

# OR AMI

## Light of My People Award For Excellence in Sisterhood Programming

WRJ congratulates the sisterhoods that submitted their diverse and outstanding programs and projects for the 2009 Or Ami "Light of My People" Award. They are all of excellent quality and meaningful to those developing and working on them, as well as to the participants or recipients. The Or Ami Award was established in 1973 to honor high quality and innovative programs of social justice, community service, and education. Only a few submissions can receive the Or Ami Award, but all can serve as models for fine sisterhood programming. WRJ resolutions and our constitution call for action and programming in response to Jewish and humanitarian domestic and global needs; the sisterhoods working on these programs and projects serving their sisterhoods, congregations, communities, and other parts of the world fulfill this call.

Visit [www.WomenofReformJudaism.org/orami](http://www.WomenofReformJudaism.org/orami) to view successful programs and community service projects which sisterhoods can adapt, replicate, or develop to respond to their interests.



WRJ 47TH ASSEMBLY • NOVEMBER 4-8, 2009 • TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

### WINNERS

#### **Beth Israel Sisterhood Shabbaton: Wise-Hearted Women**

**WRJ/Beth Israel Sisterhood**, Portland, OR

lesliejgeller@gmail.com

The sisterhood held an erev Shabbat service, followed by a day of worship and study with Dr. Judith R. Baskin, an editor of WRJ's new publication *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*, as the scholar-in-residence. The day was planned to enable members of the sisterhood, congregation, and community to explore the new commentary, demonstrating that while the book highlights the women's perspective, it is truly a bold new work for everyone to use. Working from the day's Torah portion, "Every wise-hearted person among you shall come and make everything Adonai has commanded" Exodus 35:10, participants also explored the sisterhood's role as "wise-hearted" Jewish women in creating and sustaining the Jewish world. The day included a series of afternoon workshop sessions led by local clergy and teachers that creatively responded to the Torah reading. The event was publicized extensively in the congregation, and in the Jewish and general press.

#### **Dedication of 126 Copies of "The Torah: A Women's Commentary" to Our Temple and Establishment of a New Sisterhood Program, "Rosh Chodesh Renewal"**

**Sisterhood of Temple Sholom**, Women of Reform Judaism,

Vancouver, BC, CA

dornstein@telus.net

Temple Sholom sisterhood carried out an extensive promotion for purchase of the "The Torah: A Women's Commentary" for donation to the temple or for personal use, through flyers, bulletin articles, bima announcements, and e-mails, which culminated in placing an order for 126

copies. Following receipt of the commentary, the sisterhood developed a new Rosh Chodesh Renewal group, inviting women to study Torah together using the women's commentary.

#### **Holocaust Remembrance Education Program**

**Congregation House of Israel Sisterhood**, Hot Springs, AR

jreagler@yahoo.com

This sisterhood established an ongoing Holocaust Remembrance Educational Program partnering with Garland County Public Library and other community groups to bring four educational programs to teach tolerance by keeping alive the tragic lessons and memories of the Holocaust. These programs were: a resource fair and exhibit for the teachers at the Garland County Public Library in conjunction with its US Holocaust Museum's Nazi book-burning exhibit; four presentations by a Holocaust survivor to middle and high school students; an essay contest for ninth to twelfth graders; and a Holocaust Remembrance Day Observance.

#### **Pads for Power**

**B'rith Kodesh**, Rochester, NY, with the participation of Kol Emeth (Marietta, GA), Am Shalom (Barrie, ON, CA), Community Synagogue (Port Washington, NY), Beth Orr (Coral Springs, FL), Bat Yahm (Newport Beach, CA), and Beth Ahabah (Richmond, VA) Sisterhoods  
schwartz179@earthlink.net

Typically, girls from the village of Akot, Sudan would have to take a monthly break from school during their menstrual period. Based on a WRJ social justice e-mail alert, the seven sisterhoods listed made cotton pads and kits and/or contributed funds for the purchase of a treadle

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sewing machine so that the girls could make their own pads. Organized and coordinated by the B'rith Kodesh sisterhood, the participating group worked with St. James's Episcopal Church in Richmond, VA, members of which carried the pads to Africa where they also purchased the sewing machine for the village.

