

KAVOD LUNCHEON

WRJ MIDWEST DISTRICT

CONVENTION

HONORS AND RECOGNITION

Rhoda Hauptman Memorial Award for Excellence

Membership Achievement Recognition

Woman of Valor Awards



Saturday, October 29, 2016

27th of Tishrei, 5777

**Carol Berger, Cheryl Stern, Linn Ullenbrauck
and Michelle Scheinkopf
Convention Co-Chairs**



**DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Hotel
& Conference Center, Downers Grove, IL**



⚔ A woman of valor, who can find? 📖 Her worth is far above
jewels 📖 The heart of her husband trusts in her 📖 And nothing
shall he lack 📖 She renders him good and not evil 📖 All the days
of her life 📖 She opens her hand to the needy 📖 And extends
her hand to the poor 📖 She is robed in strength and dignity
📖 And cheerfully 📖 faces whatever may come 📖 She opens her
mouth with wisdom 📖 Her tongue is guided by kindness 📖 She



tends to the affairs of her household 📖 And eats not the bread of
idleness 📖 Her children come forward and bless her 📖 Her
husband too and he praises her 📖 Many women have done
superbly 📖 But you surpass them all 📖 Charm is deceitful and
beauty is vain 📖 But a God-fearing woman is much to be praised
📖 Place before her the fruit of her hands 📖 Wherever people
gather, her deeds speak her praise.



PROGRAM

Michelle Scheinkopf, Area Co-Vice President
presiding

RHODA HAUPTMAN MEMORIAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Awards presented by Judy Lohr-Safcik, Chair

Membership Achievement Recognition
Michelle Scheinkopf

WOMAN OF VALOR AWARDS

Awards presented by Penny Shnay, Chair



WOMEN OF REFORM JUDAISM
stronger together



The **Rhoda Hauptman Memorial Award for Excellence** was created to honor the memory of Rhoda Hauptman^{z"l}, the first president of the Midwest Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (MFTS), now known as Women of Reform Judaism Midwest District. Rhoda served as president from 1956 to 1959.

The award is designed to acknowledge and publicize the accomplishments and achievements of individual sisterhoods and women's groups within our district. The outstanding award winners and honorable mentions that are featured in this booklet will offer ideas and spark the creation of other innovative programs.

The Awards have been separated into 6 different categories:

- Social Action
- Membership Recruitment/Welcoming New Members
- Membership Engagement
- Membership Programming/Event
- Fund Raising
- WRJ Projects

Mazel Tov to all our winners and honorable mentions!

The Rhoda Hauptman committee congratulates all of our entrants for their programming suggestions. We appreciate the sisterhoods/women's groups taking the time to submit their entries. All are winners. We hope that you will read through these program submissions and ask those listed for further information. Please attend the workshop session immediately following the luncheon to hear more about these award winning programs.

Judy Lohr-Safcik, Chair

Sandi Firsell

Lorri Fishman

Nikki Levin

Carrie Morris

1st Place

Social Action

Knitting Circle

**Women of Emanu-El
River Hills, WI**

Submitted by Ruth Treisman

What started out as a knitting circle of women providing hospitalized congregants of Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun Congregation with comfort shawls has grown into a social action project for the Women of Emanu-El to knit chemo caps, hats, scarves, shawls, and lap robes for various organizations throughout metropolitan Milwaukee. The Women of Emanu-El volunteer knitters started the Knitting Circle with donated yarns and other supplies provided by generous congregants. The knitters' projects included chemo caps donated to Children's Hospital of Wisconsin and the Cancer Treatment Center of Froedtert Hospital. Other knitted items were given to school children, individuals with mental health issues, women and children living at homeless shelters, homebound adults getting services from the Jewish Family Service and winter hats to refugees from Burma and Kenya who had resettled in Milwaukee. Besides giving to the congregation and community, the Knitting Circle helped to build social connections within Women of Emanu-El by meeting every six weeks from September through May. This very dedicated and talented group of knitters continues to grow and do their mitzvah projects for their congregation and the community.

Honorable Mention

Pillows for Breast Cancer Survivors

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

Submitted by Jeanie Pearlman & Linda Rukin

The purpose of this multi-generational program was to provide comfort for breast cancer survivors in the form of a pillow. Sixty pillows have been delivered to three area hospitals. Continuing plans are to do the same for two other hospitals in the future.

