ill-will to those with whom we disagree. They are really disguised Marxists. They don't care about anyone but themselves. They are hypocrites living in an ivy tower. They deliberately ignore everything that does not support their view. Their real agenda is... But remember that, while we profess to be sentient children of God, we are also imperfect. We can easily misread others. Let's start from a presumption of good faith and accept someone at their word unless they give us reason to do otherwise.
3. **Listen to learn.** This bit of advice can be seen as a selfish one. If we listen only to rebut or to confirm the rightness of our own position, we lose. We lose the opportunity to learn something new. We have squandered a moment when we might have experienced a new insight. Listening to learn should lead to questions rather than quick responses. Those questions lead to more questions and to dialogue on a new level. It signals that we value the other person. It can lead to change.
4. **Acknowledge understanding.** How many times have we heard that people want to be validated? If people appreciate that we understand them or are sincerely trying to understand them, even though we may not agree with them, they will be more willing to open up, to be accepting of us. Goethe said that "everyone hears only what they understand." When we let someone know we understand, they know they have been heard.
5. **Seek clarity rather than agreement.** Dennis Prager often makes this point. Too much noise in a conversation obscures what is being said. If we truly understand the other side's point of view or the value that underlays their position, it may not be as foreign to our own views as we initially thought. Clarity can breed insight. If we seek clarity and are able to leave a

conversation with both sides agreeing on what their positions are and how they differ, we have started to build a bridge.

6. **Recognize common ground.** It is rare for two people not to have any shared values or to disagree with everything the other has to say. There is always some common ground between people of good will. We just need to find it. By recognizing common ground, we can approach conversations not as antagonists but as conversant opposites seeking greater understanding. We become more relatable and less threatening.
7. **Avoid character attacks.** Character attacks are the silver bullets that kill communication and respect. To paraphrase Samuel Johnson, character attacks are the last refuge of the scoundrel. It is what we do when we either let our emotions overcome our reason or have nothing more to contribute. It is a showstopper, pure and simple.
8. **It's positions, not personalities.** I know—easier said than done. But if we focus on what someone is saying rather than distasteful personality quirks, we can avoid some of the small obstacles to dialogue. Yes, there are some people whom we just do not like. If we cannot get beyond our reaction to some annoying aspect of their personality, it may be better to avoid the conversation. But, more often than not, if we respond to one's positions rather than personality quirks, we can move towards understanding.
9. **Explanation, not argument.** Argument does not encourage dialogue. If we explain our position and try not to argue it with the force of a hurricane, we just might be able to find some common ground. We might also be able to move someone's needle a bit. But argument begets more argument, more argument begets defensiveness, and defensiveness begets a closed mind. Shout down begets shutdown.
10. **Earn trust.** Trust is not so much given as earned. Trust builds when we recognize how much we share with another and when we are secure in believing that our views and beliefs are not going to be maligned, belittled, or ignored. First comes respect, then giving, and later trust.
11. **Outlaw sting words.** This is a first cousin to #7 (avoid character attacks). Such words as stupid, ignorant, racist, selfish, ridiculous, naïve, Communist, will surely invoke Newton's third law of motion: for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Lower your head, as the slings and arrows are about to be returned. "Insults are the arguments employed by those who are in the wrong," said Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Simply put, they are wrong.
12. **Don't try to change the other side's position.** Political beliefs are often born of deeply held convictions shaped by our life experiences. We look at the world through lenses colored by these experiences. Even "facts" often get transformed when viewed through these lenses. Thus going into a political debate with someone else with the express intent to change their

mind is only likely to create acrimony. Focus instead on explaining why and how you arrived at your own position and have faith that both sides will be richer for this exchange. When asked if the authors of Union had succeeded in changing each other's mind after so many debates, Christopher Haugh said, "No! But as a result I am a better Liberal and Jordan is a better Conservative!"

