

# OR AMI

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



WRJ appreciates the many sisterhoods that submitted the following diverse and outstanding programs for the 2011 Or Ami Awards. All are of high quality and were significant to those involved, as well as to the participants and/or recipients. Only a few submissions can receive the Or Ami Award, but all serve as models for fine sisterhood programming. E-mail addresses are provided so that you can obtain full information for each program.



WRJ 48TH ASSEMBLY • DECEMBER 14-18, 2011

### GOLD OR AMI AWARDS

#### **Bet David Sisterhood Social Justice Programs: Twin Alexandra Township Feeding Schemes, Mandela Day, Mitzvah Day**

**Bet David**, Sandton, South Africa • Jo Ann Norris (jonorris@mweb.com.za)  
The sisterhood's Twin Alexandra Township Feeding Schemes program feeds 250 destitute pupils at Zenzeleni Primary School as well as 250 indigent adults and children at Leamogetswe (*All are Welcome*) daily. The sisterhood also provides other family assistance for the impoverished residents of these communities as needed. Mandela Day was an interactive program, coordinated by the sisterhood, for 218 children from Alexandra Township. The children came from the Look and Love Shelter as well as the Alexandra Orphanage and Child Care Centre in the spirit of the national Mandela Day's sixty-seven minutes of service to less fortunate members of the community. For Mitzvah Day, the sisterhood honored the elderly with a concert and tea.

#### **Combating Human Trafficking**

**Sisterhood of Temple Shalom**, WRJ, Vancouver, BC, Canada • Alexis Rothschild (alexis@vrcompanions.com)  
Inspired by a presentation in 2008 on the evils of human trafficking and the need for strong legislation to combat it, a sisterhood leader urged the board to launch a campaign to raise awareness on the issue. With support from the sisterhood board, she brought together a coalition of many community agencies and organizations interested in urging Parliament to pass Bill C-268, which would provide mandatory minimum sentencing for offenses against minors who were victims of human trafficking. A forum on the issue, letter-writing campaign, petition, and other advocacy efforts were organized and succeeded in generating public support for Bill C-268. The bill was passed in June of 2010, thanks in part to the efforts of the sisterhood and the work of its leader in collaboration with various partner groups and individuals.

#### **Embrace — Each Member Brings Ruach and Connects to Everyone**

**Congregation Emanu El Sisterhood**, Houston, TX • Linda Zoll (sispres@emanuelhouston.org)  
Through Embrace, the sisterhood offers opportunities to bond with women, sisterhoods, and communities beyond its congregation through cultural, spiritual, and emotionally-supportive programming. Embrace began with the establishment of links with Temple David Sisterhood in Perth, Australia. Current initiatives include: program-planning with WRJ-affiliated

Beth Shalom Sisterhood in Bryan, Texas; a joint program with Houston's Congregation Beth Israel Sisterhood; and women chefs from Joseftal and Dado, Israel participating in "Ethnic Flavors," a program of the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston, at United Orthodox Synagogue.

#### **P'tach Libeynu, Open Our Hearts**

**Women of Isaiah, Temple Isaiah**, Lafayette, CA • Gloria Schiller and Barbara Kaplan (bob.gloria@comcast.net)  
The sisterhood started an East Bay Area Jewish community coalition that included rabbis, mental health professionals, and representatives of Jewish agencies dedicated to eliminating the stigma of mental illness in the Jewish community. The committee organized a conference, held at Temple Isaiah, that revealed the need for safe, accepting, and welcoming places for individuals with mental illness and their families. Support groups for family members have been established and the committee is providing educational programs for clergy and synagogue leaders. Programs, as well as information for congregants through e-mails, conversations, and sermons, have begun the process for systemic change.

#### **Sisterhood Creative Service: The Story of the Children's Opera "Brundibar"**

**University Synagogue Sisterhood**, Los Angeles, CA • Julia Weinstein (juliaweinstein@gmail.com)  
The sisterhood's creative service presented the history and story of the Terezin concentration camp in Czechoslovakia through an original cantata. It was based on the children's opera "Brundibar," which was originally performed at Terezin in 1944. Co-written by two members of the sisterhood, the cantata was prepared and performed to honor the children whose courage in performing "Brundibar" gave them the hope and strength to endure life at the camp. The service allowed sisterhood members, the cantor, the children's choir, and the youth group to forge new bonds.