### **To Life, The Journey of Addiction and Recovery in our Jewish Community**

**Sisterhood of Temple B'nai Torah**, Bellevue, WA

shanaauc@yahoo.com

Acting on WRJ's 46<sup>th</sup> assembly adoption of a resolution calling for a change in public drug abuse policy from a criminal justice to a medical/social paradigm, the B'nai Torah sisterhood held a conference on substance abuse to increase awareness of addiction as a disease, and provide hope and information about recovery. Partnering with Jewish Family Service of Seattle, the sisterhood held a conference attended by approximately 175 professionals, lay people, and clergy. The conference focused on addiction in the Jewish community, addiction as a disease, concurrent disorders, the impact on the family, how to access help, and recovery.

## HONORABLE MENTIONS

### **Chai Life**

**The Valley Temple Sisterhood**, Cincinnati, Ohio

kschlaeger@fuse.net

Sisterhood members, their children, and grandchildren participated in a variety of service-oriented activities, such as making blankets for homeless shelters, Chanukah cards for congregants who are ill, and hamantaschen for inclusion in mishloach manot gift bags for elderly congregants.

### **Connecting with the Women of Or Hadash Haifa, Israel**

**WRJ-Temple Israel**, Boston, MA

scheffassoc@comcast.net

WRJ-Temple Israel funded a creative arts room at Congregation Or Hadash to be used for children at risk. WRJ-TI leaders met with many Or Hadash women and a WRJ-TI past president consulted with Or Hadash and assisted them to form a sisterhood. The two sisterhoods have found mutual friendship, support, and shared values and are currently developing an e-mail pen-pal connection between their women.

### **Four Women in Dialogue**

**Temple Beth Shalom Sisterhood**, Santa Ana, CA

sborovay@hotmail.com

Four Women in Dialogue featured a moderator and four panelists of different faiths: Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, and Methodist. Following introductions, each panelist gave a brief overview of their involvement in and basic tenants of their faith. This program was held to create awareness and tolerance for other faiths within the community, as well as educate attendees regarding the common threads and differences of women's roles within their families, faiths, and communities. Over 150 people attended.

### **Hospice Thanksgiving Meal**

**Congregation Mickve Israel**, Savannah, GA

annettecarnow@bellsouth.net

The members of the Congregation Mickve Israel Sisterhood have provided a home-cooked Thanksgiving meal to the families of Hospice Savannah patients and staff for the past eleven years. Hospice Savannah has a normal occupancy of about twenty-one patients and during an eight-hour shift there is a staff of eighteen people on the premises. If food is left over the

sisterhood volunteers encourage the staff to take it home to share with their families. This year, the hospice staff members who make home visits have started to bring sisterhood-produced meals to their clients' houses.

### **Nice Jewish Girls "What Would Your Mother Say?"**

**Temple Emanu-El Sisterhood**, Atlanta, GA

amram\_jd@bellsouth.net

This program, held for about forty women of all ages included adult and teen tracks and incorporated a social action project. The adults participated in a session with the rabbi and a WRJ/Lilith Salon. The teen track included a session on learning how to cope in difficult situations at school and an introduction to needlework. Following lunch, both tracks listened to a speaker from a women's resource center who spoke about how the center helps women and children deal with domestic abuse situations. Participants then created "thinking of you boxes" for the women at the center. Each person filled a decorated shoe box with brownie mix, toiletry items, and small toys. They also collected donations to help the resource center. The closing focused on the *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*.

