



CONGREGATION  
SUKKAT SHALOM  
**Bulletin**

## Rabbi's Message

by Rabbi Sam Gordon

*"The old shall dream dreams, and the young shall see visions."*

The tragedy at Parkland, Florida, has served as a catalyst for motivating young people to become activists in a campaign to change the laws and culture of our country regarding guns and violence. I have been inspired to see the commitment and engagement of high school students throughout our country, led by those from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

Out of grief and mourning for their fellow students and teachers, they have organized and spoken out. They have demanded changes in laws and attitudes. While Congress and state legislatures may resist change, they already have made an impact on American corporations and local communities.

Perhaps more importantly, the Parkland high school students have inspired other teens to lift their voices and take leadership roles in a national movement to fight against gun violence and ensure safety in our schools and workplaces. These young leaders have galvanized adults to join them in marches and lobbying efforts to demand sensible gun laws.

On Friday night, March 2nd, teens led our Shabbat service as we joined with other

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## *My Journey* by Shoshana Buchholz-Miller



Through my '20s, I felt an internal conflict about my Jewish identity. My mother was Jewish, my father was not. Although I was raised in a Jewish home, we celebrated Christmas and other holidays with my father's family, who were -- and are -- terribly dear to me.

While I grew up in a predominantly Jewish community, I was conscious of the "other" -- my father. While he was a leader in our community, I think he was always aware of being different, which made me feel different -- and a bit proud to be so.

In college I was in the minority as a Jew for the first time and, in that role, I embraced my Judaism more. And then the pendulum swung in the other direction, when I spent a post-college year in Israel and was acutely aware of how non-Jews in and outside of Israel were sometimes treated and thought of -- again, as the "other."

Had I not met Victor in Israel, and had Judaism not been an important part of his identity, I'm not sure where my journey would have taken me. But together we were committed to having a Jewish life in an environment that would be accepting of the various ways Jews identify and that is engaged and committed to the world around it.

When we moved to Wilmette with small children over a decade ago, we began

***"I had done Sunday and Hebrew School as a kid. Why did I need to do it again?"***

"synagogue hopping," trying to find a place that felt right to us. We moved from Conservative to Reform to Reconstructionist, never finding quite

the right fit. We felt like Goldilocks and the Three Bears. I had heard of Sukkat Shalom, but felt that the Family School model might be too much for me. I had done Sunday and Hebrew School as a kid. Why did I need to do it again? But we were still not finding the right fit for us, so Victor convinced me to give it a try.

We attended High Holy Day services, a Shabbat dinner and Family School. It was meeting with Rabbi Gordon that made the connection for us. He talked about the open door of the community, its welcoming and nonjudgmental nature, its quest for knowledge and social justice. I was willing to give up every other Sunday to give it a try.

What this journey made clear to me was that working for justice for all people is the way I express my Jewish values. I am most comfortable in an environment that is not insular but open and embracing of differing perspectives and experiences. I spent my career working for social justice in various ways and this journey has culminated over the past

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## Musical Notes: Israeli, American Pop Are Surprisingly Close Cousins

by Cantorial Soloist Kenny Lyons

Despite the distance between the two countries, and the vastly different traditions of many of their citizens, Israeli popular music and American popular music are remarkably similar.

The instrumentation of most songs heard on Israeli radio features catchy, synth-driven hooks that are easy to dance or sing along to. The difference is found in the scales and vocal stylings employed by most Israeli singers—sounds that are undeniably evocative of older, more unfamiliar musical traditions of the Middle East.

Just like in America, pop stars come and go—but many enjoy enduring fame and popularity. The following “listicle” touches on a few of the most popular Israeli pop artists, some of whom have even had success in America.

**Idan Raichel** is an award-winning pianist and singer known for his fusion of various cultures, religious texts and musical backgrounds to produce a unique and beautiful sound. He routinely collaborates with musicians of different racial or religious backgrounds. Listen to “Hinach Yafah (Thou Art Fair),” which is actually a musical setting for text from the biblical Song of Songs.

**Omer Adam** rose to fame more recently, after performing and impressing on an Israeli TV version of “American Idol.” Despite not winning the competition, Adam has enjoyed several years of success on the Israeli charts. Listen to a January 2018 release titled “Shnei Meshugaim” to hear music that mixes American pop formulas with a distinctly Middle Eastern sound.