#### **WRJ Pacific District 2010 Convention — Sew Green**

**WRJ Pacific District** • Linda Henderson (lhenderson@gmail.com)  
WRJ Pacific District sisterhoods were invited to sew convention bags for the November 2010 WRJPD convention using recycled, re-purposed, and left-over materials. Instructions and images were provided and sample bags were available at their Area Days. The district's goals included: generating excitement about the convention, involving district women in something creative and tangible, saving the costs of purchasing convention bags, putting the "recycle, reuse, re-purpose" mantra into action, and building community

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by working on a joint project. The district received more than enough bags for the convention delegates, many of which were exceptionally creative and were auctioned off during the convention.

## SILVER

### Birthing Kit Project

**Congregation Beth Israel**, Austin, TX •

Gloria G. Litt (gloria.litt@gmail.com)

The sisterhood's social action chair organized an event that incorporated the traditional women's celebration of Rosh Chodesh with a program about the dangers of giving birth in developing countries and the assembly of birthing kits. Each birthing kit contained vital supplies for women giving birth in areas without hospitals, clinics, or medically-trained personnel. The kits have been shown to help reduce the rates of infant and maternal mortality in these countries. At the inaugural birthing kit assembly event, more than 150 kits were created.

### Bullying: A Critical Issue

**Touro Synagogue Sisterhood**, New Orleans, LA •

Stacy Weinreb (sjwinnola@att.net)

In response to pervasive current concerns about bullying, the sisterhood and the congregation's LGBTQ and Social Action Initiatives co-sponsored an educational forum, "Bullying, a Critical Issue," which was free and open to the public. Panelists included Jewish and secular experts, clergy, mental health professionals, educators, and both gay and straight representation and perspectives. The event focused on bullying from various perspectives including: Jewish, mental health, child, parent, administrator, and educator.

### Grandparent-Tot Tea Party

**BJBE Sisterhood**, Deerfield, IL •

Barbara Offenberg (johnandbarbie@sbcglobal.net)

The Grandparent-Tot Tea Party is a multi-generational bonding experience that enables the youngest congregants to enjoy activities with their grandparents in a Jewish setting. Activities include: a craft decorating boxes, large group grandchild/grandparent song and game activities, fancy tea settings in a room lined with books, and time with questions provided to spark conversation between the children and their grandparents. The sisterhood notes that such parties help familiarize the youngsters with temple life while recruiting new sisterhood members among the grandmothers in attendance.

### Sisterhood Shabbat/Eishet Chayil Award

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

Kate Royston (kroyston@webmd.net)

For its 2009 Sisterhood Shabbat, the sisterhood collaborated with the clergy and the Jewish Women's Archive to create a worship service that honored American Jewish women's contributions. The event also posthumously honored their own past president with the first Eishet Chayil award for all she had accomplished for their sisterhood and the Portland Jewish community. They engaged members over an eight-month period in learning about Shabbat liturgy as well as Jewish women's history in great detail. The creative service taught the congregation about Jewish women's history.

### We Meet at Last — Connecting with Rabbi Ayala Miron of our Twin Sisterhood in Israel

**North Shore Congregation Israel**, Glencoe, IL •

Amy Duque (fourduques@gmail.com) and Pamela Faulkner (pfaulkner@gmail.com)

NSCI Sisterhood invited and hosted Rabbi Ayala Miron from its twin congregation in Israel to a weekend Shabbat retreat. In addition to helping lead worship services, Rabbi Miron attended their late-night pajama party, participated in their spirituality exercises, and told them about her journey towards becoming a Progressive woman rabbi in Israel and the struggles of her congregation. The highlight of the retreat was the presentation of a

Torah cover made by one of their members to Rabbi Miron for her congregation's use. The twinned sisterhoods also made plans to hold a virtual Share-a-Shabbat dinner.

## BRONZE

### From the Heart

**Temple Israel**, Memphis, TN • Sue Pfeffer (spfeffer7@gmail.com)

The purpose of this program, held jointly with the Memphis Beth Shalom Sisterhood, was to educate members about the risk factors for heart disease in women. The speakers included a forty-two year-old survivor of bypass surgery, who is also a social worker and author; and a cardiologist from the Memphis Heart Clinic. Educational materials were distributed and desserts prepared from the author's cookbook, *WomenHeart's All Heart Family Cookbook*, were served.

### Giving Back to Our Hosts

**Southwest District** • Renee Roth (swdistrictprez@sbcglobal.net)

Beginning at the Toronto assembly, and again at the district convention in Dallas, the district selected a Jewish charity in the host city and donated food, toiletries, and items for children. The women brought the items with them and together they created the centerpieces for their events, after which the centerpieces were donated to the selected charity.