## COMMENDATIONS

### **A Celebration of Jewish Women: Our Everyday Miracles**

**Congregation Albert Sisterhood**, Albuquerque, NM

CASisterhoodEvents@gmail.com

The sisterhood moved from holding a women's Pesach seder to one which focused on women in New Mexican history. Initiated and hosted by the sisterhood, the celebration was created and produced by a lay committee from various Jewish women's organizations. Its format was similar to that of a Pesach seder with different questions, symbols, and a series of vignettes about Jewish women from New Mexican history, representing the participants journey to freedom as New Mexican Jewish women.

### **CHAI Shabbat Dinner and Congregational Dinner**

**Temple Shalom Sisterhood**, Dallas TX

ilene.zidow@verizon.net

Temple Shalom Sisterhood hosts an annual Shabbat dinner for CHAI, Community Homes for Adults, Inc., which provides group homes for adults with cognitive disabilities. CHAI residents, family members, staff, and board of directors are invited to come to the temple for Shabbat services and dinner. This year the sisterhood opened up the evening to the congregation and had the largest attendance ever with over 100 people coming together for the Shabbat dinner.

### **Gesher-Jisir (Bridge to Bridge in Hebrew & Arabic): A Women's Dialogue**

**Temple Emanuel** of Davenport, IA

karpigail@sau.edu

A women's group dialogue process evolved from a personal relationship formed between two women leaders in the Quad Cities Muslim Community and the cantor of Temple Emanuel. The first event was a dialogue held at the temple, with twenty-five women (evenly represented from the Jewish and Muslim communities) in attendance. Self-introductions, a "human bingo" game, a dessert reception, and a tour of the religious symbols in the museum case and sanctuary comprised the activities for the evening. A follow-up potluck ethnic brunch was held two months later.

### **Malaria in Darfur, the 11<sup>th</sup> Plague**

**Temple Emanuel Sisterhood**, Cherry Hill, NJ

cinnastern@aol.com

Motivated by a WRJ Wednesday social justice e-mail, highlighting the need

for malaria nets in Darfur, the sisterhood incorporated the project into its plans for a women's seder to be held one week later. A copy of the WRJ e-mail was placed on each table, making malaria the 11th plague at the seder. A large net was circulated at the conclusion of the seder to collect donations. One-hundred and twenty women at the seder donated \$1200, enough to change the lives of 120 families in Darfur.

### **Valentine's Day Pampering and Candlelight Dinner at the Julian Center**

**Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation**, Indianapolis, IN  
Sadland@aol.com

Twenty-four members of the sisterhood volunteered to provide a beauty makeover and candlelight dinner for thirty-five women who live in a shelter for abused and battered women. Many of the women have their children living with them so the sisterhood also provided a pizza dinner, arts, crafts, and babysitting for the youngsters during the two-hour event.

### **WHC Sisterhood Presents PurimFest**

**Washington Hebrew Congregation Sisterhood**, Washington, DC  
sharyng@mindspring.com

Proceeds of this first PurimFest were given to food banks in keeping with the mitzvah of Purim. The committee felt that the charitable element was also important in asking vendors for donations or discounted rates to help make the event affordable for congregants. PurimFest had something for everyone: carnival booths, a wine bar, a DJ, great food, belly dancers, jugglers, and face painters. The evening's highlight was the "Temple's Got Talent," featuring live performances by temple members plus video from the Temple's Got Talent auditions, wrapped up in an original Purim Schpiel, with a singalong to the tune of "Yellow Submarine."

## SPECIAL APPRECIATIONS

### **Sisterhood Goes Green**

**Congregation Beth Israel Sisterhood**, Austin, Texas

This sisterhood implemented three projects that respond to environmental concerns: Sisterhood Goes Green (dawnforman1966@yahoo.com), Beth Israel Garden (lilo@grandecom.net), and Sisterhood Goes Camping/Women's Retreat (nvillalpando@statesman.com). The sisterhood uses real plates for temple meals or biodegradable, recycled plates, scrapes them to provide meals for chickens, recycles containers, and sells CFL energy-saving light bulbs in the gift shop. Volunteers maintain a large temple garden, which had fallen into disrepair. When the sisterhood took over, they removed nonnative plants and added native, low maintenance, low water use varieties, as well as herbs that are used in the kitchen. For events, they fill vases from their garden. The sisterhood camping retreat included hiking and cleaning up trash on the trails, as well as study, worship, and good conversation.

