



MIDWEST DISTRICT M'KESHER

מְקֶשֶׁר

Tevet 5777

January 2017

Message from Janet Buckstein

Midwest District President

Greetings!

I hope all of you had a wonderful Hanukkah and celebratory welcome to 2017! I know that I enjoyed a bit less hectic pace. Thanks to all of you who have headed out on wonderful vacations and left the rest of us some peace and relaxation!

One of our main goals for Midwest District (hope you've noticed this in our past two M'Keshers) is to build a sense of WRJ Community within every sisterhood/women's group member. But how does one do that? Yes, we can communicate and celebrate in our eblasts, website and social media... but perhaps the most effective way is for every member to participate in WRJ events and programs. Well, there are several major opportunities for you to join your WRJ sisters coming up soon.

- We've been talking extensively about the [Fried Leadership Conference](#) which is March 3 to 5 in Charleston, SC. This conference provides wonderful training programs for rising leaders, spiritual services and fun time to sing and dance together. Even more important, you will have an opportunity to meet and bond with your Midwest District sisters at a special get together and Shabbat dinner. About 10 of us are arriving early to explore Charleston and you are welcome to join us. We will have group dinners on March 1 and 2, and sightseeing on March 2 and 3. Check out our Midwest District Yammer Group to participate in our conversation. Take advantage of the early registration rates and register NOW!
- Midwest District will be representing WRJ at the

Useful links ►

EVENT INFO:

[FLC Schedule](#)

[FLC Registration & Fees](#)

[FAQs about FLC](#)

[NFTY Convention](#)

[NFTY Alumni](#)

[Mah Jongg & Canasta Weekend](#)

FORMS:

[Speakers Bureau Request Form](#)

[Expense](#)

biennial [NFTY Convention](#) in Chicago from February 17-20. Many, but perhaps not all, of you are aware that Michelle Scheinkopf has extensive experience in working with and teaching teens. This was tapped by WRJ when they asked her to chair their College Outreach taskforce, and now they have asked her to represent WRJ at the convention. In her letter below Michelle is asking for others to assist in this effort. *I'll be there... will you?*

[Reimbursement Form](#)

[District Deposit Form](#)

- Save the date (and let your sisterhood members know about) our annual [Mah Jongg and Canasta Weekend](#) at OSRUI from Friday March 31 to April 2 (you can attend any part or all of the weekend). The event is being chaired by Marla Goldberg and Audrey Zaprudsky, and YES, lessons will be given!
- Attending our **2017 Midwest District Kallah** is a wonderful way to re-energize yourself and share spiritual experiences with your sisters. Chairs Karen Schwartz and Donelle Macey are planning a wonderful day/weekend {your choice}. The theme this year is "Creative Renewal and Rekindling Your Imagination" and it will be held from April 28 to 30 at OSRUI.

I hope to see you at all the events you can make. My favorite part of my job description is to meet and have fun with all of you!

L'Shalom,

Janet Buckstein

President, WRJ Midwest District



**Creating Our WRJ Community...
Are you Stepping UP?**

by Janet Buckstein

Attending Fried Leadership Conference really is a great way to experience WRJ Community. Two years ago 28 of us went to Austin, Texas and that was the start of incredible friendships for me and I think many of us. Even though some of us were snowed-in and ended up watching the Super Bowl at the Austin airport Hilton, I have incredibly fond memories. Join us in Charleston and be part of future memories!



Are you stepping up to creating our WRJ community? [Let me know](#) and I'll let everyone else know!

Are You Marching to Support Women's Rights?



We know that many of you are asking about and will be participating in the **January 21 Women's March** in both Chicago and Washington DC.

The **Women's March on Chicago** will be starting at the Petrillo Bandshell in Grant Park at 10 am. You can [register](#) on their website. If you will be marching, please be sure to take lots of photos and send them to the district and to WRJ. Consider posting your photos and reflections on social media. And don't forget to wear your "I Am a Woman of Reform Judaism" pins and other

WRJ bling! If you want to meet up with other WRJ members you might want to start up a conversation on our Midwest District Yammer group.