**Yael Naim** holds the distinction of being the only Israeli artist to reach the top ten in the U.S. Billboard Top 100. Her song “New Soul” rose to ninth on the charts

when it was featured in a commercial for MacBook Air. Naim is much more than one song, though. A dual citizen of Israel and France, Naim enjoys incredible popularity in her two home countries and across Europe. In addition to “New Soul,” listen to “Too Long” -- a moody, brooding song that blends English and Hebrew lyrics, as well as several musical styles.



A giant of the Israeli popular music scene, the band **Hadag Nachash** blends funk and hip-hop with Middle Eastern musical traditions. Their virtuosic musicianship collides head-on with lyrics that often protest aspects of religious and political life within Israel. Anger and calls to action are often disguised behind infectious grooves, backed by a rambunctious brass section. Check out two tracks from their mega-hit album *Homer Mekomi* (Local Stuff): “Shirat HaSticker (The Sticker Song)” and “Chalifot (Suits).”

## Rabbi's Message, cont'd

area Reform congregations for “Teens Take the Bima.” Elsewhere in this newsletter are some of the messages our teen leaders shared with the congregation. It was also our first experiment with live streaming, so you can watch the service by going onto our Facebook page to access that recording. It was extremely moving to hear the passion and insight of our high school youth.

Looking back 50 years to 1968, many of us recall that a young generation responded to the Vietnam War and the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy through protests and marches. Many young people were inspired to be activists and to take the lead in moving our nation in new directions.

To me, it feels like this might be a moment when a generational transfer of leadership is taking place in America. I am feeling very hopeful that these young people will take up the mantle of political and social responsibility in helping to move our nation forward and into the future.

## *Journey, cont'd*

three years in my work as Vice President of the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center. In this role, my Jewish identity has strengthened -- building on the foundation created over decades and solidified at Sukkat Shalom.

I feel it is an imperative and a privilege to educate tens of thousands of visitors about this dark chapter in our history -- a time when our “otherness” transformed to dehumanization and persecution. It is a special honor to be playing this role now, when I can work with Holocaust survivors -- a window that is sadly closing. But equally important, it is an imperative and privilege to make the connection from the past to the future; to inspire visitors to take action, to speak up and not be bystanders. So when hatred rears its head against any group of people, they are not deserted and helpless, but championed by their fellow human beings.

I am saddened that this work seems more important today than at any time I can remember. But I am proud that, when I ask myself what I am doing to improve the world, I can point to my daily work: educating the public on the Rohingya genocide, hosting an exhibition on Syrian refugee children, and speaking out against a troubling Polish law that may gag an honest appraisal of the role of Poles in the Holocaust. In this way, I express my Judaism every day. And I am grateful to my parents, to Victor, to Sukkat Shalom and to my children -- all who have led me on this journey.

*“What this journey made clear to me was that working for justice for all people is the way I express my Jewish values.”*

# Fighting Oppression Through “Peace Posts” to Promote Equality, Empower Women

by Zoe Parker

Recently, women have been coming out against inappropriate interactions in a movement called the Me Too campaign. These women have been too scared to say something before now. They were oppressed, silenced, and felt like they were not valued. They were underpaid, taken advantage of and at times threatened or harmed.

Evanston Township High School (ETHS), along with many schools across the country, had a dress code banning certain items and containing vague guidelines of what was appropriate to wear at school. Many dress codes also include rules against anything a teacher may deem inappropriate. These rules can be problematic because they are often vague, gender-specific, and can be described as

policing women's bodies.

These types of dress codes are enforced differently among different groups of people, usually based on body type and race or ethnicity. This kind of behavior and oppression is very much related to what we see in the Torah. In my Torah portion, we read about the Israelites escaping oppression in Egypt and celebrating Passover to remember this important story.

In August of 2017, ETHS sent out a letter saying that the dress code policy

had changed. Students had been pushing for this for a long time and they had finally succeeded. The new dress code policy states what students are allowed to wear and leaves no room for misinterpretation. The policy states that no student should be called out or shamed for their dress or appearance.



Zoe Parker and her “peace posts.”

terpretation. The policy states that no student should be called out or shamed for their dress or appearance.

This model is one other schools need to adopt. Dress codes really limit your ability to express yourself, and often enforce body-shaming and gender stereotypes. Such practices are unfair. We need to learn from the stories in the Torah such

as the story of Passover that tell us to fight for justice, stand up for those who are not truly heard.