### Let's Play It Safe — Sisterhood Meeting

**Adat Chaverim**, Plano, TX • Natala Assa (natala2@sbcglobal.net)

Adat Chaverim sisterhood planned its January meeting for parents and children, "Let's Play It Safe," because of the importance of child safety for families. The program included speakers from the Plano police and fire departments and the chance to have children fingerprinted and ID'd for parents' personal records. The children also created a large safety banner.

### Temple B'nai Torah Sisterhood Pink Shabbat Program

**Temple B'nai Torah Sisterhood**, Wantaugh, NY •

Stephanie Jacobson (snj53@aol.com)

The sisterhood sponsored a Pink Shabbat program. The importance of breast cancer screening, early detection, and treatment were presented through poetry readings, prayer, song, and an expert guest speaker. The program promoted breast cancer awareness and expressed compassion, solidarity, and sensitivity for congregational members and families whose lives were devastated by this disease. Literature was available and pink bracelets were sold to support breast cancer research.

### Tikkun Olam: One House at a Time

**Temple Emanuel**, Davenport, IA •

Linda Golden (goldenlinda@sbcglobal.net)

Believing that "repairing the world" begins with one family and one neighborhood, the sisterhood partnered with the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity to build a home for a working family with limited resources three blocks from the temple. The sisterhood was one of the major funders for the home and members and their families provided hours of labor. They educated the congregation about housing issues and added poverty issues to the religious school curriculum.

## ADDITIONAL SUBMISSIONS

### 2010 Sisterhood Community Brunch

**Adat Chaverim Sisterhood**, Plano, TX • Natala Assa

(natala2@sbcglobal.net)

Sisterhood women across the metroplex mingled, learned about the Vogel Alcove, which helps homeless mothers and children, and donated clothing and personal necessities to the Alcove.

### A Day in the Garden of Eden

**University Synagogue Sisterhood**, Los Angeles, CA •

Julia Weinstein (juliaweinstein@gmail.com)

A one-day retreat featuring relaxation and stress relief through gentle

Qi Gong movement, a speaker on maximizing satisfaction at home and at work, Torah study, music, and havdalah under the stars.

### **Adopt a Wounded Soldier**

**Temple Israel Sisterhood**, Staten Island, NY •

Muriel Schlefstein (murielmusthave@aol.com)

The sisterhood spearheaded the project with the temple, SI Project Homefront and the YMCA to collect hats, pajama bottoms, slipper socks, phone cards, and funds for soldiers wounded in combat who are stripped of clothing for transport to field hospitals.

### **Annual Women's Panel**

**Sisterhood of Temple Emanuel**, Denver, CO •

Pamela Gross (pammgr@comcast.net)

An annual panel of experts, speaking on topics such as: the many faces of Jewish women, the many faces of women of faith (interfaith), women's health issues, and women facing challenges.

### **Blanket Buddies**

**WRJ/Sisterhood Congregation B'nai Israel**, Boca Raton •

Susan Stein Chiesa (sscwalker@bellsouth.net)

Volunteers meet monthly to make "no-sew" blankets, which are then given to patients in local hospitals, children's units, cancer treatment facilities, and dialysis centers.

### **Blankets, Books, & Bordeaux**

**Sisterhood of Temple Emanuel**, Denver, CO •

Pamela Gross (pammgr@comcast.net)

This multi-generational program involved making no-sew blankets for babies and seniors. They also collected new books for donation to a local elementary school.

### **Chanukah Giving Project**

**Temple Beth Emeth Sisterhood**, Ann Arbor, MI •

Sally Brieloff (sbrieloff@sbcglobal.net)

Jewish Family Services provided the sisterhood with descriptions of individuals in crisis during the holiday season and their wishes. Congregational families made their wishes come true.

### **Coburn Place — Every Day is Mother's Day**

**Temple Sisterhood of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation**,

Indianapolis, IN • Bonnie Foster (bfoster3@indy.rr.com)

Sisterhood provided a program of food, salon services, donated purses, and costume jewelry; as well as child care with music, crafts, snacks, and games for mothers and their children who have fled abusive homes and are staying in a shelter.

### **GI Jane**

**Congregation Schaarai Zedek Sisterhood**, Tampa, FL •

Paula Zielonka and Sharon Ravner (doczonk2@gmail.com)

Members collected toiletries and feminine hygiene products for women serving in Afghanistan. The major collections took place at the 2010 and 2011 Circle of Service luncheons.

### **Gift Shop Exchange**

**Southwest District** • Renee Roth (swdistrictprez@sbcglobal.net)

Sisterhoods brought their unsold Judaica shop items to the district convention where they could buy each other's merchandise. The district donated fifteen percent of the proceeds to the YES Fund.

