We practice radical hospitality.
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Rabbi’s Report
Submitted by: Rabbi Michael Ragozin

From my perspective, the purpose of Shirat Hayam is to deploy Jewish wisdom and practices to promote human flourishing. We flourish through deeper webs of relationships (community, family, within ourselves, spirituality, etc.), gratitude, joy, living with greater awareness, and more. Therefore, we strive to create accessible Jewish experiences that result in these feelings.

To accomplish the above, there are three main areas of focus.

Over the past year, Diane Levin, Howie Abrams, and I have worked to bring our efforts in these three areas into alignment. We have made some progress and set the stage for even greater alignment under the next board president.

At the same time the environment at Shirat Hayam over the past year has been characterized by change among the professional team. New team members since May 1, 2016 include:
- Center for Early Education (CEE) Director, Cheryl Schwartz
- Center for Jewish Education (CJE) Director, Janis Knight
- Director of Membership and Engagement, Sherri Crowley

Our Executive Director, Diane Levin, had only been on the job a few weeks when this past year began. I, too, have been rabbi at Shirat Hayam for less than two years and am still
learning about our community. Ironically, in this dynamic environment the fact that Cantor Elana and I led High Holy Day services for the second time together constitutes stability.

Our remarkably talented, industrious and dedicated team of professionals has worked hard to overcome the normal challenges of staff transitions and being in a new job. As we coalesce as a team and learn our individual responsibilities, we grow our capacity and likelihood for success.

As a leader in the organization, my focus has been on setting priorities and aligning our team in execution of those priorities, primarily in the spiritual area. I also strive to create conditions that allow individuals not only to succeed in their areas of responsibilities, but also to shift their responsibilities to the best and highest use of their time and talents. At the same time, this has been a team effort. I am grateful to my colleagues for their true partnership and guidance.

As I outlined in February of 2016 the primary priorities are:

- Maintain high quality Shabbat experiences, including Synaplex™
- Make Shirat Hayam the best place for Jewish families
- Advance adult learning

Highlighted achievements include:

**Shabbat, Spiritual, and Pastoral**

- Launch of the Holy Happy Hour Minyan. This new, monthly, Friday night experience drew 45 and 79 participants in March and April, a significant increase over average Friday night attendance of 13.
- I combined our daily minyan with Temple Sinai. Since the merge of the daily minyan, we have begun to combine some of our holiday services as well.
- I have performed 28 funerals in the past year.
- Renewal Minyan. Over the past couple of months we’ve had some extraordinary Renewal services. Credit to Cantor Elana for her spiritual leadership, including cultivating a unique and diverse team of percussionists.

**Jewish Families**

- Teens. Through a relationship with the North Shore Teen Initiative, I helped to launch the Sloane Peer Leadership Fellowship. This fellowship equips teens with the social skills to engage their teen peers in Jewish life.
- Together with Cantor Elana and Janis Knight we created a vibrant Tuesday afternoon song-prayer experience that not only encultuates students into Shirat’s signature spiritual expression, but also fosters a relationship between students and clergy.
- Shabbat breakfasts. I hosted K – 2 students and their parents for a special Shabbat breakfast with “Ragomuffins” (my own cinnamon and orange rolls) at my home, building community and relationships among the families. Thanks to Cantor Elana for leading in my absence and the Renewal Minyan for their understanding.
- I hosted 20s and 30-somethings for Shabbat dinner on September 9, February 3 and April 7.
Adult Learning
- Obama Doctrine Examined drew over 120 people.
- Summer Weekday Nosh & Drash averaged 60 participants.
- iEngage – a nine-part study about Israel has 82 registrants.
- Year-round Torah study was well-received with registration approximately 20.
- Sulam for Purposeful Living – a learning experience that aims to inspire baby-boomers to draw from the deep waters of life experience and Jewish wisdom and find even more purpose in their relationships with their family, friends, colleagues and synagogue community.

Financial Leadership
- I have played an active role in development, contributing to the success of our LEV initiative.

Community
- Inclusion; Radical Hospitality 2.0. Thanks to the efforts of Shir Lanu, Shirat Hayam’s inclusion team, Shirat Hayam is now a Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Partner.
- Launch of the Campus Anti-Semitism Task Force.
- Raised over $2,000 to support a local Syrian refugee family.
- Currently pursuing establishment of Jewish-Muslim dialogue.

All of the above has been a team effort. Together, the professional team and clergy are partners in thought and execution. Lay people, too, have played a critical role many initiatives. I look forward to our continued success as we continue to gel as a team and as a community.
Cantor’s Report
Submitted by: Cantor Elana Rozenfeld

The 2017 annual meeting marks the end of my sixth year as cantor of Congregation Shirat Hayam. I feel so blessed to be part of this community, and to work alongside Barri, Janis, Cheryl, Sherri, Marylou, Richard, Diane, Rabbi Michael and our other staff.

This year, I’ve continued teaching my b’nei mitzvah students and my Cohen Hillel Academy fifth grader trope class. In addition to engaging pre-b’nei mitzvah students in leyning, I also keep some post b’nei mitzvah kids and adults in the reading circuit: reading Megillah on Purim, haftarah, and Torah. I hope to train more child and adult Torah readers in the years to come.

Our regular services have been evolving beautifully, from the High Holy Days, to Friday night services, and our Shabbat morning Synaplex™. In fact, this year we introduced the Holy Happy Hour Minyan, a musical Friday night service which occurs each month. It begins with drinks and schmoozing, followed by a short, musical Kabbalat Shabbat service, ending with cookies and more schmoozing. Our first Holy Happy Hour Minyan was a huge success, and our second one was even better attended. We hope to have continued excitement and engagement with this service well into the future.

When we remember our Shabbat services this year, we must not forget our Ruach Rally Band, whose members work closely with me to infuse our Shabbatot and holiday programs with energy and spirit. So, thank you to our ever growing and evolving Ruach Rally Band. They are all amazing musicians and singers, and freely give of their time and their talents many of our program including Purim, Renewal, Share-A-Shabbat, Holy Happy Hour Minyan, and of course every Shabbat service. The Ruach
Rally Band deserves major recognition for all of their dedication this past year. In addition, thank you to Roger Talkov for taking care of our sound needs: lending us equipment, and being our go-to sound expert who takes time out of his busy workday to manage sound set-ups, break-downs, and sound checks for all major musical programs. Thank you!!