In Our Own Voice: Stories of Hope and Recovery from Individuals Living with Mental Illness

**Sisterhood Temple Beth Israel
Skokie, IL**

Submitted by Nina Henry & Lisa Wynn

Sisterhood Temple Beth Israel collaborated with the Cook County North Suburban affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). The purpose of this program was to decrease the stigma and increase literacy about mental illness. It was hoped that the participants gained a better understanding of how mental illness manifests itself in those we know and love. Additionally, this program put a face on mental illness and recovery.

Birthday Bags for Deerfield Food Pantry

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

Submitted by

Jeanie Pearlman & Linda Rukin

Everyone wants to celebrate birthdays with cake and candles, including those who may not have the funds in their budget to purchase these items. The purpose of this program was to provide “birthday party” items for those in need of food pantry assistance. Sisterhood members were encouraged to bring items such as candles, cake mix, and paper goods for birthday celebrations as part of our project, Birthday Bags for the Deerfield Food Pantry.

1st Place

Membership Recruitment/Welcoming New Members

Pursuing Your Dream–Inspiration for the New Year

Women of Bet Shalom
Minnetonka, MN

Submitted by Beth Ettinger

As part of our membership recruitment campaign in September 2015, Bet Shalom Sisterhood held a free membership kickoff event titled, “Pursuing Your Dream – Inspiration for the New Year.” This kickoff was a brunch that featured our guest speaker Cantor Sarah Lipsett-Allison. Cantor Lipsett-Allison spoke of pursuing her dream to become a cantor after having been part of the financial world for many years. Her journey to becoming a cantor began as a cantorial soloist and culminated after years of study to become the cantor at Bet Shalom. Cantor Sarah was truly an inspiration for all of us to pursue our dreams, whatever they may be. One of our dreams as a sisterhood was to convey a stronger image for women at our congregation. This program inspired our sisterhood and its new members to start discussions regarding a name change. We held a vote and we are now Women of Bet Shalom.

Honorable Mention

Shabbat Bags:

Welcoming New Members

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

Submitted by
Sherry Popper & Gloria Marron

The purpose of this project was to provide Shabbat Bags for new members joining BJBE. Personal letters from the clergy and sisterhood were included along with challah, wine and candles to celebrate Shabbat.

1st Place
Membership Engagement
Canasta Card and Fun Day

Women of Temple Chai
Long Grove, IL

Submitted by Mae Schwab

In these changing times, it was clear to our Sisterhood that alternative and creative ways of attracting new members and engaging our established members was essential. We believed that women would consider joining if there was a "hook" or something of significant interest to make them want to interact with other women. Since Canasta has become a popular game and we found that many of our members wanted to learn, it was a great way to engage our members in a fun activity and encourage affiliation by others. The reason why this ongoing program is so exceptional is that it has been a wonderful engagement opportunity for many people to create relationships. We have gained many new members to our Sisterhood. It should be noted that several of our new members also belong to their respective Temple women's groups. Because of their ability to play Canasta, many of them play with the people they have met at Temple at other times during the week, i.e. Saturday night or another day. Most importantly, everyone loves it, looks forward to it, and it is FUN!!!

1st Place
Membership Program
Sweat, Sip and Snack

Sisterhood Temple Beth Israel
Skokie, IL

Submitted by
Gale Nudelman & Sheila Rosenfeld

The purpose of Sweat, Sip and Snack was to draw attention to our sisterhood in a fun and unusual way. We wanted to create a program that was simply for socialization, with no aspects of fundraising or serious educational tones for the evening. Sweat, Sip, and Snack was created to provide an evening of multi generational friendship and fun for our sisterhood and community at large members. We wanted to raise awareness that belonging to Sisterhood is beneficial in so many areas. As the instructor was able to give a very reduced rate for a 45-minute program, we in turn offered the event as a no admission charge event. It was a lot of fun as we danced and laughed throughout the Zumba exercises. After the sweating, everybody stayed for more laughter as we sipped and snacked. We exceeded our goal of an evening of friendship and fun and raised awareness of another aspect of belonging to our sisterhood. Women became reacquainted with friends they hadn't seen in a while and would not have expected to see at an exercise class. All in all, this was a successful engagement event for Sisterhood Temple Beth Israel.