If you will be joining the **Women's March on Washington**, consider joining others from the Reform Movement for Shabbat worship at 8:30am led by local DC-area clergy. Following worship, from 9:30am – 3:45pm, the Religious Action Center (RAC) is hosting a hospitality space with refreshments, restrooms, and a place to congregate and reflect. Both events will be at the [Hyatt Regency](#), near the March location. Attendance is free, but [please register](#) so they have an accurate estimate of participation. More information can be found at [here](#).

Although WRJ and others in the Reform Movement have not formally endorsed the marches or the various speakers you may hear that day, we are committed to women's rights and social justice, and support our women activists. As our foremothers did in generations past, WRJ women today will continue to raise our voices for justice!

Will You Join Us at the NFTY Biennial Convention in Chicago, February 17 - 20?



The North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) Convention is coming to the **Hyatt Regency Chicago Hotel** on Wacker Drive from **February 17-20** (Presidents' Day weekend) and WRJ has asked us to be involved!

[NFTY Convention](#) is a high-energy biennial gathering, where over 1000 teens will have the opportunity to meet with other engaged teens (grades 9-12th) from across the country, interact with an amazing array of guest lecturers, rabbis, and educators; and be inspired by ideas and

ideals. [Register here.](#)

For NFTY Alumni (like I am) [check out this link](#) on how you can be involved and reconnect with fellow NFTY alums at the Chicago convention.

Why WRJ Midwest at a NFTY Convention you ask?

Since the convention is being held in Chicago, the Midwest District has been asked by WRJ to be the local WRJ representative at this assembly. WRJ would like us to provide coverage at the WRJ Booth at the NFTY Resource Mall during specific times at the convention. Here we will have the opportunity to share with teenagers and their adult youth advisors the amazing things WRJ does for them now and in their futures. We will literally be planting the seeds (our legacy) for these young women and their future involvement in WRJ.

Specifically, we have been asked to inform students about our WRJ Distracted Driving resolution and ask them to sign the Distracted Driving Pledge. This is the same pledge many of you signed at our biennial convention in Downers Grove last October. At the NFTY convention, the teens will be attending programming on a host of social action issues. This is our opportunity to also engage with them on issues and resolutions such as pay equity, gender equality, and paid family medical leave that are important to the Women of Reform Judaism.

If you are interested in volunteering at the WRJ Booth or have any questions about our role at the NFTY Convention, please don't hesitate to contact me at atscheinkopf@sbcglobal.net. Those who volunteer at the WRJ Booth will be eligible to receive a Resource Mall Badge and will have access to the programs, speakers and events of the Youth Summit at NFTY Convention.

Volunteers needed at the WRJ Booth at the NFTY Resource Mall

Friday, Feb. 17: 11:00 am-1:00 pm / 1:00-3:00 pm

Saturday, Feb. 18: 5:00-6:00 pm / 8:15-11:30 pm (during plenary and social event)

Sunday, Feb. 19: 12:00-1:00 pm / 8:00-11:00 pm

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Michelle Scheinkopf

Midwest District 1st Vice President, WRJ College Outreach Chair



Critical Issues by Marilyn Glazer

This month we will celebrate the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who was born January 15, 1929. His birth will be celebrated as a national holiday on January 16, 2017. As we celebrate the day off of work, we need to remember Dr. King and what he stood for, for his own people and for us, and continue his legacy in this uncertain world...

[Click here](#) to read her entire article. Questions? Contact Marilyn@MarilynGlazer.com.



WRJ Fried Leadership Conference
Charleston Marriott Hotel
Friday, March 3 3:30 pm - Sunday, March
5 12:30 pm

FLC will move you when you experience the powerful prayer of hundreds of women worshipping together on Shabbat.