In addition to our adult musicians, I also continued to work with iShir, our kids’ choir. This choir is a mixture of CJE and Cohen Hillel students. They came this year to participate with me in mussaf and Ruach Rally once a month. They also participated in our Purim program, singing their incredible rendition of “I Want You Back,” by the Jackson 5. This year I have also continued with our teen choir, the Chai Notes. Choir members, most of whom were in iShir when they were younger, were invited to participate in many programs this year, both in and out of Shirat Hayam. They sang at our Shabbat Services, at Aviv in Peabody, Care Dimensions Hospice, the Yom Haatzmaut Concert at the Cabot, they sang on the album that I will tell you about in a moment, they will sing at Fenway Park on June 13th, and finally, they will also sing at the Soiree concert that I will also mention. They are busy young women!

Finally, I’d like to mention the recording that I am completing for Shirat Hayam and the Song at the Sea Soiree that will celebrate its release. When I arrived here, I thought to myself that any shul that prides itself on its music, and that utilizes music as a major tool of engagement, must have an album so that people know they exist. People also frequently ask me for recordings of Talit, Kaddish, etc... Now, it is finally happening, thanks to an anonymous donor. Shortly, we will have an album called “Hallelu!” This album includes melodies from Shabbat Renewal, High Holy Days, and more. We also plan to celebrate the release of this album on June 25 at our Song at the Sea Soiree! I am planning a concert that will be fun, uplifting, and get you excited about music at Shirat Hayam.

There is so much more, but I only have a page (or two).

From strength to strength,
Cantor Elana
President’s Report
Submitted by: Dr. Howard Abrams

FY 2017 ended on a high note as we were able to rise to the challenge to close the gap on our Lev fundraising to cross the $200 thousand-dollar mark and be eligible for a match dollar for dollar from some of our generous benefactors. The concerted efforts of our newly formed major donor committee, led by Janna Schwartz, Larry Groipen, Renee Sidman, Rabbi Ragozin, Cantor Elana, Barri Stein, and Diane Levin were responsible for this significant accomplishment.

As I complete my term as president, I highlight this effort as a major step towards financial sustainability which has been for us a critical but elusive goal. Along with the completion this year of a comprehensive evaluation of our fundraising needs by talented consultants, the planned addition of a fundraising staff associate to build the needed support and infrastructure, and further education of our Board of Directors and our membership, I am confident that we will find a way to definitively address our financial issues.

There is other good news that I am able to share: We have completed a thorough review of our clergy regarding whether to enter into discussions about renewing their current contracts, both of which will be ending soon. We had two productive congregational meetings and sent out a survey with over 170 responses. The special committee convened for this purpose presented their finding to the Board of Directors who voted recently to pursue extensions for both Rabbi Ragozin and Cantor Elana.

With a focus on building needed infrastructure, Board level evaluation committees have been meeting with our clergy and executive director to establish and review mutually agreed upon goals. Similar efforts to build accountability across our entire organization are underway and have already helped improve the working environment.

We are also moving forward with T’rumah (Hebrew for gift or offering), a change in our dues structure towards a voluntary model, planned for implementation in FY 19 with a launch date of April-May 2018. This will help simplify our confusing multiple dues categories, encourage everyone to re-examine and strengthen their connection, address our need to recruit new members and hopefully help our financial picture in the long run. We still have work to do to address the details of how this will work for us at CSH, so stay tuned.

I have learned a great deal about myself and CSH in these last two years, and feel
privileged to have worked closely with our talented, dedicated and passionate clergy, staff and lay leadership. I hope that others will recognize the value and realities of what it takes to run an organization as complex and ambitious as ours and will think about ways to become more involved. With pleasure and gratitude, I will be presenting the first Presidential Award at the Annual Meeting to Sheldon Frisch, in honor of his exemplary and untiring volunteer efforts on behalf of our mission, and know that there are others of you out there who can help take CSH to the next level.

It will be a transition for me to move away from the intensity and the excitement of the day to day issues, but I know that our incoming president, Renee Sidman, has the skills and energy to continue the next chapter of the remarkable CSH story. She has already shown her leadership ability with her involvement in the Center for Early Education, as well as with our fundraising and other efforts, and I know you will continue to support her and our incoming and continuing Board members.

With humility and a renewed and deep appreciation for what our faith and our kehillah can offer, it is time for me to move on, much wiser and a little tired, and glad that I didn't pass up the chance to serve. Thank you for the opportunity.
Minutes of the 11th Annual Meeting
May 17, 2016
Submitted by: Alex Shube, Clerk

Opening by Rabbi Michael
- A prayer for our congregation.

Motion to accept minutes from last year's annual meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

President's Remarks by Howie Abrams
- Changes in leadership
  - Rabbi Michael arrived in July
  - Cantor Elana went on maternity leave
  - February – Diane Levin assumed role of Executive Director
  - Center for Early Education (Preschool)
  - Hillary Canner has moved on
  - Fortunate to have Cheryl Schwartz assume role of Director.
  - Change in Center for Jewish Education (CJE) –
    - Led by Cheryl and Beth for past 2 interim years
    - Janice Knight hired to lead CJE
- Not easy to absorb this many changes in key positions
- Board Retreat with clergy and senior leadership
- Number of congregants completed Sulam Leadership program led by Rabbi Michael and Melissa Kaplowitch
- Thank you to lay leaders for committee leadership

Executive Director, Diane Levin
- Looking back over past year with series of photos. Capturing ruach over the year (even though can't take photos on holidays and Shabbat)
- Counting days of Omer… moving from miracle to miracle. Every week at CSH, we are traveling a journey of miracles.
- How joyful and spirited rabbi's installation was
- Visitors so impressed by what we do week by week. The spirituality, vibrancy
- Acknowledge our staff
- Marla Gay, Barri Stein, Cheryl Schwartz
  - Provide a foundation for our clergy’s work
- Acknowledge board for support
- As great as we do Judaism here, there’s always room for improvement.
- Two areas of priority for Diane in her role as Executive Director
  - Investment
    - Financial Capital
    - Important to develop and continue to build funding/financial planning.
    - Relationship Capital
    - Ensure that support in place for:
  - Outreach to unaffiliated
  - In-reach to better engage congregation
    - Ensure that programming has low barriers to participation
    - Inspire more volunteer engagement.