Honorable Mention
Women's Seders
2015 and 2016

Sisterhood Temple Beth Israel
Skokie, IL

Submitted by Nina Henry (2015),
Elaine Kropveld-Berger & Paula Sabin (2016)

Sisterhood TBI wanted to celebrate the traditions of the Passover Seder but with the expressed intention of making it a Seder for Women rather than just a Seder that women attended. We also wanted to form an experimental connection with Jewish women of the past and present in all of their multicultural and multi-international variety) through a participatory Women's Seder which included a strong sense of community. There were unique aspects, including reciting the four questions in Yiddish and sharing Passover memories. In 2015, the seder included a reading by Ruth Bader Ginsburg. In 2016 the attendees sampled four types of Charoset with accompanying recipes. They also experienced the seder by using their senses.

1st Place
Fundraiser
Hungry Girl Meets Temple Chai
Women of Temple Chai
Long Grove, IL

Submitted by Cheryl Stern

The purpose of Hungry Girl Meets Temple Chai was to incorporate successful fundraising, engage the sisterhood members in a worthwhile project, and reach out to the community outside of Temple Chai. Lisa Lillien, the author of the *Hungry Girl Cookbook*, was the keynote speaker. She came to Temple Chai as a stop on her nationwide tour. Over 60 women worked on the program in some capacity and 260 women attended. The Sisterhood profited \$5,000 from this event.

Honorable Mention

**Oak Park Temple—Sisterhood
Rummage Sale**

Women of Oak Park
Oak Park, IL

Submitted by Marsha Cooper

Besides being a fundraiser, this program has become one of community outreach and social action. Many organizations and people benefitted from this event. This year free vouchers were given to 26 families who lost their belongings in a recent fire to shop at no cost.

Annual Mah Jongg Tournament

Temple Emanuel Sisterhood,
Davenport, IA

Submitted by Audrey Zaprudsky

The mah jongg tournament raised funds for a women's shelter. The Sisterhood gave goodie bags and provided refreshments. This event raised over \$1,000 while the women enjoyed the day playing mah jongg.

1st Place
WRJ Projects

**Fighting Sex Trafficking—
A Jewish Response**

Sisterhood Temple Beth Israel
Skokie, IL

Submitted by Ellen Sontag & Lisa Winn

The purpose of Fighting Sex Trafficking—A Jewish Response was to educate the Temple about sex trafficking, to show that it is a modern day form of slavery and to illustrate that it is relevant to all of us. Using speakers and drawing on the resources from Jewish Coalition Against Sex Trafficking (JCAST), the evening was enlightening. We wanted to learn how it affects our community, and what, we as Jews and as a Congregation, can do to fight against it. We felt that this was a very successful program and we were made more aware of a problem affecting young women and men in Chicago and across the country.

Honorable Mention

BJBE Sisterhood Support the Women of the Wall

B'nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim Sisterhood,
Deerfield, IL

Submitted by Carol Berger

Two events tied into this program. First, women of BJBE Sisterhood were invited to wear tallit to a musical minyan service. A statement by the Israeli Minister of Religious Affairs, David Azulai, prompted this action. A picture of the women was taken and sent to the Prime Minister. Then, approximately four months later, all BJBE women were invited to wear tallit and bring their menorahs to the Sisterhood board meeting. A picture was sent to the Women of the Wall in Israel, which they included in a video of women from all around the world lighting chanukiah while in their tallitot.



MEMBERSHIP ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION

Sisterhood is more than one. Sisterhood is one woman, joining with another woman, and another to do more than one could do alone. —Dolores Kosberg Wilkenfeld

SISTERHOODS WHO HAVE INCREASED THEIR MEMBERSHIP:

- ◆ Beth Tikvah Congregation Sisterhood, Hoffman Estates, IL
- ◆ B'nai Yehuda Beth Sholom Sisterhood, Homewood, IL
- ◆ Sisterhood Temple Anshe Sholom, Olympia Fields, IL
- ◆ Women of Oak Park, Oak Park, IL
- ◆ Women of Lakeside, Highland Park, IL
- ◆ Congregation Beth Am Sisterhood, Buffalo Grove, IL
- ◆ Mount Zion Congregation Sisterhood, Sioux Falls, SD
- ◆ Mt. Sinai Congregation Sisterhood, Wausau, WI
- ◆ Temple Beth El Sisterhood, Munster, IN
- ◆ Temple Beth-El Women's Club, Northbrook, IL

