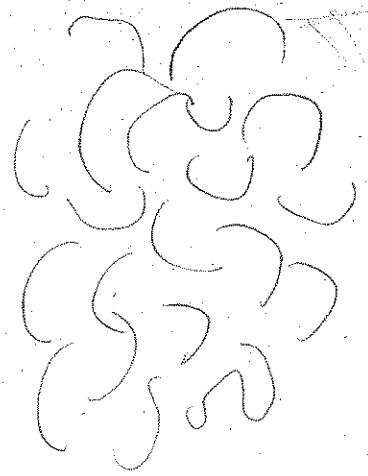


**Agenda
Inclusion Task Force
December 16, 2010**



Welcome

D'var Torah

Jewish Disabilities Awareness month - February 2011 is the third annual Jewish Disability Awareness Month, presenting congregations with an opportunity to become truly welcoming. Together we can use this month to break down physical, communication, and attitudinal barriers, educate our communities on what accessibility and inclusion really mean, and reach out to Jews with disabilities.

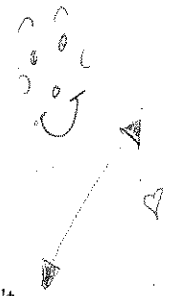
Ideas for the month

Community teach- 2-3 teachings we, lay people, take into the community

Religious school programming to raise awareness

Mercaz Students : I am Norm Campaign- www.iamnorm.org *

Inclusion Shabbat's



What we have learned from various Committee/Programs at WRT

What are we doing to address the needs of inclusion? - at our most recent WRJ meeting. Since we don't have a specific policy that deals with inclusion, the discussion brought out the fact that we should have an actual policy. Many ideas were floated. Board members were actively involved and interested in addressing any special needs that might arise at any WRJ sponsored program or in the functioning of our board.

A variety of things to address included:

How to reach those who feel excluded

Invite new or inactive members to WRJ events by making personal phone calls

Be sure that when they do come to an event they are personally asked to sit with a member

Have a marker on a new member's name tag so that they anyone who speaks to her will be aware of her new membership

Perhaps institute an "Adopt a member" program - a member should be responsible for that person's inclusion

At luncheon/dinners there should always be a seat or two open at a table when someone asks to sit there (perhaps a board member could move to another table to make room)

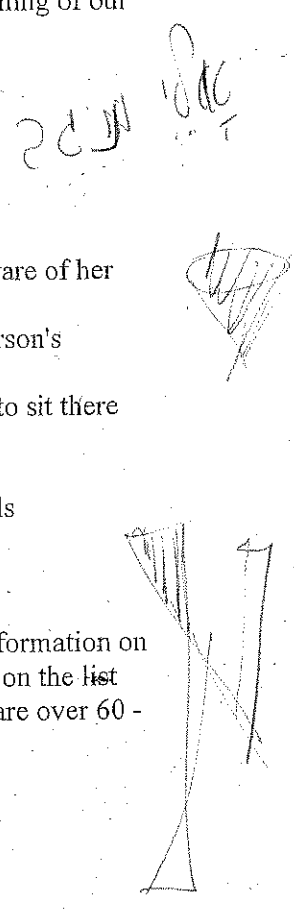
Incorporate a Greeters committee similar to WRT's -

Have 2 people stationed at the entrance to an event to greet and be sure everyone entering feels comfortable and welcomed

Be sure to find out who needs communication attention i.e. those who do not "do" e-mail

Have a list that is kept current with the person's name, telephone number and any pertinent information on how to contact that person. Assign a board member or 2 the task of contacting those who are on the list

The Scarsdale Village At Home program was mentioned as a great service for residents who are over 60 - This is a resource that we might include in our Inclusion Task Force discussions.