Budget Report FY2017 by Howie Abrams
- Reviewed FY2016 financials
- FY2017 Budget
  - 2% increase in membership dues
    - Thinking about moving towards a sustainable dues model
  - Modest increase in HHD seats
  - No increase in CJE Tuition
  - Fundraising
    - Have to learn how to do it better and plan strategically.
    - Board voted and put together a request for proposal for a fundraising consultant. Leaning toward hiring someone internally to help us move forward with it.
  - Membership outreach
    - Cantor and rabbi how to reach out to unaffiliated.
    - Membership engagement committee
• Present FY2017 Budget
  - Operating budget Income
    - Total income of $2,209,000
    - More modest/realistic with fundraising line (less budgeted than last year’s budget)
  - Operating Budget Expenses
    - Total expenses $2,584,000.
    - Difference: significant amount that we will have to draw on endowment.
    - Moving in right direction, less than we had to draw last year, but not long term

Leadership Development Committee Presentation by Melissa Kaplowitch
• Every member of current board is remaining on the board
• The Leadership Development Committee has presented the following nominees to the Board of Directors. Nominees new to the board are marked with an asterisk (*).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS SLATE FOR MAY 2016-MAY 2017

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

May 2016– May 2017
PRESIDENT, Howard Abrams
VICE PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES, Karynn Needel
VICE PRESIDENT, PRESCHOOL EDUCATION, Renée Sidman
& FINANCIAL CLERK
TREASURER & VICE PRESIDENT, BUDGET & FINANCE, Jason Levine
CONGREGATIONAL HOME, CHAIR, Sheldon Frisch
CLERK, Alexandra Shube
EX OFFICIO, Melissa Kaplowitch
EX OFFICIO, Joseph Selby
BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

**New Term May 2016 - May 2018**
Michael Cohen
Fran Levy Freiman*
Sheldon Frisch
Larry Groipen
Jess Heller
Yoni Hipsh*
Alexandra Shube
Jerry Rosen
Renée Sidman
Nathaniel Weiss*

**Continuing Term May 2016 – May 2017**
Howard Abrams
Brian Cohen
Larry Goldberg
Jason Levine
Karynn Needel
Hal Schwartz
Janna Schwartz
Wayne Trebbin

**Council of Advisors (Ex Officio) May 2016-May 2017**
Melissa Kaplowitch (co-chair)
David Rosenberg
Joseph Selby (co-chair)

The Leadership Development Committee and the board wish to thank the following individuals for their commitment and time served on our board: Melissa Kaplowitch, Joe Selby, David Rosenberg, Annette Baker, and Diane Levin.

The Leadership Development Committee and the Board of Directors recommended a “yes” vote on this slate.

**Motion to Approve Slate:**
It was moved to accept the slate of officers and directors presented by the Leadership Development Committee. Motion carried.

Final Remarks and Q&A. The meeting was opened to questions from congregants. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.
Proposed Slate of Officers and Board Members for 2017–2019

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:
May 2017– May 2018

PRESIDENT, Renée Sidman
VICE PRESIDENT, PHILANTHROPY, Janna Schwartz
VICE PRESIDENT FINANCE/FINANCIAL CLERK, Nathaniel Weiss
TREASURER, Jason Levine
CLERK, Alexandra Shube
MEMBER AT LARGE, Larry Groipen
MEMBER AT LARGE, EDUCATION, Jessica Heller

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

New Term May 2017 – May 2019
Larry Goldberg
Gitte Kushner*
Jason Levine
Corey Lewis*
Amy Powell*
Janna Schwartz
Joe Simons*
Steve Solomon*

Continuing Term May 2017- May 2018
Michael Cohen
Larry Groipen
Jess Heller
Yoni Hipsh*
Alexandra Shube
Jerry Rosen
Renée Sidman
Nathaniel Weiss

* New member

The Leadership Development Committee and the board wish to thank the following individuals for their commitment and time served on our board:

Howard Abrams, Brian Cohen, Karynn Needel, Hal Schwartz, and Wayne Trebbin

Suspension of bylaws

The LDC and the Board of Directors recommend this slate of nominees. However, there are conditions set by our bylaws that require a one-time suspension of two bylaws for this slate to be elected:
1. Article IX, Section 1 b, states: “Each officer must be a Member in good standing and have served previously as a Director for at least one term.”

Director Nathaniel Weiss has been nominated to serve as an Officer, and has served one year of his two-year term. However, this nominee has demonstrated strong support for Shirat Hayam and active participation in congregational leadership. The Board recommends a “yes” vote to suspend this condition for this year’s slate.

2. Article VIII, Section 3, states: “In order to serve as a Director, one must be a Member in good standing of the Congregation or one of its predecessor congregations for not less than one year prior to his or her nomination.”

Member Gitte Kushner has been nominated to serve as a Director. Her first anniversary as a member occurs on June 1, 2016—16 days following the Annual Meeting. However, this nominee has demonstrated strong support for Shirat Hayam and is an active participant in congregational life. The Board recommends a “yes” vote to suspend this condition for this year’s slate.

A simple majority of Voting Members present is needed to elect the new officers and directors.
Gitte Kushner
Gitte was introduced to Shirat Hayam two years ago, when searching for a local synagogue where she could say Kaddish for her father. She soon began attending minyan and Shabbat services regularly. Gitte is overjoyed to have found such a warm and welcoming Jewish community at Shirat Hayam. Gitte grew up in Newton, attended Boston University and lived in the greater Boston area until 2000, when she moved to the North Shore. Gitte's early career was in social work and holistic health counseling. For almost 30 years now, she has worked at Brigham and Women's Hospital. She managed the high-end fundraising events and a donor relations program for the hospital. For the past ten years, her focus has been on fundraising, as the Assistant Director of Development for Gift Planning. Gitte is a Reiki practitioner and enthusiastic student and teacher of meditation.