SISTERHOODS WHO HAVE MAINTAINED THEIR MEMBERSHIP:

- ◆ Emanuel Congregation Sisterhood, Chicago, IL
- ◆ Temple B'nai Jeshurun Sisterhood, Des Moines, IA

A Woman of Valor

“An accomplished woman, who can find? Her worth is far above jewels.”

The poem, A Woman of Valor, comes from Proverbs 31. In Hebrew, a “Woman of Valor” is *Eshet Chayil*. It became a Jewish custom for a husband to recite the poem to his wife at the end of the week, and to be thankful for all his wife has done for him and his family throughout the past week.

The Women of Valor that we honor today probably does not fit much of the poem of the past. Yes, they certainly extend their hands to the poor and needy; their clothing is strength and dignity; they smile at the future; they open their mouths in wisdom; the lesson of kindness is on their tongues; and they certainly do not eat the bread of idleness.

The Women of Valor today are Women of Value. They are of value to their families, sisterhoods/women’s groups, congregations, communities, Judaism, and the world. Today, they are honored and valued by the Women of Reform Judaism Midwest District and the sisterhoods/women’s groups they represent.

Let their deeds praise them.



Gloria Alexander



Women of Bet Shalom Minnetonka, Minnesota

We are very proud to nominate Gloria Alexander as our Woman of Valor. She has been an active and giving member of Women of Bet Shalom as well as a volunteer for our synagogue, and the Minneapolis community.

Gloria grew up in New York City and at 17 married Stan, the love of her life. After graduating from Rutgers University, with 6 young children they moved to Minnesota. She worked as a social worker for Jewish Family & Children Services and at a low-income apartment for senior citizens.

Since the Women of Bet Shalom's beginning in December 2006, Gloria has been an active member on our board. As historian/parliamentarian, corresponding secretary and member at large, Gloria is always the first one to volunteer. She works tirelessly on our committees, especially helping to make phone calls for our membership committee and shows up to all of our events. Gloria also steps in to represent us at our synagogue's Board of Trustees meetings.

In addition to being a Bubbe to 15 grandchildren Gloria volunteers not only in the Jewish community but the Twin Cities as a whole. Some to name a few are the Chanukah Gift Program for Jews with AIDS, Guardian ad Litem for Children, Habitat for Humanity, Jewish Federation, the Minnesota Brain Injury Association Human Rights Commission for the cities of Plymouth and Minneapolis.

Gloria is truly an inspiration to all of us. She gives of herself to our Sisterhood and to those in need in the community. She truly is our Woman of Valor.

Sara Charney



Holy Blossom Sisterhood Toronto, Ontario, Canada

While pursuing and after completing her doctorate in Italian Renaissance literature at the University of Toronto, Sara Charney taught Italian language and literature in the Department of Italian Studies at the University of Toronto. She took leave from her position to raise her three children and, as time allowed, began to engage in a variety of volunteer activities.

Sara, a member of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto, has been president of that temple's sisterhood (600 members). While sisterhood president in 2003, she brought forward the Torat Chayim Project to the temple, which was a community building initiative to write a new Torah scroll in honour of Holy Blossom Temple's 150th Anniversary.

She has served on both the board and executive committee of Holy Blossom as a department chair and recently coordinated a new leadership development initiative. In that capacity, she developed a membership 101 program for new and current members.

Sara, joined Women of Reform Judaism's board of directors in 2005 and then the executive committee in 2007. She completed a two-year tenure as local arrangements co-chair for WRJ's 2009 assembly in Toronto, at which time she was installed as a vice president of WRJ. Sara served as WRJ vice president of Marketing and Communications from 2009-2011. At the December 2011 WRJ assembly in Washington, Sara was re-installed as a vice-president, assuming the portfolio of Service to Sisterhoods and Districts. In March 2013, Sara co-chaired WRJ's 10-day Centennial Mission to Israel and Berlin. At the December 2013 WRJ assembly in San Diego, Sara was installed as vice-president of a new WRJ portfolio, Programs and Education.