13. **Words of healing.** All animated discussions will eventually result in disagreement. Sting words may fly, emotional arguments may erupt, direct attacks on character may be made, disrespectful body language may reveal feelings of contempt. Words of healing are necessary. It is the salve needed to restart a conversation or to salvage a relationship. I am sorry. I lost control. I know my words were hurtful, and I wish I could take them back. Yes, I said it, but I did not really mean it. As Christopher Haugh said, "Bro, I love you," goes a long way towards healing deep wounds.

Recommended Book List

1. [A Time to Build: From Family and Community to Congress and the Campus, How Recommitting to Our Institutions Can Revive the American Dream](#), by Yuval Levine
2. [Why Are Jews Liberals](#), by Norman Podhoretz
3. [The Conscience of a Liberal](#), by Paul Krugman
4. [Union: A Democrat, a Republican and the Search for Common Ground](#), by Christopher Haugh and Jordan Blashek **(Discussion with author)**
5. *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*; by Wes Moore
6. *The Death of Democracy: Hitler's Rise to Power and the Downfall of the Weimar Republic*, by Benjamin Carter Hett **(Discussion with author)**
7. *Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times*, by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks
8. *How to Make a Slave and Other Essays*; by Jerald Walker **(Discussion with author)**



Annual Report: Sinai Temple Board of Governors

**Submitted By: Barton H. Kogan and Paul Herman, M.D.,
Co-Chairs of the Board of Governors**

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The mission of the Sinai Temple Board of Governors (BOG) is to independently review and discuss the issues and policies of importance to Sinai Temple, and support our leaders, clergy, staff, members, our President and the Sinai Board of Directors (BOD) to develop, host and sponsor religious and cultural activities consistent with Sinai's mission and all special projects as directed by the Sinai Temple President.

The BOG was established in 1973 to provide a forum to discuss synagogue policy and programs; and to advise the Temple president and BOD. It was envisioned to tap the talent and experience of former BOD members and congregational leaders not currently serving on the BOD, to offer their time, suggestions and good counsel.

Members are elected by the BOD as recommended by the BOG co-chairs. Temple members of at least 3 years who are also past members of the BOD are eligible. All Past Temple presidents also serve on the BOG.

The BOG seeks to complement the BOD's efforts by supporting and planning projects of religious, educational, social or artistic significance that may be enjoyed by the members of Sinai Temple.

Past Projects and Temple support:

- **Yamim Nora'im**--An 88 page supplementary prayer volume for the High Holy Days.
- **Mitzvah Magnet**--Five core Mitzvot and the hours of Shabbat services and the Daily Minyan.
- **Pocket Calendars**--Handy calendars with Jewish Holidays and Shabbat candle lighting times.
- **Welcome Booklet**--A guide for non-Jews and guests to our Shabbat morning worship.
- **Sinai Yellow Pages**--This booklet enabled members to patronize each other if they so chose.
- **Sponsor Community Sinai events**-- the BOG sponsored and hosted Temple wide parties and other events honoring Sinai clergy and lay leadership in the Temple and in the community; contributed to the Sinai Temple Centennial and other Dinner Journals, made other appropriate donations honoring our Temple leaders as called upon; sponsored events

welcoming new members and clergy; the Sinai Go Green Project and the annual Sinai-wide BOG Shabbat Swap, Sinai Centennial Mitzvah Day and contributed to *Masorti*, *Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs*, and *Sinai Temple* annual fundraising dinners honoring our lay and professional leadership.

- **Archive Sinai Temple artifacts-** At the request of our Temple president, the BOG, permanently updated, categorized and verified all Sinai Temple religious and secular artifacts with our office staff.