Corey Lewis
A native of Swampscott, Corey returned to the congregation after nearly twenty years relocating wherever Amtrak stopped; first in Hartford, then back to Boston, next to Manhattan, back to Hartford, south to Philadelphia, over to Newport, and finally returning to Swampscott. The first part of this journey was while working for film studios that were launching what is now Fox, CW, Tribune, Paramount Pictures Viacom, and Comcast's NBC Universal. The second stage of his career during the past 15 years brought him back to Swampscott, into philanthropy and public service working as the Station Manager for Boston's NPR News Station, WBUR. His interest in philanthropy and creating dialogue in our community first through work, and now as a more active member in the temple, was the inspiration for joining the board of Shirat Hayam. Corey's wife, Kathleen, a native of Connecticut, was introduced to Judaism in Philadelphia where the couple married and took many classes, both of them learning for the first time how some of our traditions came to be. Learning from these classes why kosher people can't eat a cheese-burger were always followed by further discussion at the sushi restaurant down the block. Corey and Kathleen's children are the fourth generation of the Lewis family to be influenced by our temple in all of its iterations. Max, now 15 years old, was a bar mitzvah at our temple and now serves as a madrich. Zachary, 10 years old, is in Hebrew school now preparing for his big day but eventually assumes he will play for the Patriots.
New Board Member Bios

Amy Powell
Amy Powell has been working in the Jewish community in different capacities for many years. She is currently the communications director at the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, a research institute of Brandeis University. She also coaches students who are writing college essays. Prior to Brandeis, she was associate editor at the Jewish Journal and the publicity director at the Lappin Foundation. Earlier in her career, she worked at several local newspapers and was part of the inaugural team for the Boston Globe North Weekly section. Amy served on the board of Temple Israel and Jewish Family Service of the North Shore. She is a precinct representative on the Swampscott Town Meeting. Her four children attended preschool and religious school at Temple Israel and Congregation Shirat Hayam. Amy lives in Swampscott with her husband, Bob, and children.

Joseph Simons
Joe lives in Swampscott with his wife, Lynette, and their four children: Lily, Hannah, Isaac, and Daniel. Joe and his family have been Shabbat regulars at CSH for the past several years, and he is the immediate past president of the CSH Brotherhood. When he's not spending time with his family, you can find Joe trying cases across Massachusetts. A criminal defense attorney based in downtown Boston, Joe has successfully represented clients in over 75 courts so far, including the Cape and as far west as the Berkshires. Joe is looking forward to giving back to the congregation by serving as a board member, and helping CSH to continue thriving.

Steve Solomon
Steve lives in Marblehead with his wife of 35 years Karen, a former Temple Beth El Preschool teacher. They are proud parents of Ashley and her husband Scott, Max and his wife Yulia, and Hannah. Steve has served on many community boards over the years including the JCC, Cohen Hillel Academy and Jewish Federation of the NS, as well as the Lynn Chamber of Commerce and the Lynn Business Partnership. He has also been closely involved in the Federation/CJP merger. A local businessman, Steve is President/CEO of Solomon Metals Corporation in Lynn which recycles scrap metal from throughout the Northeast and ships the material into both domestic and international consumers. He is past President of the NE Chapter of the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries and served on its national board as well as chaired the Copper Division.
Executive Director Report
Submitted by: Diane Levin

The intervening months since our last Annual Meeting have been busy, and filled with exciting change – new faces, new energy, and new programs.

Cheryl Schwartz, our former co-Director of the Center for Jewish Education (CJE), stepped into the role of Director of our Center for Early Education, bringing warmth, commitment to families, and decades of experience in educating our littlest ones. We now have an extensive waiting list of children, thanks to her leadership. Joining us last June to head up CJE is Janis Knight who came to us following our nation-wide search for a new CJE Director. We have another new staff member, Sherri Crowley, in a newly reconfigured position, Director of Membership and Engagement.

Change has been bittersweet; Marla Gay, our long-time Director of Congregational Life, retired in October after 11 years of service on behalf of our congregation. Her energy, her institutional knowledge, and her relationships with our congregants built over many years serving CSH from its founding until today are missed greatly.

Marla was the only staff member with graphic design ability; her departure left us with a skill gap. With Marla retiring and her former role reconfigured, we brought on board Nancy Marland Wolinski, a Swampscott resident, jewelry maker, and professional graphic designer, as our part-time Communication Coordinator. Nancy has been creating beautiful and effective flyers and other promotional materials for us, and redesigned our print and web communications including The Wave and This Week@CSH for a cleaner, easier-to-read, contemporary format.

Our building has also received its fair share of attention. Thanks to the efforts of congregant and First CSH Presidential Award recipient Sheldon Frisch, we completed several key projects involving our building. We replaced our roof last summer at a highly competitive price, which included a solid warranty and durable shingles.
Our lobby underwent a long-overdue make-over which included much-needed paint and wall covering, and a new skylight, which harmonizes with the new glass doors donated by Larry and Lori Groipen.

Sheldon also worked with board member Yoni Hipsh to install a state-of-the-art security camera system, with internal and external cameras. The project included staff training in the use of the cameras. These security cameras provide us with an extra measure of safety during these times of increased anti-Semitism and threats to Jewish institutions. Thanks to Sheldon and Yoni for their hard work on bringing this to fruition.

We reached a settlement with the insurance company regarding the damage from the historic winter storms of 2015, including recovery of depreciation costs, and at last were able to repair and update our social hall, also thanks to Sheldon, who oversaw the project. Assisting him was board member Michael Cohen, our resident electrical and lighting expert, with board member Larry Groipen as advisor and facilitator. We now enjoy new, quieter, low-maintenance flooring, ceiling tiles, and storefront doors leading out onto the courtyard, with paint, new vinyl wall covering, and ceramic tile to transform the space into a more attractive venue, provide more storage space, and repair the damage from the winter storms of 2015.

Meanwhile, I have worked closely with Treasurer Jason Levine and with our professional staff to seek cost savings; implemented a new onboarding procedure for full- and part-time staff to ensure that all required documentation and paperwork are completed and that our personnel files are properly maintained, accurate, and up-to-date; established new policies for utilizing vendors and independent contractors; and implemented protocols for planning and budgeting for events.