Sara is married to Rick Charney and they are the proud parents of Adam (26), Andrew (24) and Laura (21). Baci, an apricot coloured cockapoo, joined the family in late December, 2015.

Sharon Green



Temple B'rith Sholom Sisterhood Springfield, Illinois

Sharon has served as president and co-president of our Sisterhood and has been an active member of the temple executive and general boards. She can always be counted on to assist and take on leadership roles in Sisterhood, Temple fundraisers, and social events. For several years she chaired our tulip bulb sales, bringing in thousands of needed dollars for our chapter and is often referred to as the “Bulb Babe.”

Sharon has spearheaded temple beautification projects. These include landscaping, new flooring in the social hall, and stairwell remodeling. She continues to beautify our tables at temple and sisterhood events, including the events we are all enjoying here this weekend.

Sharon feels strongly about the importance of WRJ and our Midwest sisters. This was demonstrated when she organized Linkin’ Hearts in Lincoln’s Heartland, a wonderful weekend filled with Lincoln sites, prayer and camaraderie.

Sharon is a committed and devoted member. She cares about our temple and its members. We can always count on her for her love and support for those in need. If it is a meal, visit, phone call or help in building a Habitat for Humanity home for one of our valuable members, she is there. Sharon is a true example of a Woman of Valor.

Alyce Heman



Temple Beth Israel Sisterhood Skokie, Illinois

As an active Sisterhood member, our Past President Alyce Heman brings her dedication, wit and leadership talents to both our Sisterhood and Temple Beth Israel. She is the first to volunteer (she has a hard time saying "no"), but that is our gain as she commits whole-heartily to any position or task she volunteers for or is elected to. When a VP of the Temple Board resigned unexpectedly, Alyce was asked to fill in and readily jumped in to handle the job expertly. She currently serves as VP Religion & Culture on the Temple board.

Alyce served as Recording Secretary of Sisterhood and Vice President of Membership. After her presidency ended she didn't sit back and let others lead--rather she jumped when asked to serve as VP Programming for several years. She demonstrates that "to get back, you need to give."

She has made Sisterhood and Temple an important part of her life, leading and working hard as a volunteer whenever she can, and willingly providing guidance and support to new leaders.

Diane Kaplan



Temple Israel Sisterhood Minneapolis, Minnesota

Diane has been an active and involved member of our Temple Israel Sisterhood for over 40 years and has held almost every position on our Board and Executive Committee. She was the “founder” of our incredibly successful Garage Sale, which was a part of our sisterhood fundraising for over 25 years.

Along with her continued involvement with us, she has gone on to sit on the Executive Committee of WRJ Midwest District and the International Board of Women of Reform Judaism. We are extremely proud of her work as the Co-Chair of the WRJ Centennial, which was held in San Diego.

If we were to list all her accomplishments and talents we would fill the whole program. She is:

Dedicated to family and community
Passionate about making a difference
Proud to lead by example

Her focus on working for the future of Reform Judaism is to leave a legacy for her seven amazing grandchildren. Want to know about them...just ask!

Leslie Kemp



Temple Beth El Sisterhood Madison, Wisconsin

Leslie Kemp's mom, Ina Smolker, is a past president of Temple Beth El Sisterhood in Madison, Wisconsin. Ina used to pull Leslie out of school to help "fluff" corned beef for our sisterhood's annual FOOD-A-RAMA Election Day luncheon fundraiser.

On November 8, 2016, Temple Beth El Sisterhood will operate our 50th FOOD-A-RAMA—50 years of serving corned beef sandwiches, hot dogs, and selling delicious Sisterhood-made items in our Deli and famous Bakery. Leslie has chaired this popular and complicated event since 2009. Leslie's favorite FOOD-A-RAMA food continues to be corned beef.

Leslie has followed in Ina's footsteps, as she recently completed a successful 2014-2016 sisterhood presidency.

In addition to her passion for Sisterhood, Leslie is a long-term volunteer for Wisconsin Public TV (arts committee) and organizes art shows for "Crossroads Coffee House" in Cross Plains, just west of Madison.