"I love the services! I laugh, I cry, I dance, I sing... It is such a beautiful experience. It opens my heart and soul and leaves me feeling so exhilarated." --
Marlene Spolane, repeat FLC attendee from Congregation Beth Israel Sisterhood, Houston, TX

Led by Rabbi-in-Residence Esther Lederman and Musician-in-Residence Debra Winter, our worship will lift you spiritually as you witness the magic of women praying and singing as one in services created just for FLC 2017, including special music and song. After Friday evening Shabbat services, stay for Debra Winter's song session to end the night on a high note.

On Saturday night, join fellow FLC attendees at a dinner-dance benefiting the YES Fund with live music by [Nefesh Mountain](#). Dance the night away to the unique, new sounds of Jewish Bluegrass, while raising funds for Reform Movement causes; it's a win-win!



Conference attendees can also choose to participate in the WRJ Choir, directed by Debra Winter. The choir is an opportunity for women to share their love of music and singing with the other FLC attendees by performing during FLC worship services. Choir members will receive preparatory materials in advance, and will have two mandatory on-site rehearsals: during Workshop Block A on Friday afternoon and during Torah Study on Saturday morning.

The WRJ Choir will perform at Friday night and Saturday morning Shabbat services. There is an \$18 fee to join to cover costs. No prior musical experience is necessary, and choir sign-up closes on February 8th. If you love singing and want to contribute to the spirit and excitement of FLC services, then the WRJ Choir is for you – sign up today, Whether you plan to sing in the choir or just want to listen to beautiful music during services and throughout the weekend, there is a place for you at WRJ FLC.

Hope you will join us! [Register Now](#)

Midwest District UPCOMING EVENTS



[Mah Jongg &](#)

[Canasta Weekend](#)

March 31 - April 2, 2017 OSRUI, Oconomowoc, WI

[WRJ Fried Leadership Conference](#)

March 3 - 5, 2017 Charleston, SC

[Midwest District Kallah](#)

April 28 - 30, 2017 OSRUI, Oconomowoc, WI

*4/28 Executive Committee Meeting (*more information coming soon.*)

[WRJ "Women's Journey to Israel" Mission](#)

May 21 - 29, 2017

[Midwest Leadership Training & Interim Board Meeting](#)

October 27 - 29, 2017 OSRUI, Oconomowoc, WI

--10/27 Executive Committee Meeting

-- 10/29 District Board Meeting (*more information coming soon.*)

UPCOMING EVENTS



Midwest District Sisterhoods

[What's Up Down There? with Dr.](#)

[Lauren Streicher](#)

Wednesday, January 11, 2017

North Shore Congregation Israel, Glencoe, IL

Gynecologist, Public Speaker & Author of Sex Rx, Dr. Streicher has been described as "Intelligent, impassioned and disarmingly funny." [More about Dr. Streicher](#) .

Sisterhood Brunch & Mah Jongg Tournament

Sunday, January 29, 2017

Congregation Beth Am, Buffalo Grove, IL

Do you have an UPCOMING EVENT that appeals to a larger audience?

Please send a pdf or website link to kyellendillon@gmail.com as soon as possible and we will try to include it in the next eblast. *Materials must be received no later than the 20th of the month.*

Please Note: *If there is a fee to attend the event, all WRJ members are invited at your Sisterhood rate.*



Grow Your Judaism with CHAI MITZVAH

Some of you may have attended the Chai

Mitzvah workshop at convention. We hope you enjoyed immersing yourself in the text and sharing your insights with the group. Whether you were able to experience this at convention or not, we would love for you to bring this experience to your own sisterhood.

Here is a little bit about Chai Mitzvah:

- Chai Mitzvah is inexpensive and very easy to implement.
- The program creates **new and lasting bonds**.
- Chai Mitzvah **adds newly engaged members** of the sisterhood, congregation, and the greater Jewish community who are excited about living meaningful Jewish lives.
- Chai Mitzvah provides a deep and rich adult **engagement** opportunity:
Engaging the **mind** in both group and self-directed learning;
Engaging the **heart** and soul with ritual/practice;
Engaging the **community** with volunteering.
- Chai Mitzvah is easily applicable to your own interests with **relevant** topics of study.