Among the projects of which I am most proud is our participation in the Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Project (RSIP), a joint project of the Ruderman Family Foundation and CJP, thanks to the inspiration of congregant Amanda Clayman. The goal of this work has been to help our synagogue become a fully accessible and welcoming space to people of differing abilities. What began as the Inclusion Committee is now called “Shir Lanu” – meaning “Our Song”. Co-chaired by Amanda Clayman and Michele Tamaren, CSH was recently awarded a $5,000 grant by the
Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Project to take our inclusion efforts to the next level. This was a highly competitive process, and only 5 synagogues were accepted this year as Ruderman partners. Yasher koach to Amanda, Michele, and the whole Shir Lanu group for bringing this to such a successful outcome.

We planned and held our first-ever inaugural donor appreciation event last summer at the Harbor Light Inn, which donated the use of its facilities. Congregant Lauren Weiss, a hospitality professional and wife of board member Nathaniel Weiss, is a manager at the Harbor Light Inn; she was instrumental in helping us plan this event. This evening of conversation and music with our Rabbi and Cantor honored our top philanthropists in a moving and meaningful way.

We have placed renewed focus on development and fundraising, which enabled us to reach a matching grant challenge proposed by philanthropists and launched by Renee Sidman during our High Holy Days LEV appeal; just before the end of our fiscal year we reached the $200,000 goal. Leading the charge and getting us across the finish line were Rabbi Michael, Cantor Elana, Renee Sidman, Larry Groipen, Janna Schwartz, and Barri Stein. I am fortunate to continue to work with those six as part of a Major Donor Task Force.

As part of its Sulam series of adult experiential learning programs, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ) selected CSH to run a pilot program targeting members of the “Baby Boom” generation, “Sulam for Purposeful Living”, which blends group discussion, individual reflection, and study in chavruta. USCJ developed the materials and curriculum. The SULAM programs are designed to stimulate greater engagement in synagogue life and the development of congregational leaders. Rabbi Michael invited me to co-facilitate this seven-session program with him, which has run from December through June.

Sustaining a sacred space like Congregation Shirat Hayam involves the work of many hands. Every day I feel grateful to work alongside our amazing clergy, Rabbi Michael Ragozin and Cantor Elana Rozenfeld; our professional staff, Marylou Barry, Sherri Crowley, Richard Kelleher, Janis Knight, Cheryl Schwartz, Barri Stein, Debbie Leibowitz; our amazing custodial staff particularly full-timers Gus Ventura, Erida-
nia Vicioso, and Yanira Romero; and 2016-2017 board members President Dr. Howard Abrams, Brian Cohen, Michael Cohen, Larry Goldberg, Larry Groipen, Jessica Heller, Yoni Hipsh, Melissa Kaplowitch, Jason Levine, Karynn Needel, Jerry Rosen, Hal Schwartz, Janna Schwartz, Alexandra Shube, Renée Sidman (who becomes our new president as of the day of the Annual Meeting), Wayne Trebbin, and Nathaniel Weiss. I also want to express appreciation to our front office volunteers—Natalie White, Sheila Rich, and Doris Villa—for their dedication and enthusiasm. Thanks to them all, and to you, our congregants, for making our congregational home the spiritually enriching community it is.

### Center for Jewish Education

*Submitted by: Janis Knight, Director*

It has been a terrific year at the CJE! We opened in early September with our wonderful veteran staff and me as the new director. Shabbat mornings always begin together in the Chapel. I lead Tefilah (prayer) with the help of musician Spencer Garfield using Siddur Mah Tovu. Over the course of the year, we have given particular focus to the meanings and values expressed in the morning liturgy, sometimes through discussion, sometimes through a story or an activity.

The Torah service is a feature of many of our mornings, including reading from our own smaller Torah tied with a wimple made by the 5th grade students. Sometimes we hear stories based on the parasha (portion), sometimes we learn about the Torah portion from looking at illustrations or an Art Walk placed around the room. On the first Shabbat morning of the month, any student with a birthday in the month to come is called for an Aliyah and blessing before the Torah and receives a special birth-
Director and Committee Reports

day pencil to mark the occasion. All of these are designed to give our students the sense of being part of a sacred community gathered on Shabbat.

After Tefilah, students head to their classes where all kinds of interesting and fun things happen. If you walked down the hallways and peeked in the doors as I often do, you would:

• see a group of students playing a Hebrew review game using tongue depressors labelled with the blessings they are learning;
• sing along with Marcy as she teaches holidays and Jewish values through song;
• hear 5th graders presenting their team’s Sacred Space creation to their classmates, sharing posters, descriptions, and their decision-making process;
• be amazed at the silent intensity of the 4th grade as they submerge themselves in a Torah Godly Play story, attention riveted on their teacher’s hands as she carefully places a wooden figure on the story cloth before them;
• get caught up in the whirl of students learning an Israeli dance;
• visit the Shabbat table of our preschoolers and have a morsel of challah;
• wrestle with a disturbing concept found in the parashat hashavuah (weekly Torah portion) with our 6th graders;
• travel the streets of Jerusalem in thought with our 2nd graders as they continue their year-long Trip to Israel;
• stretch along with our Kindergarten and First graders as they practice their Alef Bet Yoga ... 
• and more!

Tuesdays have seen us welcome special guests including speakers from the ADL, a local beekeeper, the director of REAL, teen menschen, a Shofar specialist and more.

Omanut (Arts) have been an important part of our curriculum this year. Projects chosen for each grade have been designed to expand their understanding of their specific grade curriculum. Students have created substantive Judaica pieces including ceramic Shabbat candlesticks, Hanukkiot, or oil lamps. They created a decorative banner to grace the congregational Sukkah and learned about the mitz-
vah of welcoming guests. They learned print-making as they created decorations for Purim Mishloach Manot sent from the congregation and discussed the mitzvot connected with Purim. The mitzvah of affixing a mezuzah to our doorposts is more concrete when the students created their own beautiful, modern mezuzot from glass beads, tubes and wire.