Leslie and her husband, Dan, have three grown sons, and are the proud grandparents of Cloe (born 09/12/2013) and Shafler (born 09/11/2015).

Gayle Kopin



Beth Tikvah Sisterhood Hoffman Estates, Illinois

Gayle is a role model for compassion and giving for both Beth Tikvah Sisterhood and Beth Tikvah Congregation. As a member of Beth Tikvah Sisterhood for nearly 40 years, she has served on many committees including Sisterhood President. She continues to be committed to the success of our Sisterhood. Currently she is serving as long time co-leader of our Women's Seder and is chair for Tribute Credit. She does these tasks along with her very large roles in Beth Tikvah as co-chair of the Beth Tikvah Caring Committee, helping members of our community in times of need, and as chairperson for the Beth Tikvah 60th Anniversary Year events.

Gayle and her husband Ira are both involved in most aspects of synagogue life, as well as involved parents and grandparents with four children, seven grandchildren and four great grandchildren between the two of them! She is involved in Sisterhood and Beth Tikvah in so many ways that we could not imagine Sisterhood life without her.

She is truly a Woman of Valor!

Sherry Malmon



Women of Emanu-El River Hills, Wisconsin

In Sherry's own words: Becoming this year's (WE) Women of Emanu-El's Woman of Valor is both humbling and an honor. As a 46-year member of CEEBJ, I have been involved in many wonderful classes and activities. I love the warm friendships I have made over the years as a member of the Worship Committee and Women of Emanu-El.

Having taught 6th grade for fifteen years, next starting programming for gifted learners in my district and then serving as the middle school resource coordinator for gifted education for twenty-five years, it seemed only natural to bring my years of experience to CEEBJ. Lessons learned in all of my grad school classes and experience as Board Chair of The WI Center for Gifted Learners were helpful as I've served as co-chair of the Lifelong Learning Committee at CEEBJ the past dozen years.

Recently I was elected to our Board of Trustees and am now one of several Vice Presidents. I represent CEEBJ on the Milwaukee Board of the Coalition for Jewish Learning and its Congregational School Initiative. I've headed the CEEBJ Purim Carnival for several years and help out elsewhere as needed, most recently as co-chair of the Search Committee to hire Rabbi Schaller as our new Rabbi/Director of Lifelong Learning. The honor that Women of Emanu-El has bestowed upon me will encourage me to continue my volunteer efforts.

Sheila Mina



Temple Anshe Sholom Sisterhood Olympia Fields, Illinois

It is with great pleasure that Temple Anshe Sholom honors Sheila Mina as a Woman of Valor.

Over the past seven years, Sheila has been responsible for keeping the Sisterhood at our congregation a force to be reckoned with. Her presence at temple board meetings has kept the temple aware of the importance that Sisterhood represents and the work it does for the good of all congregants.

Sheila has made sure that all Bar/Bat Mitzvah students still continue to receive a gift on behalf of Sisterhood, which is different from what the temple itself does for the student. The boys receive a Kiddush cup, while the girls receive a pair of candlesticks, nurturing the continued practice of Jewish traditions as the students mature. Around Chanukah time, she also sees to it that college-aged students receive a gift from the Sisterhood, letting them know that people at their temple still care about them.

Sheila's soft-spoken mannerism and her downplayed role as a leader tends to have people want to help her. Her non-demanding ways make people step up to help. Furthermore, her ability to run effective board meetings as well as attempting to offer programming to reach a diverse age range of people is something to be commended.

Diane Moore



Woman of North Shore Congregation Israel Glencoe, Illinois

Ever since her first position as the Israel Chair on the sisterhood board, Diane has enthusiastically embraced the mission of WNSCI. Diane has served her synagogue and the Jewish community in various ways. She has been Co-President of WNSCI, a member of NSCI Board of Trustees, NSCI Representative to North Shore Jewish Community Candidates' Forum, past Regional VP of ARZA, past board member of the Chicago Federation, Past President and Campaign Chair of JUF Young Women's Board, past member of JUF Women's Board, Life Member of Hadassah, and member of NCJW.

WNSCI is proud that Diane brought to the attention of the WRJ Midwest District Board information regarding automatic voter registration for the State of Illinois. As a result, the Midwest District was the only WRJ district in the country to endorse automatic voter registration.