### **Temple Beth Israel Sisterhood Strategic Plan**

**Sisterhood Temple Beth Israel**, Skokie, IL  
auntiema1122@sbcglobal.net

Inspired by WRJ's 46<sup>th</sup> Assembly's workshop, this sisterhood engaged in a strategic planning process. It was important to Temple Beth Israel sisterhood to consider operating more cohesively. The strategic plan included documentation of history and survey results, as well as reports. This project enabled the sisterhood to apply a business/organizational perspective with regard to future planning. The goal now is to do the work needed to move from envisioning to implementation. Clarifying processes and roles will help future leadership (officers, board members, and chairpersons). Sisterhood and congregational members with varying degrees of sisterhood commitment were included in this project.

### **Unveiling a New Sisterhood**

**Temple Israel Sisterhood**, Minneapolis, MN  
cweitz@comcast.net

The goals of the strategic plan were to tailor a new sisterhood designed to fulfill the wants and needs of the women of Temple Israel, attract new members, and have current members become more active. With donated professional assistance, the sisterhood strategic planning committee reached out to the temple community to learn what programs would bring in new members and what programs would be of interest to existing members so that they would participate more frequently. They garnered information through this intense research program and learned more than expected because they developed ideas for new programs, but also developed ideas about how to grow their relationships.

## RECOGNITION

### **A Taste of Passover**

**Women of Reform Judaism Temple Emanu-El**, Dallas, TX  
kschachter@schachterharris.com

### **Adopt-A-Survivor, Surrogate Survivor Program**

**WRJ of Temple Judea of Manhasset**, Manhasset, NY  
LLevine3@optonline.net

### **Adult Mitzvah Corps**

**North Shore Congregation Israel**, Glencoe, IL  
scheinkopf@sbcglobal.net

### **Annual Women's Interfaith Event**

**WRJ/B'rith Kodesh Sisterhood**, Rochester, NY  
swarnold1@yahoo.com

### **Bake and Take**

**Temple Beth Emeth Sisterhood**, Ann Arbor, MI  
hillaryh@ix.netcom.com

### **Balancing: Keys to Healthy Living**

**Temple Emanu-El**, Westfield, NJ  
janet.kurtter@gmail.com

### **Breast Cancer Awareness Programs**

**Temple Shalom** of Aberdeen, NJ  
suzsilverman@att.net

### **Breast Cancer Survivorship**

**Sisterhood, The Congregation Temple B'nai Jehudah**,  
Overland Park, KS  
lawlady271@aol.com

### **Sponsor, Camp Kalsman Campership Fund/**

### **Fashion Show project**

**Temple Sholom Sisterhood**, Vancouver, BC, CAN  
dornstein@telus.net

### **Caring Community**

**Temple Shaaray Tefila Sisterhood**, Bedford Corners, NY  
hezeller00@aol.com

### **Carol Rosenberg Memorial Spa Night**

**Sisterhood of the Community Synagogue**, Port Washington, NY  
mphilips209@gmail.com

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**Chanukah Program and Support Our Troops Mitzvah Project:  
“The Woman Left Behind”**