Special events and celebration for the school as a whole included a Tu B’shevat seder in January. Students explored new fruits, tasted old favorites, learned about the holiday connection with Spring in Israel and laughed even as the snow came down outside our windows. At Purim, we giggled our way through a Purim shpiel presented by our intrepid faculty. During Hanukkah, we rotated our way through 4 Hanukkah station activities including Hanukkah Jewpardy, a dreidel tournament and a selection of Hanukkah music videos from Israel and more. Passover saw another seder but this time, it was a Chocolate seder which I created. We traveled through the Haggadah, recited the blessings, sang seder songs compared each stage to the “real” seder and got sticky and goofy on too much chocolate. Our year ends with a Maccabiah to celebrate Yom Ha’atzmanut and our last day of CJE for the year.

I cannot praise the faculty of the CJE enough. This year, they went out of their way to be welcoming and helpful to a new director. They also joyfully invested many extra hours in attending professional development programs, including a whole day session at LimmudBoston in December, a two-part workshop on Social Thinking offered by Gateways and shared with Temple Emanu-El, a special training on differentiated learning techniques from a special needs educator and more. They support and help one another and are always looking for new and interesting ways to share their love of Jewish learning and life with their students.

Rabbi Michael and Cantor Elana made certain that the CJE students knew how important they are by
setting aside time every Tuesday afternoon to lead Tefilah (prayer) with the students. They offered a taste of Renewal service as well as the ever-popular Ask the Rabbi/Cantor. They enthusiastically embraced the tool of Visual Tefilah and made it their own, showing students the places where technology can intersect spirituality.

Wednesday afternoons are reserved for Hebrew Lab, a kind of catch-up day for any student who has missed Hebrew practice or class during the previous week. Our two teachers and their helpers do a terrific job helping students to review and keep their Hebrew reading and chanting skills bright.

We have enjoyed the efforts of 14 madrichim, teen aides, some paid, some volunteer on Saturdays and Wednesday Hebrew labs. They don't even realize how much the younger students learn from them and look up to them, but we do!

All in all, it has been a busy, fun, successful year at CJE and I am truly grateful that I have had the opportunity to share it with you, your children and our faculty and teens. I am looking forward to more growth and innovation, some new curricular pieces and even higher learning goals for our students in the year to come.

L’shalom,
Janis Knight, Director of CJE

Center for Early Education
Submitted by: Cheryl Schwartz, Director

When I began my role as Director of the Center for Early Education on May 1, 2016, there were 60 children enrolled in the program. As of this writing, there are 73 children registered for September 2017, with a wait list of almost 30 families. Any family with at least one Jewish parent is offered complimentary synagogue membership.
The CEE has transitioned greatly over its 42 year existence. It began as Temple Beth El Nursery School in 1975 with 4 rooms and a half-day program. Toddlers were added a number of years later and the school grew to 6 rooms. Temple Israel Preschool merged with Temple Beth El in 2003 and all 7 classrooms and the library were filled with students, and the school became Temple Beth El Preschool. Not long after that extended hours were added to the half-day program. Today the Center for Early Education is a full-time Jewish day care center, serving children 3 months to 5 years of age, from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every day, 51 weeks a year. The CEE day is enriched with many programs. Each week, the children have: Hebrew with Rachel Jacobson, Spanish with Debbie Brooks of “Little Lingos”, Music with Philip Alexander of “Mr. Philip”, and Shabbat with Marcy Yellin. In addition, the children learned about snails, starfish, and crabs with the New England Aquarium’s “Tots and Tide Pools” program; families joined us for a family pizza night; the CEE had a successful “Giggling Gala” fundraiser; and the children participated in many school-wide activities: a Purim Parade; latke making, and a Hanukkah party, just to name a few.

This was the first year of the Parent Advisory Committee. With their unlimited energy parents created welcome bags for new students; provided a holiday dinner
and gift cards for the staff; coordinated all aspects of the Giggling Gala; and were of great support all year for the teachers and administration. A giant Todah Rabah to Renee Sidman, Emily Packer, Jennifer Moskwa, Bethani Hipsh and tons of very dedicated parents.

The CEE is licensed by the state of Massachusetts, and under their guidelines the classrooms are limited to specific numbers of children each day. In addition, each room requires 2 licensed staff members at all times.

- Room #’s 2 and 4 are baby rooms, ages 3 – 15 months. Each room is allowed 7 babies per day.
- Room #’s 5, 6, and 7 are toddler rooms, ages 15 – 33 months. Each room is allowed 9 toddlers per day.
- Room #3 is a mix of toddlers and preschoolers, ages 30 months – 3 years. This room is allowed 9 children per day.
- Room #1 is a 3-year-old preschool-age classroom. This room is allowed up to 16 children per day.
- The Library Classroom is the Pre-K room. All the children in this room will move on to Kindergarten. This room is also allowed up to 16 children per day.

The CEE would not be as wonderful as it is without an amazing staff of teachers. “KOL HAKAVOD” to these fabulous staff members: Marisa Castro, Marie Cherville, Caroline Croyle, Sonia D’Oliveira, Marcy Furlong, Valerie Gilbert, Stefanie Gladstone, Erin Kelly, Brianna Keating, Christina Lannon, Wendy Lewis, Samantha Lovins, Kimberly Manley, Lindsay McKinnon, Nicole Metelas, Yaritsa Munoz, Claire O’Donnell, Halie Pica, Kelly Porter, Alie Ramos, Allison Richardson, Yanira Romero, Gretchen Rowe, Marie Rose Saint Pre, Melissa Silva, Rachel Stark, Nancy Terranova, and Lindsay Welch; and our high school helpers: Sophia Maselek, Matt Messinger and Jamie Ring. A special thank you to Program Administrator, Debbie Leibowitz, for her assistance in all aspects of the Center administration.

A final thank you to: Rabbi Michael and Cantor Elana for their help in all things Jewish; to Richard Kelleheer for being the kindest, most patient, human being—the silent partner of the CEE; Diane Levin, Marylou Barry, Barri Stein and Sherri Crowley, for their computer, financial, party-planning help at any time, day or night; Gus Ventura, Eridania Viscoso and Yanira Romero for helping to keep the CEE clean and in working order; and last but not least, Janis Knight, who has made the sharing of the CEE/CJE space “easy-peasy”!
Events and Facility
Submitted by: Barri Stein, Director

As in past years, we’ve seen a lot of changes here at Shirat Hayam over the last year but that hasn’t stopped the number of events or decreased the quality of events we produce. On any given day (or night) we have something going on here. It’s a busy, busy place and we love it!! Shabbat is the highlight of our week here and all our (yours and ours) hard work and your willingness to participate comes together. We love seeing new faces, faces we haven’t seen in a while and faces who we continue to see week in and out. Our Shabbat Synaplex experience continues to be successful. We love that we can recognize multiple celebrations and events at the same time in which the community comes together.