Most importantly, Diane has made lifelong friends through these activities.

Diane resides in Highland Park with her husband, Jim. She and Jim are both graduates of Ohio State University and Ohio State University Law School, and big Buckeye Football Fans. Diane is the doting Jewish mother of three children and grandmother of two.

Sue Rothbardt



Temple Emanuel Sisterhood Davenport, Iowa

Temple Emanuel is proud to honor Sue Rothbardt as our Woman of Valor. Sue brings so much enthusiasm, determination, motivation, and organizational abilities, to all that she touches. Add to this her engaging personality. She always has a smile on her face and puts the needs of Sisterhood first. Sue inspires all of us to be positive and successful. She is always willing to volunteer her time and services, which she feels “Once you join you are active.” “No choice---we need energetic women to help with all our programs”.

Her list of activities is numerous: She has been President of Sisterhood for two years; planned and executed a Regional Sisterhood convention; is always involved in fundraising; and has cooked Shabbat dinners for years at the Temple.

She was a youth group advisor, taught Sunday school, was Co-President of Temple Emanuel, and today is Vice President of Membership for the Temple and Sisterhood.

We are fortunate to have Sue as our Woman of Valor for 2016. Mazel Tov!!!

Eileen Schur



Beth Tikvah Sisterhood Hoffman Estates, Illinois

Eileen Schur is a foundation of both Beth Tikvah Sisterhood and Beth Tikvah Congregation. She has been a member for over 40 years and continues to volunteer each and every year, having served as President for both Sisterhood and the Congregation. Over the years, Eileen has been involved either as a leader or volunteer for most Sisterhood activities. She currently holds leadership positions as facilitator of the Lilith Salon and longstanding co-leader of the Women's Seder. Eileen served as president of the Midwest Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (MFTS) District 18 from 1994-1996.

Eileen is one of those women who jumps into action at the mere mention of a task needing attention. This past year, she assisted in the daunting task of completely cleaning and organizing our kitchen, a time consuming and tedious task. No job is too big for Eileen to tackle. Over the years, Eileen has been a voice of knowledge, and we would be at a loss without her expertise. When Eileen and her husband, Vic, are not busy serving at the Temple, they enjoy time with their son and daughter and 4 grandchildren.

We are proud to honor Eileen as our 2016 Woman of Valor.

Mae Schwab



Women of Temple Chai Long Grove, Illinois

Mae Schwab is a founding member of the Temple Chai Sisterhood and has always held a board position since its creation in 1978. In her various positions on the board, Mae has worked diligently to promote the success of every aspect of sisterhood. No matter what she was ever asked, she never refused.

As sisterhood president from 1998-2000, she inspired others to think responsibly and instilled in them the goals of mitzvah as she served others within, and outside the temple community. Mae has served on the Midwest District Board as Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Area Director, Kallah Co-chair and currently Speaker's Bureau Chair. However, Mae believes her finest role is when she creates worship services for Sisterhood Shabbats at Temple Chai and for Midwest District events. Her knowledge and spirituality reflect her finest qualities.

As a wife, mother, grandmother and friend, Mae is a loyal, loving, and dedicated individual. Temple Chai Sisterhood is proud to call Mae Schwab their Woman of Valor.

Debra (Debi) Shandling



Woman of Lakeside Highland Park, Illinois

Debi was born and raised in Skokie, Illinois. She and her family were members of Temple Beth Israel when the congregation was located in Chicago. She and her husband Rick, daughter Melody, and son Trevor joined Lakeside Congregation for Reform Judaism in the early 1990's. Debi was one of the early leaders of Lakeside's sisterhood, serving as President from 1994 to 1996 and as an active leadership role for another three years. The Shandling family is very musical, owning Debi's Piano Tuning and Repair Service, run by Debi and Rick and employing their son Trevor; and they tune pianos for some of Chicago's top musical venues. Debi and her family bring their skills to Lakeside where they voluntarily tune all pianos, participate in the temple choir, and are part of a new musical Shabbat service.

Debi also brings her musical talents to the Women of Lakeside (WOL), where she leads and coordinates the Women's Shabbat Choir, while accompanying on piano. An avid gardener, Debi also put together the most recent closing WOL program where she demonstrated creating an herb garden, provided plantings, handed out recipes and brewed peppermint tea from herbs from her garden. She even designed the poles needed to fit our chuppah for the "Red Tent" at the WOL belly-dancing event.