For my Mitzvah project, I crafted large posts with words of peace in many languages: English, Spanish, Hebrew, and Arabic. They say, “Peace, Love, and Equality.” This is important in showing that everyone is equal and respected throughout our community. Part of the significance of these posts is that they create a strong and positive message that is a clear statement for all to see. Speaking out against intolerance is incredibly important and with these markers, we are taking a stand and promoting inclusion.

These “Peace Posts” are going to be raffled off with proceeds donated to Jewish Women international or JWI. JWI is a great organization as it works to empower women and girls by protecting their physical safety and economic security, promoting leadership and inspiring community engagement.

My project is about overcoming oppressive thoughts and attitude and Passover is a story about people escaping slavery and oppression. It is through this story in the Torah that we learn that it is important to fight for justice by refusing to be silenced, and taking action.

## Maxing Out: Mother-Daughter Team Benefits 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Family School Students

by Jodi and Amanda Max

Spending Sundays with family is the foundation of our Family School program. Not only do students and parents get to spend time learning together, so do we as a mother-daughter teaching team. Time once spent making pancakes in our pajamas, getting ready for dance practice and finishing up the weekend's homework has turned into coffee and lesson-planning on the second floor of the Wilmette Recreation Center.

I'm Jodi Max -- a pre-K teacher by day and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Family School teacher on Sundays. I have three children: Kelli (a 6<sup>th</sup> grade Family School teacher), Amanda, and Tyler. The only “child” that still lives at home with me is my dog, Bailey.

I'm Amanda Max -- a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher in Chicago and private reading tutor in Highland Park. I'm also a 5<sup>th</sup> grade Family School teacher. I spend much of my time commuting back and forth between the city and suburbs.

Together, we have the privilege of helping to educate the enthusiastic 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Family School. Our work is grounded in building community and exploring the teachings of the prophets. We started working together as co-kindergarten teachers at Sukkat Shalom.

As we transitioned to teaching 5<sup>th</sup> grade together, it has been so special to see our young students grow into their own Jewish identity. It has also been an opportunity for us to expand our knowledge and conversation about our own Jewish heritage.

Although our lives have changed and we no longer live in the same house, Family School at Sukkat Shalom has become our new home.



5<sup>th</sup> grade Family School teachers Jodi (left) and Amanda Max.

# “Teens Take the Bima” to Share Thoughts on Gun Violence and the Future

At Shabbat services on Friday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, a number of our of teen congregants spoke to the congregation about the Parkland, Florida, tragedy and the national movement it has spawned. Following are excerpts from some of their speeches.

## Annelise:

Over the past two weeks, I've felt this exciting, but also scary, sense that what is happening in our country now will go down in history as an incredibly important movement. It's easy to feel like you're completely powerless, especially as a teen. I think this is emphasized by the fact that, for the most part, we live safe, sheltered and privileged lives.

*“Teens are the ones who are making the difference in our country right now by fighting for what we believe in.”*

The incredible thing about this “reinvented” form of the anti-gun violence movement is that it shows teens nationwide that we DO have a voice. It's not that we didn't know that before. But the Parkland students have stepped up and acted as a guide for the rest of us. They are some of the most admirable people in our country right now.

I think for many it seems as though this is the first time there has been such a movement driven by young people. And in some ways this is true; I think it's ONE of the first times -- but not the ONLY time -- that a large movement driven by young people using social media has gained momentum. But it's certainly not the first time young people have sparked a movement. Think about the Civil Rights Movement that was so driven by the actions of young people through sit-ins and Freedom Rides. This is not even the first time in this decade that young people have organized on a large scale to fight for gun violence prevention. Think about the Black Lives Matter movement.

Our nation needs to recognize that our gun violence problem runs deeper than we thought. The long-term solution to this problem is to change the way that our nation thinks about and treats guns. But even more than that, our nation needs to change the way that it thinks about race. Gun violence truly is a multifaceted issue -- a nationwide issue in more ways than one. But the bottom line is that this movement is about saving

lives and creating a safe country for ALL people.

I hope that we've inspired you to think more about what is happening in our country right now. There are so many sides, and the issue is so complicated. But we all need to work together, and not be

intimidated by the complexity of the issue. We need to recognize various opinions, talk about them, and then take action. This is especially important as Jews. The Talmud tells us: *“If you can stop the whole world from sinning, and do not, you are held responsible for the sins of the whole world.”* By working together, we can take action to “stop the world from sinning” and achieve the goal of *tikkun olam* -- to make our world a better place.