**Congregation Kol Ami**, White Plains, NY  
ylawrie@aol.com

**Cradle Roll**

**B’nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim**, Glenview, IL  
gloria@kaizs.com

**Furnish Homes for Refugees**

**Main Line Reform Temple**, Beth Elohim, Wynnewood, PA  
ldf999@comcast.net

**Geriatric Luncheon**

**WRJ of Temple Judea of Manhasset**, Manhasset, NY  
montague5767@aol.com

**Heart Healthy Women’s Opening Program**

**Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation**, Indianapolis, IN  
smkantor@comcast.com

**Hereditary Cancer in Jewish Families**

**Congregation B’nai Tzedek**, Fountain Valley, CA  
zipora@earthlink.net

**How to Be a Jewish Grandmother –  
when the grandchildren may not be Jewish**

**Congregation Albert Sisterhood**, Albuquerque, NM  
CASisterhoodEvents@gmail.com

**How to Get Your Doctor to Do What You Need**

**Congregation B’nai Tzedek**, Fountain Valley, CA  
zipora@earthlink.net

**Knit N Knosh**

**Temple Beth El-WRJ**, Boca Raton, FL  
margieplough@gmail.com

**Krav Maga Self-Defense Seminar**

**Temple Emanu-El**, San Diego, CA  
suzyQweiss@yahoo.com

**Live, Learn and Celebrate Shabbat Seminars**

**Sisterhood of Temple Sholom**, Women of Reform Judaism,  
Vancouver, BC, Canada  
dornstein@telus.net

**Maagal Tzedakah–Circles of Giving**

**Women of Isaiah**, Lafayette, CA  
jeanetteg@jhgdsgns.com

**Mah Jongg Friend’zy**

**Congregation Emanu-El B’ne Jeshurun and Shalom Sisterhoods,  
along with several Conservative and Orthodox Sisterhoods**,  
Milwaukee, WI  
judyjoseph@wi.rr.com

**Maxine Horwitz Cultural Series: Cantor’s Day Off,  
Anything Goes!**

**Temple Beth Shalom Sisterhood**, Santa Ana, CA  
shugarman@sbcglobal.net

**Meals For A Community-Based Shelter**

**Temple Beth Ami Sisterhood**, Rockville, MD  
JeanneKahn@aol.com

**Meet The New Israeli Consul General, Orli Gil, at North Shore  
Congregation Israel: A Briefing on the Current Situation in  
Israel**

**North Shore Congregation Israel Sisterhood**, Glencoe, IL  
penny.herbst@sbcglobal.net

**Menopause, Present, Past, and Future**

**Temple Beth David**, Westminster, CA  
nancinator1111@yahoo.com

**Mikvah and Martinis**

**Temple Israel of Akron Sisterhood**, Akron, Ohio  
csandybeach1@att.net

**Mitzvah Knitting**

**North Shore Congregation Israel**, Glencoe, IL  
Got1222@aol.com

**Sanctuary Blanket Project**

**Sisterhood of Temple B’nai Torah–A Reform Congregation**,  
Wantagh, NY  
profrobinw@aol.com

**Shabbat Services for Jewish People in Community Senior Care  
Institutions**

**Temple Adat Elohim**, Thousand Oaks, CA  
char4321@hotmail.com

**Sisterhood E-News, Print and Website Publicity**

**Temple Israel of Hollywood**, Los Angeles, CA  
g.zalkind@earthlink.net

**Sisterhood Shabbat: Odyssey Project**

**Temple Beth El Sisterhood**, Madison, WI  
B\_tayavon@yahoo.com

**Sisterhood Shabbat Service**

**Temple Emanu-El** of Lynbrook, NY  
ALANENADEL@aol.com

**Stepping Stone Shelter and The Bridge**

**Sinai Temple**, Michigan City, IN  
robostrauss@sbcglobal.net

**“Think Ovarian”... Listen to the Whispers Presentation**

**Sisterhood of Temple Sholom**, Women of Reform Judaism,  
Vancouver, BC, Canada  
dornstein@telus.net

**Uniongram Prayers for Nancy--A Sisterhood YES Fund  
Endeavor of Prayer Connecting Sister to Sister**

**Temple Beth Orr Sisterhood**, Coral Springs, FL  
jeratan@aol.com

**Women of Rodeph Sholom Torah Study**

**Sisterhood of Congregation Rodeph Sholom**, New York, NY  
stannenbaum@ix.netcom.com

**Women’s Weekend Retreat, “The Power of W.”**

**Temple Israel Sisterhood**, Minneapolis, MN  
ers@schak.com