WRJ/Chai Mitzvah

Chai Mitzvah can help build and deepen Jewish connections within your sisterhood, congregation and community.

[Read more
www.wrj.org](http://www.wrj.org)

- Chai Mitzvah is affordable - **only \$65 for group registration, and \$25/person/year.**
- Chai Mitzvah is **easy to implement** with a curriculum that is already established; with facilitator guides and resource help available from Chai Mitzvah educators.
- For **WRJ groups**, Chai Mitzvah includes dedicated webinars and supplemental materials relevant to WRJ women.

For more information, or to get started with your new Chai Mitzvah group, contact:

Nina Woldin - nina@chaimitzvah.org, 973-568-5788; or **Micaela Russell** - mrussell@wrj.org, 212-650-4060.



Yom Huledet (Happy Birthday) Wishes to our Midwest Board Members:

January:

2 Adrienne Daskal - ADaskal@att.net

- 4 Sharon Green - punchy4@aol.com
- 4 Ruth Garner - ruthsq1966@comcast.net
- 17 Amy Fields - afields1717@gmail.com
- 24 Mary Fisher - maryfisher105@aol.com
- 25 Gale Nudelman - gnudelman7@gmail.com
- 26 Lois Gibson - lgibson900@aol.com
- 27 Donelle Macey - donelle12@comcast.net
- 30 Beth Ettinger - beettinger@gmail.com

February:

- 7 Laura Cooper - cooper4449@gmail.com
- 7 Rachelle Sheffer - rmsheffer12@gmail.com
- 12 Lottie Frank - lottie.frank@yahoo.com
- 15 Judy Lohr-Safcik - jklohrsafcik@gmail.com
- 19 Penny Shnay - plshnay@sbcglobal.net
- 24 Diane Kaplan - dlkap@aol.com
- 24 Sally Frank - Sally.Frank@drake.edu
- 24 Rachel Willens - rwil636@aol.com
- 27 Debra Bauer - debrabauer@gmail.com



R'fuah Sh'leimah (Get Well) Wishes to:

Carol Berger, VP Service to Sisterhoods & Programming,

recovering from recent knee surgery. Get well wishes may be

sent to her at ponderer4552@sbcglobal.net or by mail to 4552 Lindenwold Lane Northbrook, IL 60062



Zichrono Livracha (May his/her memory be for a blessing) Condolences to:

Alumnae **Sharon Sabin** on the recent loss of her mother, Ruth Dauber z"l. Messages of condolences may be sent to Sharon at 3843 Russett Lane, Northbrook, IL 60062 or sharonsabin714@aol.com.

Need a Speaker For Your Next Event?



**REQUEST
a Speaker**

Having a WRJ speaker available for Sisterhood Services, installations or to just help facilitate or conduct workshops is really easy to do. Just fill out the form and return it to me to let me know what you are looking for.

Also, do you know someone in your Sisterhood who has an area of expertise she might be willing to share? We are looking to expand our Speaker's Bureau and we can only do that with the help of each of you. I am looking forward to your requests and wonderful ideas from each and every one of you. Thanks!

Gloria Kaiz

Midwest District Speaker Bureau's Chair

gloria@kaizs.com 847-945-3741

[Download the Speaker Request Form](#)



WOMEN OF REFORM JUDAISM
stronger together

The Mission of WRJ

WRJ strengthens the voice of women worldwide and empowers them to create caring communities, nurture congregations, cultivate personal and spiritual growth, and

advocate for and promote progressive
Jewish values.

Connect with us



[Sign up for our Eblast](#)

[Visit our Midwest District website](#)

Contact: Janet Buckstein, WRJ Midwest District President
jfbuckstein@gmail.com wrjmdpres@gmail.com