Cantor Abramson

B'nai Mitzvah

1. Oversee tutoring so students with special needs get the help they need; partnership with Nancy Abraham
2. Create learning plans for individual students
3. Work with clergy to sculpt the actual bare/bat mitzvah services for special needs students and families

WRJ

1. Thanksgiving Dinner for the Visually Impaired (clergy participation; religious school participation)

Social Action

1. Tu B'Shevat Seder for Developmentally Disabled (clergy participation)
2. Chanukkah party for Developmentally Disabled (**post-confirmation/confirmation participates**;clergy participation)

Other: Inclusion Shabbat

ECC

Brenda Stern the social worker goes into classes and talks about friendship and bullying issues. She is also available to help teachers and families.

SEIT's are welcome into program.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

We have a "Learning Differences Coordinator" on staff who outreaches to parents of students with Learning Differences, arranges one-to-one support for students and works with the teachers as well.

Many students with learning differences of all sorts are accommodated in our Religious School program with specially selected teachers (and peers), additional help, special schedule arrangements or a combination of the above. All students can become Bar or Bat Mitzvah at WRT: extended tutoring is offered as well as adjusted expectations for the student participation in the service. Children with special needs are offered "single" Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebrations.

We have a "no nuts" policy for all food that we serve and we offer special foods or snacks for allergic children at any program where food is served (eg. Chanukkah, Mercaz).

Students in our Mitzvah Corps and 11th and 12th grade volunteer at the Social Action events noted above.

We have special programs for Jewish Disabilities Awareness month and have also had other events to raise awareness of this important concern.

In the new Beit Midrash, there is an elevator which can be used to reach the second floor by anyone who has mobility challenges.

Single Parents living with divorce or who are Widowed

Support Groups

We have had two incredible events so far. One the end of September in the sukkot and one this past weekend to celebrate the end of Hannukah and the winter. We have reached different age groups and even some married women have come. The events have a spiritual component and then everyone reveals issues that they are dealing with as single parents. It is a great forum to bare your soul without fear of being judged.

Our next event will be a dinner shared before attending a shabbat service. One of the reasons for the group was to create a community for those families that looked different and were not like the majority of those at the temple. This event will allow all of us to come and not be alone.

Allergy Awareness:

In order to be more responsive to the needs of congregants and children with special food allergies, we will try to have regular signage on the serving tables indicating the contents of any food served at WRT. In general, we should be avoiding nuts as much as possible even though we cannot declare ourselves a 100% nut-free zone because we do not have control over all caterers who use the building. Please make sure that any caterers you work with know (and affirm) that that should not be using nuts in any dish prepared for WRT. Although the ultimate responsibility for knowing what to eat rests with the congregant, we can help them make decisions by abiding to the above signage policy and giving them as much information as is reasonable about food served at WRT.

Jill Sommers will be responsible for the signage for food ordered through the temple for dinners, Dvar torah workshops, and any events for which she orders food.

The ECC and RS should prepare and display their own signs for any "food" event where they order the food, including Tot Shabbat, Mercaz, Likrat Shabbat dinners, staff events, parent coffees, etc..

Men's club and WRJ should also be responsible for signs for their events, meetings, dinners, luncheons, boutiques, etc.

Steve Siegel (or someone appointed for the TS class) should be responsible for signs for Torah Study food.

Felicia should be responsible for informing any congregants who order for special events.

Each year, we will have to give instructions to parents who order for Sharing Shabbat, Confirmation, etc.

Some general signs for bagel breakfasts, etc., can be kept in the cabinets in the Social Hall.

We can only make this work if all involved with food ordering take responsibility for "signing" their own orders when they arrive and are served. Please let me know if I left anyone off this list or if you have any further suggestions for making WRT a safer place food-wise for all of our congregants.

Discussion notes and questions:

- Who is included in this text? How do we know?
- "You stand this day..." – the Hebrew word "atem" is the plural form of "you" – in other words, all the people are being addressed, even as various groups within the group are identified. All the groups enumerated are addressed in this plural form (the suffix "-chem").
- What different groups are addressed? Leaders or "full citizens" (men) and dependents
- What is the point of specifically identifying wood-choppers and water-drawers? (These were probably considered lowly occupations – therefore highlighting that the text addresses all members of society from the highest to the lowest.)
- Who is meant by the phrase "those who are not here with us this day"? (It is traditionally understood to be pointing to future generations; it could also be understood to mean those unable to be present at this moment – for example, people who were ill or have some kind of disability.)
- "This unit emphasizes the full participation of all the people – women and men from all segments of the community - in the ceremony that establishes the covenant between God and Israel." (Women's Torah Commentary, p.1219).
- This text (and following Torah portion) was selected by the Reform movement as the reading for Yom Kippur. Why do you think it was chosen?
- Even though when we read the text it appears that the first people addressed are men (since "women" are listed separately later on), we read this as a text of inclusion. It is a great example of how Torah texts can be read with new insight as human understanding evolves. Therefore – how can we read this text as being anything more than inclusive of *all* individuals?

אַתֶּם נֹצְבִים הַיּוֹם בְּלִפְנֵיכֶם...

You stand this day, all of you, before the Eternal Your God – you tribal heads, you elders, and you officials, all the men of Israel. You children, you women, even the stranger within your camp, from wood-chopper to water-drawer – to enter into the covenant of the Eternal your God... in order to establish you this day as God's people...

I make this covenant, with its sanctions, not with you alone, but both with those who are standing here with us this day before the Eternal our God and with those who are not here with us this day.

Deuteronomy 29: 9 – 14

This text is part of Moses' final speech to the Israelites as they stand east of the Jordan River ready to cross over into the Promised Land. Here Moses begins by reminding the people of how God made a covenant with them.

Inclusion Task Force Meeting
November 10th, 2009

Introductions

D'var Torah

Review of the Visioning session
Where are we today

D'var Torah's – Committee meeting feed back

Next steps:

Feb is Jewish Disabilities Month

Jewish
Disability
Awareness
Month

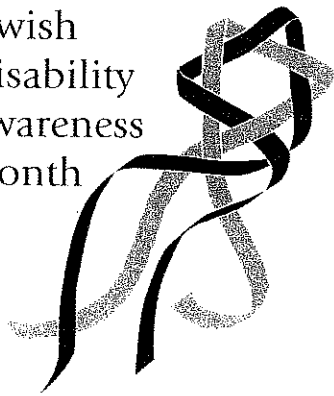


Programming within committees to raise
awareness

February 2010

New Initiatives
"Greeter/Ushers"

Jewish
Disability
Awareness
Month



February 2010

JEWISH DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH February 2010

Join a unified effort to raise disability awareness and support efforts to foster inclusion in Jewish communities worldwide.

The mission of Jewish Disability Awareness Month is to unite Jewish communities and organizations for the purpose of raising awareness and supporting meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities and their families in every aspect of Jewish life.

During Jewish Disabilities Awareness Month you can:

- Offer programs on disability awareness in your community
- Dedicate a Shabbat worship service to inclusion and the contributions of children and adults who have disabilities
- Participate in a community-wide disability awareness event such as the showing of "Autistic License" or any of the fine films listed on our website
- Start a Committee on Inclusion

Jewish Special Education International Consortium

Visit www.jsped.org for many ideas about programs and resources you can use, including the Jewish Disability Awareness Month logo.

**For additional information, contact
Shelly Christensen at schristensen@jfcsmpls.org or 952-542-4838**

The Jewish Special Education International Consortium is a professional network of directors, coordinators and administrators of Jewish special education services in Central Agencies for Jewish Education and/or Inclusion of People with Disabilities and is affiliated with JESNA.

WRT INCLUSION MEETING
December 9, 2008
Brainstorming Notes

OUR VISION OF INCLUSION

- * Bringing a disabled adults would not be an issue
 - * No feelings of discomfort around disabled people
 - * the leadership know about congregants with disabilities
 - * the leadership has created a culture of safety
 - * Inclusion is a part of all dimensions
 - * We find a place for needs we cannot meet and keep members involved in the community even if they need to go elsewhere for some facet of learning or support.
- Support / Knowledge
- * Someone is the point person for resources and it is communicated
 - * communication is thorough
 - * People feel safe to share
 - * Stigma is diffused here