### **Great Girls to Wonderful Women: Raising Confident, Competent Daughters**

**The Valley Temple and Isaac M. Wise Temple**, Cincinnati, OH •

Lorie Kleiner Eckert (lorieke@fuse.net)

This program was held to provide strategies for better family communications, convey a sense that each family member is treasured,

strengthen existing ways of coping, and offer healthy ways to manage feelings and choices.

### **Healing Shawls and Baby Sweaters**

**Holy Blossom Temple**, Toronto, ON, Canada •

Ruthe Schipper (sisterhoodprez@rogers.com)

Baby sweaters and shawls knitted by sisterhood members are given to newborns named in the synagogue and to people with cancer.

### **Hope for the Next Generation**

**Temple B'Nai Israel**, Albany, GA • Gail Greenfield

(gailsgreenfield@hotmail.com)

The sisterhood is helping a good student (and her family) with financial and societal challenges, as recommended by a nearby elementary school, with the hope that she will set goals to seek a higher education.

### **Hope for the Homeless: Caring Connection Carts**

**Temple Israel Sisterhood**, Akron, OH • Audrey Baker

(avbaker@neo.rr.com)

The sisterhood assembled wheeled carts with books, toys, and art supplies for children living in a temporary shelter.

### **Identity Theft**

**Holy Blossom Temple**, Toronto, ON, Canada •

Ruthe Schipper (sisterhoodprez@rogers.com)

A Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer spoke about the increasing incidence of identity theft and ways individuals and families can protect themselves.

### **Klezmer Brunch**

**Beth Israel Sisterhood**, Portland, OR • Kate Royston

(kroyston@webmd.net)

The sisterhood held a Sunday brunch, discussed the roots of Klezmer music, and enjoyed a performance.

### **Ronald McDonald House, RMH, Meal Making**

**Temple Beth-El Sisterhood**, Providence, RI • Paula Annenberg

(serendipitypa@cox.net)

Working with the brotherhood, the sisterhood prepared a hot, home-cooked meal for families living at RMH while their children were in the hospital.

### **Round Up for the YES Fund**

**Congregation Beth Israel**, Austin, TX • Renee Roth

(swdistrictprez@sbcglobal.net)

Judaica Shop customers are asked if they would like to "round up for the YES Fund" to the nearest dollar. If so, their change is placed in the shop's YES Fund donation can.

### **S.O.S. — Social Outreach for Sisterhood**

**University Synagogue Sisterhood**, Los Angeles, CA

Julia Weinstein (juliaweinstein@gmail.com)

Members prepared fifty lunches for a month at a women's shelter. Several times a year, they serve brunch and dinner at the shelter, bringing donated travel-size products. They have also invited women to seders and Chanukah dinners.

### **SAFE HOME...Keeps Women and Children Safe: Love Is Not Abuse**

**The Temple: Congregation Ben Yehuda**, Overland Park, KS •

Lois Bernstein (lrbdirector@everestkc.net)

Other sisterhoods were invited for this program on domestic abuse. The speaker was from a shelter for women and children, and attendees brought socks for the residents. Sisterhood members volunteer at the shelter and regularly donate socks, toiletries, and books for the children.

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## Sisterhood CAN

**Temple Israel Sisterhood**, Tulsa, OK •

Lesley Bumgamer (bumalou@cox.net)

The sisterhood initiated the Sisterhood CAN program to raise awareness of hunger and to collect food to help alleviate this problem. A logo was placed on plastic bins – a reminder that sisterhood is seeking donations of canned food.

## Sisterhood Conkerr Cancer Pillowcase Making Party

**Adat Chaverim**, Plano, TX • Natala Assa (natala2@sbcglobal.net)

A project to make decorative pillowcases for hospitalized children while seeking to make temple members aware of the cancer center.

## Sisterhood Mitzvah Meeting to Make Shalach Manot Bags for The Legacy

**Adat Chaverim**, Plano, TX • Natala Assa (natala2@sbcglobal.net)

The sisterhood makes and delivers Purim Shalach Manot bags to over 140 Jewish residents of an assisted living home.

## Sisterhood Shabbat and New Officer Installation

**North Shore Congregation Israel**, Glencoe, IL •

Amy Duque (fourduques@gmail.com) and Pamela Faulkner (pfaulkner@gmail.com)

The nine past presidents of the sisterhood were honored at an outdoor Shabbat service and installation of their new board.

## Sisterhood Shabbaton: A Day of Mindfulness

**Temple Israel Memphis**, TN • Sue Pfeffer (spfeffer7@gmail.com)

The shabbaton was focused on spirituality, intentionality, mindfulness, and health.