By the close of our fiscal (April 30, 2017), we celebrated 11 B’nei Mitzvah this year, either during the Shabbat morning or evening. We ended last fiscal year celebrating our incoming President, Renee Sidman, becoming a Bat Mitzvah and ended this fiscal year with another adult Bat Mitzvah celebrated with Shelley Sackett. We hope this will encourage more of our adult members to either become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah for the first time or celebrate the anniversary of their B’nei Mitzvah. All morning B’nei Mitzvah (except one) held their Kiddush here at Shirat Hayam which continued our success of our joint celebratory Kiddushim and several continued their celebratory parties here in the evening. Our multiple simcha/sponsorships during Shabbat consisted of namings, anniversary celebrations, B’nei Mitzvah anniversaries, birthday sponsorships, auf rufs, and various other community celebrations. I
wish I could bottle the joy these families feel after their simcha. While the year was one of fewer B’nei Mitzvahs that we’ve seen in the past, we took the opportunity during a quiet winter to renovate our lobby, social hall and part of the sanctuary. Our enhanced Boker Tov Café during the time that we renovated the social hall was so well received that we may revisit that during our quieter months. We look forward to more families holding their celebrations and many more events in our “new” space. We also look forward another BUSY year, with 17 children becoming B’nei Mitzvah for this next fiscal year, May 1, 2017-April 30, 2018.

Other lifecycle events continued to be held on non-Shabbat days including namings, birthday parties but unfortunately, we saw too many funerals held here this past year and lost many wonderful vital members of our congregation. On a personal note, I deeply miss Burt Shepard, my right hand man who took with him on his passing his wealth of knowledge for the Temple Israel Cemetery and his love for Shirat Hayam. I credit much of what I know to him.

Our staff has become quite adept at throwing many Jewish celebratory events. Our annual Break-the-Fast, Simchat Torah and Purim celebrations continued with increasing popularity. We had a wonderful turnout for the Sukkot/Farm Day Open House on a beautiful crisp fall day. This is all in addition to our Shabbat Olam, new Holy Happy Hour Minyan, 2 Connections events, milestone anniversary celebration, Share-a-Shabbats, Nosh and Drash, and on-going weekly programs which are too numerous to mention them all.

The revised and more condensed B’nei Mitzvah Handbook and notebook that we completed last year continues to assist families, complete with prayers, kiddush information and learning material.

We also hosted many organizations from the community whether it was their major fundraisers or just use of our parking lot. These included JF&CS, AIPAC, Hillel, Jewish Journal, Salem State University, My Brother’s Table, JTS, CJP, Town of Swampscott Fire Dept. and Board of Health, Red Cross, Kulanu, ADL, Yachad and the annual town July 4th parade.

Thanks to the ongoing cooperation of the clergy, staff and minyannaires of both Temple Sinai and Congregation Shirat Hayam.
Shirat Hayam, we combined our daily minyans. I have to continue to thank our Shirat Hayam morning and evening minyan leaders who devote their time every week to opening the building and leading our minyans. It is a huge commitment and we are so thankful for them. Thank you for your relentless commitment and dedication to make sure we have a minyan when our members need one. They’ve made us a part of their lives, and we are better for it: Alan Sidman, Barbara Tobin-Forbush (who has since moved to FL), Mark Messenger, Jason Stark, Ann Segal (New!), Eli Talkov, Carl Shalit, Natalie White, Murray Goodman and Eric Kahn.

We continue to improve and maintain the upkeep of our building. I am eternally grateful for the guidance and vast knowledge base and expertise of three members, Sheldon Frisch without whom I would have never gotten through the year, and Board Members Michael Cohen, owner of A-1 Lighting and Larry Groipen, owner of ERC Wipes. We finally completed repairs and some renovations from the overwhelming snow fall from the winter of 2014/2015. A new roof was put on over the sanctuary and social hall. We also spruced up the lobby with a clean and bright new look and replaced the skylight. The “new” bathrooms caused a bit of distress with several backups but we seem to have solved the problem. Helaine and Jim Hazlett donated our new sign on Atlantic Avenue. Our “shmatta” drive continues to bring in funds. Daily maintenance of our kitchens, appliances, doors, carpets, bathrooms, tent, HVAC system and outside grounds require constant vigilance.

I would be remiss to complete this report without recognizing our amazing custodial staff here that does EVERYTHING that I ask without complaining. We currently have on staff at least 6 custodians (3 full-time). The amount of work to “flip” rooms is daunting and yet they manage to do it with ease (ie Matisyahu concert and the High Holy Days). We couldn’t do what we do each week for Shabbat Café without them AND the amazing group of volunteers who give of themselves. Peeling 15+/- dozen eggs is no easy job and they still come back week after week, Arlene Leventhal, Rhonda Preman, Janice Levine and Doris Villa.

With regards to the cemetery, in the Beth El section, we continue to see shrubbery...
that needs to be replaced due to destruction by weather, deer or age. In the Temple Israel section, shrubs need to be replaced as they have become overgrown due to their age. These shrubs are the responsibility of the family who owns the plots. As more headstones are installed, our sprinklers need to be raised up to cover more ground. Lichens and moss continue to be a problem on headstones. If you would like your family’s stone power washed, please contact our groundskeeper. Flags will be placed on graves for all war veterans in both sections for Memorial Day. If you know someone who qualifies for a flag, please contact the office.

As the first generation of many of the original lot owners are passing away, we struggle to continue to locate next of kin to secure future uses of owned lots. If you know of anyone who currently owns graves in either section, please have them contact us to arrange burial permissions. We continue to try to secure plot assignments for unused graves before the original owners pass.