ONE YEAR FROM TODAY

Themes – Accessibility / communications/ Acceptance/ support / Training

- * The sanctuary will be done with an accessible bima
- * We will have accessible bathrooms
- * The school will be nearing completion
- * We have a resource network in place
- * Communication books are in place with pictures and words available for distribution everywhere –inbound and outbound – about resources
- * Inclusion mission Statement / Logo / Bi-Line goes out in all mailings i.e. “Our doors are open to all”
- * The sermons have reflected the importance of inclusion
- * There are regular events that help to raise awareness
- * Professional development training in place
- * Ability awareness training for children
- * The role of the learning differences coordinator has been developed
- * Proactive outreach is occurring for families

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- * There is an inclusion task force with a mission statement
- * This task force is being profiled in the January bulletin
- * We have raised awareness by interviewing leaders
- * We have a learning differences coordinator
- * Praying with Lior is scheduled for January
- * We are identifying areas for improvement

OUR STRENGTHS

- * People are open
- * People are not sitting static
- * Open clergy and professions staff – dynamic and supportive
- * Passionate change makers – not afraid to make changes
- * Openness to learning
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- * We partner with other agencies
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OUR PARTNERS

- * Clergy
- * Lay leaders
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- * A timeline for the next 12 months will exist
- * Praying for Lior will be shown and discussed 1/11
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- * The surveys will be summarized

PLUS OF MEETING: organization / action oriented

NEGATIVES OF MEETING: didn't address 13.1+ age group, attendance

D'var Torah

“What is it that religion . . . can offer people who are lonely, disabled, or not? Religion offers to redeem us from loneliness, by teaching us to see our neighbors as ourselves, to be aware of their humanity, their fears and failings. Religion offers community to our lonely human souls. The house of worship represents one place where the barriers fall and we all stand equal before G□d.”

By Rabbi Harold Kushner in his book: Who Needs G.d??

Inclusion Task Force Meeting
February 10th 2009

Introductions

D'var Torah

Feb is Jewish Disabilities Month
<http://urj.org/jfc/disability/>

Review of visioning session
Where are we today
Praying with Lior

Creation of a time line

Next steps

Reimagining the Jewish Landscape

Engaging Children with Special Needs and their Families in Jewish Life
JCC Manhattan-Amsterdam and 79th Street

Sunday March 15th 9am-1

for more info 646-505-5708 www.jccmanhattan.org

Faith, Facilities and Inclusion

Creating Welcoming Programs and Sacred Spaces for Individuals with Disabilities March 22, 2009-Wilmington, DE <http://urj.org/jfc/disability/>

UJA-Federation of New York Autism Symposium

**Promoting Inclusion: Best Practices for Education, Vocation,
and Socialization Across the Age Continuum**

Monday, May 11, 2009

8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

UJA-Federation of New York
Seventh-Floor Conference Center
130 East 59th Street
New York City

For more information, please contact Alex Roth-Kahn at 1.212.836.1762 or
roth-kahna@ujafedny.org

30.
prayer
cards
Cynthia

A Prayer for Peace and Wholeness (*Shalom and Shleimut*)

Let us pray for all of God's people - for the people who are blind and cannot see, and for those who can see but are blind to the people around them.

God, in Your mercy, help us to touch each other.

For people who are deaf and cannot hear, and for those who can hear but are deaf to the cries of others,

God, in Your mercy, help us respond to each other.

For people who move slowly because of accident, illness or disability and for those who move too fast to be aware of the world in which they live,

God, in Your mercy, help us work together.

For people who learn slowly, for people who learn in different ways, and for people who learn quickly and easily but often choose ignorance,

God, in Your mercy, help us to grow in your wisdom.

For families, friends and caregivers who serve people with disabilities, and for those who feel awkward in their presence,

God, in Your mercy, help us see each other with Your eyes.

For people who feel isolated by their disabilities, and for people who contribute to that sense of isolation,

God, in Your mercy, help us change our lives.

For all the people in Your creation, that we may learn to respect each other and learn how to live together in peace and wholeness,

God, in Your mercy, bind us together.

