

Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oak Park Temple B'nai Abraham Zion
Wednesday, April 12, 2017, 7 pm

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּצַרְכֵי צְבוּר:

Baruch atab Adonai Eloheinu melech haolam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu la'asok b'tzorchai tzibur.

Praised are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who sanctifies us through mitzvot and has commanded us to engage in the needs of the community.

Present: (14 counted toward quorum): Doris Angell, Jimmy Korshak, Deborah Holdstein, Danielle Sandler, Maurie Stern, Rabbi Weiss, Shari Schindler, Allison Cowett, Dan Zoloto, Marci Sperling Flynn, Olga Vydra, Sarah Lewensohn, Carolyn Sherman, Janice Moskoff, Elliott Regenstein, Marc Imowitz, Alan Fox, Mel Loeb (guest)

Absent: Liz Simon, Aaron Lebovitz, Jenn George, Brian Hammersley, Randy Gillett, Cindy Gould, Susan Cicelsky, Karen Muriello, Amy Drescher-Crumpley, Allison Mandell

Begun 7:04 pm

1. **Rabbi's Comments:** why eat matzah during Passover? Bread of slavery & servitude. No time to rise. Reading from Jonathan Sacks' Haggadah: anyone who is famished should come and eat. Why invite people to eat something that's sign of oppression? We should share even if we have little ourselves. Rabbi Sacks: sharing food is first act through which slaves become free humans. OPT is a diverse community, some who need support; also we support others in community including non-Jews. Also, people are starving for companionship.
2. **Previous Minutes:** approved with changes.
3. **Social Action (Allison Cowett)** Annika Rothbaum heads committee; Allison is Board rep. Advocacy, tzedakah, work with religious school to teach kids moral & ethical values.

Project Sandwich: 150-200 lunches sent to Outreach Mission. Jonathan Marcus is coordinator. Coordination between religious school & outsiders.

Housing Forward: not coordinated by RAC. PADS started 1992. OPT hosts every Tuesday night, and OPT members help every Wednesday at other congregations. Lutheran church.

Hat and glove drive: (Margaret Rohter) done every year. Sometimes used as b'nai mitzvah project. Benefits Midwest Workers Association.

Mitzvah day in January 2017, coordinated with religious school. Projects in all classes, then other projects for other community members. Well attended by families with children in religious school; less so by other families. Want do more. Was held in winter 2017 so no outdoor projects were done this year.

Exoneration Project (Josh Tepfer) 4-5th grades, brought visitors who were wrongly incarcerated.

Sole Hope (Green Chaverim) make denim uppers for shoes sent to Africa, avoids chigger bites.

Muslim Leadership Academy collaboration. Grew out of Shari: putting project in for URJ award. Community of Congregations needed place for Iftar gathering: Annika. 4th time meeting for Iftar; alternating meetings at OPT. During May Iftar: discussion of how to be minority in today's political climate. Project to benefit Ronald McDonald House. Feb meeting: collecting materials for Refugee One.

Refugee One: Annika suggested sponsoring family. Met twice in late fall with staff person from Refugee One. Overwhelming support; over \$17,000 donated (only needed \$8,000 to be eligible for programs), plus materials for apartment. Family arrived 12/8/2016, met by over 20 OPT members at O'Hare. OPT responsible for weekly mentoring visits to family. Mail, bills, English, books for kids. We have Google Docs description of our visits. Tutoring 3 of the 4 kids; 2 of our 6th graders are doing tutoring as B'nai Mitzvah project. Helping with child with special needs. Kids doing great in school; parents ESL in Truman College; someone in Syrian community donated a van.

Irving J. Fain Award for Social Justice- award which honors URJ congregations "doing exemplary social justice work." Awarded by RAC (religious action center). Shari is applying for the award on behalf of the Social Action committee.

4. **Political and Social Action Guidelines**(not on original agenda):

Shari: Some members objected to Women's March on Washington, because it's political not social. Serious issue with other congregations. Sarah: other synagogues doing more political stuff; will always get feedback from people who object; feel we do too little. Janice: Republicans might be uncomfortable with liberal rhetoric. Elliott: Direct servicer; analysis (big issues); advocacy (influence others; must be careful if speaking in voice of community.) Some congregations have framework to decide on going to particular event. Allison: Social Action Committee deals with this all the time; maybe should not use the term "Social Action Committee of OPT" so not obvious reflecting will of OPT. We don't carry sign saying "we represent OPT". Mel: does this affect tax deductibility? Shari: takes more political action (like "we support Hillary"), so we're not anywhere near that point. Rabbi: we're allowed to support OP school referendum because it was not political. Jimmy: does SAC decide on taking bus to demonstrations? Allison: not official; no OPT funds involved in bus to Women's March. No OPT sign on bus to DC. Deb: need balance that all perspectives are heard, hard to achieve balance. Danielle: have heard complaints on both sides. Dan Z: don't want to sanitize everything. Marci: various issues caused exodus of members over time. Olga: minority should be protected. Marc: after 2016 High Holiday sermons heard some dissenters about politicizing issues, especially in framework of religious service.

Rabbi: 6-7 years ago sent bus to Springfield supporting marriage equality. Board decided it was appropriate to do advocacy. Danielle and I see if Religious Action Center or URJ support specific issues; in case of marriage equality there was a clear mandate from RAC. Similarly for Women's March on Washington. We get many requests for advocacy. Elliott: maybe have listserv for people to advertise specific activities; neutral; maybe board should support specific positions which is different from forum. Community Corner Facebook page already exists. Marc: suggest Max communicate "this is something URJ supports." Sarah: care about email overload; must prioritize.

Shari: is everybody Ok with sniff test? Rabbi: if no OPT money is spent it's less of a problem. Danielle:

this should be in Policy Manual (which she reminded Alan must be updated.) Rabbi: URJ has hired community organizers in several major cities.,

Shari: will write something up for future meeting. Alan will work on reviewing Policy Manual section on this subject.

5. **Security (Danielle Sandler):** plans definitely are in place. We're applying for JUF security grant. We've always had emergency procedures. In touch with Oak Park police force, FBI, ADL. Doors may be unlocked during meetings upstairs or nobody available to clear people in. During services doors unlocked and this is a valid concern. Other temples have security at all times. We used to have greeters; Board members should be in Rotunda for all services, acting as greeters and incidentally to verify people's identity. Rabbi: there have been several burglaries; I keep my office locked now; answer is not locks but physical presence. Shari passed out Friday signup sheet.
6. **Auction committee:** need chair.
7. **Bios:** Some still have not provided them to Lee Kantz (lee@leekantz.com) for posting on web site. Send them to him. Include photo and brief bio.
8. **Adjourned** at 8:29 pm.
9. **Dates to Remember:**

Services Friday night, Saturday morning, Sunday morning
April 18: OPT history, conversation with Rabbi Gerson & David Sokol
April 6-20-27: American Jewish History (Rabbi)
April 17-24, May 1: Israel lecture series (Rabbi)
April 21: Earth Day Shabbat Dinner (6 pm) before services
April 28: Or & Felizia Zohar (Rabbi of Kiryat Tivon sister congregation) will lead music
April 30: Peter Hayes, Adult Ed Holocaust expert 2 pm
May 5: Kabbalat Torah
May 6: Tzedakah-Sadiqah at Islamic Foundation Mosque in Villa Park
May 7: Israel Solidarity Day
May 10: Board meeting

Respectfully submitted
--Alan Fox, Secretary