Debi loves Lakeside and WOL, who she describes as her family and support network; and we love Debi!

Sandra (Sandy) Small



Congregation Emanu-el Sisterhood Waukesha, Wisconsin

Our Woman of Valor, Sandy Small, was a member of the original group of women that met in 2009 to revive our sisterhood, which had been non-existent for many years.

Every sisterhood has a person that stays steadfastly in the background, who guides and nurtures the organization and the members...and that describes our Sandy Small. The word “no” is not in her vocabulary. Our original bylaws and the constant revisions have Sandy’s stamp all over them. As our Parliamentarian since 2010, Sandy has been a constant source of wisdom for how our sisterhood functions. Her many years of being president of the citywide Milwaukee Council of PTA’s and hosting a radio program on public radio had given her the background that a new sisterhood needed.

In addition to serving as Parliamentarian, she has served our sisterhood as Membership Chair and also chaired fund-raising projects.

Thanks to Sandy, we have become an integral part of not only our own synagogue but also the WRJ family.

Janet Swig



B'nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim Sisterhood Deerfield, Illinois

Janet and her late husband Stan^{z"l} were active from the minute they joined BJBE. Stan served as president of the congregation and Janet has served on Sisterhood's board in various positions. Most recently, Janet has served on the Interfaith Committee and the Senior Events Committee. She also participates in the planning and execution of the annual luncheon for seniors from nursing homes.

Before retiring, Janet was an employee of a local law firm. Until the organization stopped meeting, Janet was an active member of a local organization supporting Multiple Sclerosis research, a disease that took the life of her daughter Adeena.

Janet is a traveler and has enjoyed multiple visits to Israel where she has an "adopted" family. She also travels to see her daughter Paula and family in California. Other travels find her participating in family events across the country.

Even with all her traveling, she still finds time for sisterhood.

Florence Weese



Women of Oak Park Oak Park, Illinois

Florence Weese is a priceless treasure to the Women of Oak Park Temple. She not only is a long time member and supporter, she is very often the calm voice of reason that is needed to refocus a discussion and get everyone back on track.

She and her husband Carl²¹ were very generous and giving of themselves to our temple. Florence carries on this value of giving without wanting recognition. She is currently responsible for writing out and sending our tributes (she has the most beautiful handwriting ever!). One of her greatest gifts to all who know her is her warm and loving smile, which she shares often.

It is our honor to celebrate Florence as our Woman of Valor.

Gayle Weil



B'nai Yehuda Beth Sholom Sisterhood Homewood, Illinois

Gayle Weil's valor/value goes way beyond BYBS Sisterhood. Whether it is family, friends, sisterhood, temple, community, WRJ, URJ, or more, Gayle devotes herself to taking care of what has to be done.

“Ask Gayle” seems to be the mantra for many of us, from how to do something, to whom to go to for answers, to who is the person across the room. If Gayle does not have a connection with someone it is a rarity.

There is not enough space to cover her accomplishments from temple president, sisterhood president, Co-Area Director for WRJ Midwest District for Greater Illinois/Northwest Indiana, URJ North American Board; too many others including the years spent teaching elementary school. That is besides her role as Bubbe extraordinaire.

Gayle, your life does matter—to your 99-year old father, husband, two sons, two grandchildren, to us, and to WRJ, URJ, the Jewish community, and the world.

Zabe Williams



Temple Beth-El Sisterhood South Bend, Indiana

Zabe has been active in Temple Beth-El Sisterhood for many years serving as President from 2008-2010. She currently sits on the board in a trustee position.

Zabe is not one to shy away from large tasks. She orchestrates Temple Beth-El's largest fundraiser. Not once, but twice each year she organizes Deli Day which culminates in the sale of 800 corned beef lunch meals.

Zabe is on the Women of Reform Judaism Board of Directors and WRJ Midwest District Board. On the district board, she is the Vice President of Development and WRJ Projects, which oversees the Alumnae, Camp, WRJ Projects and YES Fund.

She shares her love of Judaism with husband, Peter Cholak and sons, David and Nathan.

Zabe is compassionate, committed, and resourceful.