## Lucy:

I spent last weekend in Washington, D.C. for the L'taken Social Justice Seminar where Jewish teens from all over the country came to learn about the issues happening in our country right now and share our views about them with members of Congress.

At the seminar, we learned specifically about immigration, reproductive rights, LGBTQ rights, criminal justice, gun violence prevention and more. We divided up these issues, wrote speeches and lobbied our Representative, Jan Schakowsky, and our Senators, Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth. Rachel Rudolph and I wrote about the criminal justice system in our country -- specifically, lobbying for bail reform.

We also learned a lot about gun control laws which, unfortunately, was very timely because we attended the seminar just a few days after the Parkland school shooting. As you can imagine, it was a very prominent topic of the weekend. While at the seminar, we attended a gun violence discussion where most teens felt

the same way that we did -- that something needed to be done to get stricter gun control in America. For us, it was extremely inspiring to see hundreds of teens around the country gathering to try to make a difference and change gun laws, just like the kids in Parkland.

## Rachel:

Representative Schakowsky's chief of staff told us that teens like us, lobbying and protesting for what we believe in, are the ones who are making a difference in our country. We learned that because of these protests senators and representatives were now trying more than ever to get gun control laws passed, such as tighter background checks, banning bump-stocks that turn semi-automatic guns to fully-automatic, and raising the age limit to be able to purchase a gun.

We learned that only 35 percent of guns used in Illinois actually come from Illinois. A majority of these guns are bought in Indiana -- showing how gun problems are a national issue, not just a state issue. We also learned that our teen effort is helping, and were encouraged to keep up the momentum by engaging in social media activism and continuing to reach out to our representatives. Already, major companies like Dick's Sporting Goods and Walmart have adjusted their gun policies, raising the minimum age of gun buyers to 21 and ending the sale of assault-style weapons.

As Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote: “In a free society, only some may be guilty but all are responsible.” While only a very small number of people are responsible for the gun violence happening in our country right now, we are all responsible to make sure that we put an end to it. Teens are the ones who are making the difference in our country right now by fighting for what we believe in, and we will continue to do so as we become the future leaders and activists of our generation.



# Seeking Justice Through Nutritional Assistance to the Needy

My Torah portion is known as Shof'tim, or "Judges." It is part of a speech by Moses to the Israelites who are about to enter the Land of Israel. Moses knows he will not enter the Promised Land with them, so in this speech he is setting up the justice system for them to create. He gives many details about appointing judges and legal officials to carry out justice within the society. He also warns against the worship of other gods.

God wanted the children of Israel to establish a justice system as opposed to what they knew when they were in Egypt, where the law could change at the whim of a pharaoh. God wanted them to be free, and the definition of freedom is not anarchy but the reliance on an orderly justice system.

Generally speaking, there is one line that held the most meaning to me: "Tzedek, tzedek, tirdof," which translates to, "Justice, justice shall you seek." I find this word choice to be very meaningful because the

phrase "shall you seek" means justice is never fully obtainable. You must constantly fight for it.

In light of my portion on justice, I decided to undertake my bar mitzvah project at A Just Harvest, a food pantry in Rogers Park. Volunteering there is a way to serve others and work towards a more just world. I clean and help cook and serve dinner to more than a hundred people at a sitting. I'm glad I have the chance to make a positive change for some of our most vulnerable citizens.

Food and justice might seem unrelated. Yet, lack of nutrition not only negatively impacts physical wellness, but also mental health and brain growth. This issue particularly affects low-income populations and also continues the cycle of poverty by disadvantaging our most defenseless citizens.

In addition, there is tremendous environmental cost to our food system, most

of which stems from agribusiness and processed foods. This is an injustice in and of itself, because researchers have shown that climate change most detrimentally affects the poor. Therefore, food is extremely important not only to social justice, but also to the health of the globe.

As I continue to grow and mature, I plan to study social justice further and to devote myself to supporting ideas that help make our world a more equitable and kinder place. I've learned that our problems are complicated and there are no easy fixes, but the struggle is worthy. I will always remember the words: "Tzedek, tzedek tirdof. Justice, justice you shall seek."