May the One who makes peace and wholeness in the high heavens make peace and wholeness for us, all Israel and all who inhabit the earth. Amen.

Adapted from That All May Worship: An Interfaith Welcome to People with Disabilities, National Organization on Disabilities. Original litany written by the Reverend Kate Chips.

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Subj: **Inclusion Task Force Meeting June 10th 2008**
Date: 10/21/2008 10:24:43 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
From: sdwiener@gmail.com
To: CantorJEA@aol.com

~~SECRET~~

Melissa S.
Irene Steinberg
Judy Galst
EA Krimly
Carol Kadanoff
Judy Gross

minutes from meeting.

Inclusion Task Force Meeting June 10th 2008

3s - 3 ^{pecie} SE-IT ^{ducate} Get it from District.
4s 3 SE-IT it must teacher-

Welcome and D'var Torah
Yose ben Yochanah of Jerusalem said:
"Let your house be wide open."
(Pirkei Avot 1:5)

Neurotypical

10-12 / 120 = 10%

Scarstate.
Committee on Preschool Education
Amy Chandler -

Background-

Opening the Gates: Synagogue-based Inclusion Initiative

Two seminars were held for Westchester synagogues to more fully engage people with disabilities in the synagogue's spiritual, educational and social programs. Sorel Loeb and Susan Wiener attended both seminars. Carol Kadanoff also attended the 2nd seminar. Presenters were Shelly Christensen from the Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis and Deb Berman from Ramapo for Children.

Mission statement -to be worked on by Susan Wiener, Liane Carter and Ellen Blumstein

Some changes suggested that night-

The mission of Westchester Reform Temple's Inclusion Task Force is to welcome and value the diversity of abilities of our members, and creating a culture of respect, acceptance and care for all our members to be enriched by participation in our community

Create logo-

WRT-Welcoming, Respect, Tolerant

Barriers to inclusion

- Architectural
- Communication
- Attitudinal

Raising Awareness-Brainstorming of ideas of things we could do now-(not in any particular order)

- High Holiday sermons-reach everyone-help people to understand what it is like
- Showing if Praying with Lior.
 - Mercaz program invite parents and open to congregation
 - pay day- parent and youth day
 - how do we reach younger parents to come out to see
 - show several times to reach different constituencies, WRJ, Men's Club
- Component of the 6th grade retreat-anti bullying

'Dedication'

Westchester Reform Temple
Inclusion Task Force
Tuesday, October 28, 2008

Agenda:

1. Dvar Torah:

Therefore, write down this song for yourself.

Deuteronomy 31:19

Every Jew is commanded to write a SEFER TORAH for his own use. Even if he has inherited a SEFER TORAH, it is a mitzvah to write one at his own expense. If he writes it with his own hand, it is as if he has received it himself at Mount Sinai. If he does not know how he should have others write it for him. Anyone who corrects a single letter in a SEFER TORAH is credited with writing all of it.

Maimonides, MISHNEH TORAH, Laws of the Sefer Torah, 7:1

The many letters in the Torah represent the many souls of the Jewish people. If one single letter is left out of the Torah, it is unfit for use. If one single soul is left out of the union of the Jewish people, the Divine Presence will not join them. Like the letters, the soul must join together in a union. Then why is it forbidden for one letter to touch another? Because every soul must have its own unique relationship with its Creator.

Rabbi Uri of Strelisk, Tales of the Hasidim: Later Masters, Buber

**everyone
writes their s.*

*like if
you destroy
single letter
you destroy
the whole
saw a man
who saw the
whole.*

דברים

*- Moses
et al.*

*- 613th -
Commandment.*

*Explanation
of this
D13N*

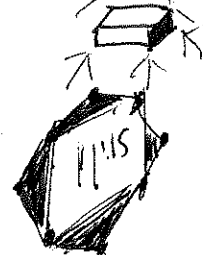


2. Review of our ongoing interviews with Temple professional and lay leaders
3. Planning for a showing of "Praying with Lior" Sunday, January 11

*- minyan
project
leads*

Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 9, 8 PM

216 INFO.



Analy.