## Sisterhood Tallit

**University Synagogue Sisterhood**, Los Angeles, CA •

Julia Weinstein (juliaweinstein@gmail.com)

The sisterhood made a very large tallit, that can wrap several women for special events including blessings, prayers, and healing.

## Sixty-Six, (the movie) A Truish-Jewish Story About Bernie, His Bar Mitzvah, The World Cup and 66 Oldish and Newish Ways to Celebrate Your B'nai Mitzvah

**Temple Israel Sisterhood**, Minneapolis, MN •

Julie Zimmerman Berg (juliezb@aol.com)

This program enabled parents of youngsters who have upcoming b'nai mitzvah – fifth, sixth, and seventh graders – to have a discussion with other parents who had recently been through the process.

## Spirituality Retreat Weekend

**Temple Beth Shalom**, Needham, MA • Judith Ravech (jravech@rcn.com)

The sisterhood's Spirituality Retreat Weekend has been held for thirteen years. In 2009, they decided to tap the varied talents of their members and clergy to create a program by committee rather than by an outside facilitator, resulting in a retreat that they believe increased their membership.

## Stuff-A-Duff

**Women of Temple Beth Ami**, Rockville, MD •

Rhona Arbit (arbitfamily@gmail.com)

The sisterhood worked with the temple's Tikkun Olam committee, stuffing duffel bags with necessities for children entering the foster care system or moving from one foster home to another.

## Supplies to Our Soldiers in Afghanistan

**Congregation B'nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim Sisterhood**, Deerfield, IL •

Barbara Offenberger (johnandbarbie@sbcglobal.net)

Sisterhood members collected and sent 100 boxes of items needed by US soldiers stationed in Afghanistan, e.g., toothpaste, soap, toothbrushes, lip balm, and socks, and sent them to a battalion stationed in a remote area.

## Tailgate Treasures and Trash

**Holy Blossom Temple**, Toronto, ON, Canada •

Ruthe Schipper (sisterhoodprez@rogers.com)

The cars of those participating were assigned a position in the temple parking lot where tables were provided. Items were available for sale on tables or in the car trunks. A bake sale was also held.

## Tea and Makeovers

**University Synagogue Sisterhood**, Los Angeles, CA •

Julia Weinstein (juliaweinstein@gmail.com)

The sisterhood provided makeup and makeup artists for a tea and makeover event at a transitional housing project for mentally-ill homeless women.

## The Platter Project

**Temple Sisterhood of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation**,

Indianapolis, IN • Bonnie Foster (bfoster3@indy.rr.com)

To raise money for the Interfaith Hunger Initiative, the sisterhood provided platters to be designed and painted, for a fee, by congregants, including the religious school's seventh grade. Some of the painted platters were auctioned off at a congregational breakfast.

## The Sisterhood of Central Synagogue of Nassau County Celebrates 75 Years of Prayer and Community

**Sisterhood of Central Synagogue of Nassau County**,

Rockville Centre, NY • Carol Fisher (clbf1313@aol.com)

Following a dinner, selections from the sisterhood archive illuminating members' thoughts through the years, were read along with selections from prayer books of the same time period.

## Tu B'Shevat Seder

**Temple Isaiah Sisterhood**, Lexington, MA •

Pam Awrach and Sandy Bornstein (pamawrach@yahoo.com)

The annual Tu B'Shevat Seder celebrates the holiday, using a haggadah with readings and songs to explain its meaning. The readings teach about Israel and can be changed every year to be current.

## Tu B'Shevat Seder

**Temple Beth Emeth Sisterhood**, Ann Arbor, MI •

Sally Brieloff (sbrieloff@sbcglobal.net)

A women's seder conducted to celebrate spring in Israel and to provide a time for women of the temple to come together.

## What Not to Wear

**Temple Sisterhood of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation**,

Indianapolis, IN • Bonnie Foster (bfoster3@indy.rr.com)

Three women of different ages won a makeover by Nordstrom's stylists. Almost sixty women attended a fashion show of the new looks and enjoyed champagne cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and one another.

## Womens' Wellness Series

**North Shore Congregation Israel Sisterhood**, Glencoe, IL •

Amy Duque (fourduques@gmail.com) and Pamela Faulkner (pfaulkner@gmail.com)

An ongoing program focusing on the health, safety, and well-being of their congregants. Programs are led by temple members and community professionals.

## Zumba

**Congregation Kol Tikvah**, Parkland, FL •

Tami S. Isenberg (ti123mom@gmail.com)

The sisterhood hired a local Zumba instructor for a fundraiser. After the success of the first series of sessions they now run ongoing five-week sessions and are "having a blast while getting into shape."