

Bet Shalom Visioning Session
Sunday, April 22, 2007

The Inclusion Vision

- People with disabilities and their families are actively welcomed.
- People with disabilities and their families feel free to look for the support they need—they don't have to hide.
- Inclusion is what we do!
- Inclusion is in the mainstream—it's just one piece of the puzzle.
- Social inclusion is up to the entire congregation, not just the Inclusion Committee, the rabbis, the cantor, etc.
- There is outreach to parents, siblings and other family members to provide support and encourage their participation in the congregation.
- There is ongoing support to people with acquired disabilities.
- Those who haven't "fit" elsewhere know that this is the place where they are welcomed.
- Jewish families come to our congregation because support is offered to people with disabilities, family members—they don't have to ask all the time.
- Our rabbis speak about inclusion from the *bimah*.
- People with disabilities come to here to meet these needs:
 - Spiritual
 - Social
 - Ritual
 - Jewish educational
 - Family life cycle events
- We have a congregational nurse on staff to help deal with issues.
- As a matter of course—when a family is facing an issue, they turn to this congregation for support.
- We encourage people with disabilities and their family members to self-disclose that they have a disability.
- People feel SAFE here.

One Year from Today April 22, 2008

- All written materials and our website have publicity about accommodations and how to ask for them.
- We publicize the inclusion initiative and the services provided.
- Support for families in place—a Take a Break program.
- The process to provide transportation to people with disabilities is moving forward.
- Our rabbis speak about inclusion from the *bimah*.
- Youth group has a Circle of Friends program in place to welcome and include members with disabilities.
- We have a Circle of Friends program for adults with disabilities.

- More kids attend the religious school autism program.
- The autism class is simply one of the classes offered at our Religious School and is on equal footing with the other classes.
- Raising awareness campaign is ongoing.
- Disability Awareness Training has begun for ushers, staff, committees and the Board. Eventually everyone will have participated in some kind of disability awareness training.
- Additional trained staff in the Religious School.

Our Achievements to Date

- We have an active Inclusion Committee.
- Mission statement of congregation has an inclusion statement.
- We have the Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) class in place and running.
- Staff members are very sensitive toward other staff members with disabilities.
- We have an Inclusion Coordinator in our Religious School.
- Our budget has a line item for inclusion which will be increased for the next fiscal year.
- We have accessible materials and the building is accessible.
- *Madrichim* from the Religious School had a successful fundraiser for inclusion, and our *Tzedakah* Fair raised money for inclusion.
- We have a dedicated fund for inclusion.
- We have had inclusion services and dinners.
- We have Inclusion *Havdallah* services.
- Some people with disabilities are included in congregational life.
- Our rabbis support inclusion.
- Outreach to congregation and the Jewish community.
- In-services about inclusion and disabilities have been provided to religious school staff.
- *Shiva* books in large print.

Our Partners

(be sure to list these people by name on your own list)

- Inclusion Committee members
- Religious School staff
- Professional staff
- Executive Director
- Rabbis and Cantor
- Office staff
- Teachers
- Teaching assistants
- Congregational Executive Committee and Board
- Committee chairs
- Lay leaders and volunteers

- Youth Group leadership and members
- Sisterhood
- Community Inclusion Program Manager

Our Strengths

- Our building is accessible to people with physical disabilities.
- Very supportive clergy.
- Vocal Inclusion Committee.
- Some members of the Inclusion Committee have someone close to them who struggles.
- Flexibility in adaptations to attend religious school.
- Some funds are available.
- History of including people who are different.
- We can identify and write grants.
- Informed Inclusion Committee members.

Six Months from Today

- Raising Awareness (**Note:** this was identified as a specific goal. Below are the steps to do over the next six months)
 - Written materials and information about resources and accommodations will be provided in:
 - Religious school and preschool packets
 - *B'nai Mitzvah* handbooks
 - Service handouts/programs
 - Membership materials
 - We will publicize our inclusion statement.
 - We will publicize accommodations ahead of time.
 - Better signage.
 - Website—we will begin to work on having an inclusion link.
 - We will work with our rabbis and cantor to focus on inclusion from the pulpit.
- Inclusion Committee (**Note:** this was identified as a specific goal. Below are the steps to do over the next six months)
 - Increase active membership of the committee.
 - We will look at the job description and funding so that the Inclusion Coordinator can attend Inclusion Committee meetings.
- Disability Awareness Training (**Note:** this was identified as a specific goal. Below are the steps to do over the next six months)
 - Completed or scheduled for:
 - Youth group advisors and leaders
 - Teaching assistants
 - Teaching staff
 - Professional and administrative staff

- Lay leadership
 - Leadership Development Program—formal training on inclusion should be included as part of this program.
 - Adult membership should be included in disability awareness training
- Transportation (**Note:** this was identified as a specific goal. Below are the steps to do over the next six months)
 - Consult with Jewish Family and Children’s Service to see how they are implementing transportation to Annual Meeting and Benefit.

Note: Achievement of these goals is a work in progress. Defining specific steps can help you stay focused, reaching your goals by the end of the year.

One Month from Today

- Written inclusion statement for all materials will be developed and disseminated to Inclusion Committee for feedback. After revisions, will be forwarded to staff so they can use it in their materials.
- May 5 *Havdallah* Service will be our opportunity to actively recruit new members for the Inclusion Committee—who will ask potential members will be determined.
- Talk to executive director and rabbi about people they think may have an interest in the Inclusion Committee.
- Ask Sisterhood to appoint a representative to the Inclusion Committee.
- Ask *Torah* Study group if someone would be interested in joining the Inclusion Committee.
- Ask incoming president to include remarks about our Inclusion initiative in speech for the annual meeting.
- Develop disability awareness training using the chapters in the *Jewish Community Guide to Inclusion of People with Disabilities*.
- Send executive director the mission and vision statement of the Inclusion Committee.
- Talk to executive director about signage telling people what services are available.
- Write article for congregational bulletin (DEADLINE MAY 5) about the Visioning Session, goals, and priorities. Also see if this can go on website which has good visibility.

Remember, execution of items on this list is shared by members of the Inclusion Committee so that the tasks do not fall on one or two people.