

"Welcome to Holland"

by Jen Abramson and Hilde Sham, co-chairs of the Inclusion Committee

This past year, Beth Am formed the "Inclusion Committee" whose mission is to facilitate the accommodation, acceptance, and appreciation of individual differences so that all members of our synagogue community may participate together-in Torah study, prayer and spirituality, communal life and acts of loving kindness to all humanity. The committee members, which can include you if you choose to be a part of this amazing group, will work to identify needs within the congregation, educate and raise awareness about disabilities and special needs. Our goal is to help Beth Am address the needs of all our congregants, to the best of our ability.

So, to begin this process, we offer you "Welcome to Holland," written by Emily Perl Kingsley. It will help to educate our community and raise awareness of our work. We hope you will join us as we travel to Holland together, as a sacred community. Please feel free to contact us with questions, comments, or to join our committee.



I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability - to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this.....

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off

you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland???" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills...and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there.

And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever go away... because the loss of that dream is a very very significant loss.

But... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things ... about Holland.



In Memoriam

The Congregation notes with sorrow the passing in recent weeks of:

- Beatrice Freeman, *Sister-in-Law of Shirley Kahn*
- Solis Gilbert, *Husband of Bonnie Gilbert & Father of Jaynee Lowry*
- Paul Ginsburg, *Husband of Evelyn Ginsburg*
- Dorothy Gordon, *Grandmother of Jennifer Gordon Laver*
- Carol Gray, *Sister of Michael Kravitz*
- Sylvia Jaffe, *Mother of Carolyn Ohl*
- Paul Kish, *Uncle of Bob Brodsky*
- Neil Lansman, *Husband of Ellice Lansman & Father of Jennifer Hoffman & Scott Lansman*
- Leonard Naidu, *Father of Richard Naidu*
- Rita Litman Ostroff, *Mother of Harvey Ostroff*
- Sarah Isabelle Rice, *Great-niece of Elliot and Eileen Simmons*
- Daniel Rosen, *Son of Marlene & Barry Rosen*
- Bernard Stricoff, *Father of Robin Stricoff*
- Stanley Weinberg, *Brother of Lylla Shinberg*
- Esther Wilson, *Aunt of Eleanor Sapers*