2020-21 New, Continuing Projects and Sinai Temple support:

- **Gifts to our B'nai Mitzvah**--Sponsor the gift of Rabbi Wolpe's book, *Why Be Jewish?*.
- **Curators**—Coordinate and select exhibitions of paintings and photographs in the Merage Art Gallery.
- **Serve as Usher, Greeters and on the BIMA** for Shabbat and Holiday services as requested annually.
- **Serve on Temple Committees** in all aspects of Temple operations as part of our charge to offer sage advice and counsel to Sinai Temple.
- **"Better Together" Religious School Shabbat Program.** The BOG has joined with Danielle Kassin and Michal Morriskamil (Michal) to assist in this fledgling program designed to bridge the generations at Sinai through interaction with 6th graders, the BOG and our Israel Levin Center friends.
- ****During 2020-21 monthly "Better Together" sessions featuring relevant themes developed by Michal have been presented virtually via zoom.**
- **Visibility** Increase our branding within the Temple and recruit additional members who meet the requirements set in the Sinai Temple Bylaws.



Mount Sinai Mortuaries and Memorial Parks Annual Report to the Sinai Temple Membership

**Submitted by: Eric J. Diamond
Chairman of the Sinai Temple Cemetery Management Committee**

There is no way to begin this report other than to note that COVID-19 impacted virtually every aspect of Mount Sinai's operations. Nevertheless, we provided the Jewish community with our industry leading service, supporting families during their time of great need. We moved from our chapels to graveside services. We transitioned to smaller gatherings with social distancing. In contrast to our competitors in the Jewish and secular communities, Mount Sinai never failed to meet a family's need to bury a loved one within 24 to 48 hours. We continued to operate our mortuary 24/7 with men caring for men and women for women.

During calendar year 2020 Mount Sinai handled 100 COVID-19 cases. This represented approximately 7.50% of our mortuary activity. Unfortunately, at the start of 2021 (January and February) we cared for an additional 120 COVID-19 cases. Since February we have seen a dramatic reduction in COVID-19 activity with monthly case counts of a dozen or less. Hopefully, this positive trend will continue.

Throughout the impact of COVID-19, the professional staff remained committed to serving the community. When some individuals were compelled by circumstances to work from home, others stepped in to fill the gap. By rigorously following CDC and County Board of Health protocols, Mount Sinai did not experience a single employee-to-employee COVID-19 transmission.

From all of this it would be easy to assume that the impact of COVID-19 prevented Mount Sinai from continuing anything more than routine maintenance. Nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, we successfully completed our new Gardens of Rebecca section in Simi Valley while completing plans and obtaining permits for construction in the Proverbs section in Hollywood Hills. Both of these areas add desirable inventory that allow us to meet the community's ongoing needs. Perhaps even more exciting are the early plans to create a new "natural burial" area in Simi Valley adjacent to the Kamenir Chapel.

On the financial side of its operations, Mount Sinai completed its gift to the Sinai Akiba Academy scholarship endowment. This \$1.6 million dollar transfer satisfies a \$2 million commitment – a partial match of the incredibly generous donation by Bill and Ana Tenenblatt.

Much of the credit for these accomplishments results from the talented and caring management team led by our General Manager, Mr. Howard Kaplan. In slightly more than 3 years Howard successfully addressed virtually every aspect of Mount Sinai's operations. Having joined Mount Sinai following a long and successful tenure as Executive Director of Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Howard leaves us on July 1 to enjoy a well-earned retirement. Following Howard as General Manager is Mr. Randy Schwab. Prior to joining Mount Sinai Randy spent 10 successful years leading Jewish Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Los Angeles.

In closing, I wish to acknowledge my colleagues on the Cemetery Management Committee who join me in providing lay oversight to our operations. Current committee members include Linda Camras, Malcolm Cosgrove, Jim Delshad, Tom Flesh, Ira Friedman, Abner Goldstine, Robert Held, Milton Hyman, Thomas Lane, M. Milo Mandel, Daniel Merritt, Kurt Smalberg, Eric Swanson, Perry Wallack, Joel Weinstein, Richard Weston and Sinai's President Jamie Berman. These committee members, together with a large number of additional lay leaders who serve on our active sub-committees, provide their professional experience and thoughtful judgment to enhance our decision making. We would not achieve our continuing success without them.