## Making Warm Connections at Winter Family Retreat

by Emily Paris

*[Over a December weekend, a number of families from Sukkat Shalom joined Rabbi Daniels for a Family Retreat on the grounds of the URJ's Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. Here is one participant's account]:*

Our family had the privilege of attending the Sukkat Shalom Family Retreat this winter. We were hoping to get to know other families from the congregation and enjoy a little R&R in a natural setting. Both of our goals were achieved!

It was the perfect balance of organized activities that brought everyone together and free time where we could play and socialize with our new friends. We did puzzles, played board games, completed a scavenger hunt, played active games in the gym, made snow angels, did arts and crafts, made s'mores, sang songs, talked about Judaism, and had deep and meaningful conversations around the fire.

We really got to know the other families in attendance, and now our kids look forward to Family School so they can see their new friends. The Family Retreat was a great weekend, but it has made every Family School Sunday more enjoyable, as well.



*Participants in our December Family Retreat.*



## Calling All Bakers and Drivers!

The Hineinu (We Are Here) Committee is currently looking for drivers to deliver Shabbat bags at the end of the month for congregants who have lost a loved one or added a baby to their family. The number of deliveries usually ranges between one and four each month.

We also need baked treats for our Shabbat bags. They should be packaged and put in the freezer at the temple.

Please contact the temple office for more information or if you want to sign up.

# Overcoming Addiction By Building a Sacred Community of Trust

by Rabbi Carlie Daniels,  
Director of Lifelong Learning

In early March, I participated in a week-long immersion experience at Beit T'shuvah, a Jewish addiction treatment center and synagogue community in Los Angeles. Beit T'shuvah is a non-profit, faith-based residential treatment program that incorporates Judaism, psychotherapy, twelve-step, and creative arts. Our cohort of six rabbis and educators from across the country spent a week immersed in the Beit T'shuvah community, learning about its innovative approach to treatment and recovery, hearing stories from residents and staff, and studying Torah.

Over the course of the week we learned from Harriet Rosetto, Licensed Clinical

Social Worker and Founder, and her husband and partner Mark Borovitz, Beit T'shuvah's Senior Rabbi. Both Harriet and Mark taught: "The opposite of addiction is not sobriety, it is connection." And Beit T'shuvah serves to do just that -- creating connections among the residents as well as their congregational community.

Addiction is a disease that often results in shame. As a society and as a Jewish community, we do not discuss addiction openly. Instead, it is something that we often try to shield ourselves from, even when addiction touches someone we love.

Harriet led a session called, "You Don't Have to Be an Addict to be in Recovery." It was one of the most meaningful sessions of the week. She teaches that, essentially, we are all broken and everyone needs connection and a passion and purpose in life. When we learn to address our own brokenness, it makes us less judgmental of others' mistakes.

Each resident at Beit T'shuvah learns to share their story as a part of their recovery, and that openness and vulnerability is what forges connections with others -- helping to create and sustain a beautiful, loving and supportive community. Ultimately, we are all seeking connection and purpose in our lives, and it's through our own vulnerability that we create connections.

The recovery program at Beit T'shuvah addresses the whole person — spiritual, emotional, and physical. In his book, Recovery: The Sacred Art, Rabbi Rami Shapiro teaches: "Addiction is a disease. Most people in twelve-step recovery assume that their disease is physical: an alcoholic's disease is the inability to drink moderately, just as a drug addict's disease is the inability to cease taking drugs... I disagree. My assumption is that alcoholism, drug addiction, compulsive overeating, and any other addictive behavior are physical symptoms of a deeper psychospiritual disease, a state of mind that all humans share. The real

disease from which all of us suffer is the disease of playing God, of thinking we are or should be in control of what happens to us in life."

Rabbi Shapiro argues that the addiction serves as a substitute for God, or a higher power or meaning in one's life. Through my time at Beit T'shuvah, I realized that understanding how our own brokenness manifests itself in our lives can lead us to healing and wellness.

As I continue to process and reflect on this experience, I will consider how I can bring this learning to our congregation. If you are interested in learning more about Beit T'shuvah, please visit their website at: [www.beittshuvah.org](http://www.beittshuvah.org). If you or a loved one are struggling with addiction, please feel free to reach out to me at: [cdaniels@sukkatshalom.org](mailto:cdaniels@sukkatshalom.org) or 847-251-2675 x12.

Just as the residents and staff of Beit T'shuvah have built a sacred community by sharing of themselves with others, so can we continue to build our community on transparency, sharing and love.

*"As a society and as a Jewish community, we do not discuss addiction openly."*



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