We respectfully ask that no metal containers be placed on or near the headstones, only small rocks are left for visitation and no permanent plantings are done on your own. If you have ANY concerns about your plot you can first contact Barri Stein. If you’d like anything planted, replaced or have a stone that needs to be power washed, you can contact our groundskeeper directly, Dave McKenna at John M. Ross and Son at 978-774-0139.

Thankfully, we saw a large numbers of sales of graves this past year to members and non-members as people learn the value of preplanning. Our policy change to allow members to purchase plots for their immediate family at the member price contributed to this increase. Similarly, we continue to see an increased need for single graves or additional graves near already interred family members which, with some creativity and lots of negotiations, we’ve been successful in securing.

If you know someone who owns a completely unused lot and may have questions regarding its future use, please contact the office. We will assist you however possible to use any unused graves. If you have prearranged or pre-assigned grave usage, please contact us to obtain proper documentation. We encourage families and individuals to preplan and pre-purchase
plots. We will make the process as painless as possible.

I would be remiss in not acknowledging new and old staff members who I had/have the pleasure of working with this past year including Marla Gay, Beth Tassinari, Sherri Crowley and Janis Knight.

We are grateful for your support, attendance and the wonderfully generous donations that we receive each year to make our services, Kiddushim and other programs a success. Please remember to contact me for any lifecycle event, your cemetery needs, and building usage requests or if you’d just like an Aliyah on a Shabbat. We continue to improve upon our offerings and our facility and we hope our members and community will look to us to hold their lifecycle event here, whether it is for your wedding, bris/ baby naming, birthday, anniversary, memorial or even funeral.

**Membership and Engagement**

*Submitted by: Sherri Crowley, Director*

It seems spring is finally here, and so much is going on. We have had so many exciting programs and events this past year and have so many more to look forward to. Most recently, we had our congregation come together in support of our Lev initiative, enabling us to surpass the $200,000 matching goal set by committee philanthropists. I think this is a true testament to the hearts and soul of our congregation, our members, and the value of continuing to elevate Shirat Hayam as our spiritual community.

We began last season with a wonderful donor appreciation event at The Harbor Light Inn. We had beautiful summer Friday night services led by Cantor Elana and the Ruach Rally band out at Salem Willows. As usual, our amazing, musical High Holiday services did not disappoint and our soon-to-be-President, Renée Sidman, gave us the most beautiful, heartfelt Lev appeal to date.
We went through the fall, celebrating Sukkot, Simchas Torah, and welcomed our new members with our New Member Shabbat Service. Farm Day was a hit, as always – my own boys are still asking when it is coming again. (I recall they were most impressed with the Swampscott fire truck that showed up).

Our iEngage monthly series, in collaboration with Temple Emanu-El, brought 80+ people to learn and discuss Israel in a new way. We had our weekly Nosh and Drash with Rabbi Michael on the Book of Joshua, and Sue Weiss brought Hebrew to life with her teaching of Read Hebrew America. Becky's Book Club continues to meet monthly, and our Mah Jong group continues to be found playing every Monday night.

We had a lovely Hanukkah program with Temple Sinai. Our Family Life Committee sponsored Share-A-Shabbat program continues to grow in participation each month. CJE provided us with a learning Havdalah, called “Making Bedtime Jewish” in February. It was fabulous. We were lucky to have Sarah Ragozin lead a sold-out Women’s Paint Night this winter. Janis Knight then led our first CSH Community Women’s Seder, which was a spiritual and renewing event like no other. We can't wait to expand upon this energy in next year’s Seder, and in upcoming Women’s Events throughout the year.

As we look forward, we already have so many engaging events coming up, beginning with CEE’s Giggling Gala on May 6 and our May 30 Great Shavuot Cheesecake Bake Off. We have fun, Share-A-Shabbat’s planned for May, in partnership with InterfaithFamily and our July Share-A-Shabbat at the JCCNS pool. June 11 offers us a trip to the MFA for the Henryk Ross Exhibit and Concert, in partnership with Temple Sinai and led by our own Janis Knight. Of course, on June 13 we will be at Fenway for Jewish Heritage Night, cheering for the Chai Notes as they sing the National Anthem and for the Sox against the Phillies. And this is only the beginning of the year!

It is such a pleasure getting to see and get to know people during our weekly
Synaplex Shabbat. We have had such interesting Nosh and Drash sessions, Our Renewal Service continues to be a spiritual foundation for the week for so many of our members, and our Yoga Minyan has grown to a consistent 30 people a week.

I had the pleasure of joining the staff here at CSH just after Yom Kippur. Both the Congregation and Staff have been so welcoming to me. I look forward to getting to know more of you this year. Let's continue together to build upon the renewed energy I have seen in this Congregation just in my short time here. See you soon! Bring your friends too! (You even get a free High Holiday ticket if you bring in a new member.)

Center for Early Education Parent Advisory Committee
Submitted by: Renée Sidman, Chair

The Preschool Advisory Committee is comprised of 14 parents who are committed to promoting, supporting, and helping the administration and teachers at the CEE. This group has also allowed us to make new friends and family connections! We organize fun family activities, provide operational feedback to administration, and enable a positive and thoughtful environment for the teachers and our children.

The PAC works closely with Cheryl Schwartz, our fearless and amazing Preschool Director. We are also committed to giving back to the organization. The CEE teachers provide so much love and caring to our children day in and day out, as well as an amazing learning environment.

This group planned the Giggling Gala to help raise funds for our much needed playground. And we are committed to seeing the playground fundraising and construction to the end. This playground will be used by all the children of the congregation, not just the preschool community. We also organized generous Hanukkah presents for all of our loving staff. And we plan to organize an end of the school year event for the teachers as well.
Religious Life
Submitted by: Alan Sidman

The goal of this committee is to be a supportive group to the clergy and to help facilitate any programs that they choose to implement. It should also act as a sounding board for issues that may come before the clergy. We hope to create a climate within the committee that can comfortably express and receive points of view that may help resolve issues.

Committee members are: Alan Sidman, Rabbi Ragozin, Cantor Rozenfeld, Mark Messenger, Larry Goldberg, Devora Feinbloom, Mikaela Levine, Jay Mahler.

Issues that have been discussed are:
1. How to address the different levels of observance in our congregation and make it relevant to their lives
2. How to reinvigorate the evening minyans and guarantee that we have enough people at every service for those saying kaddish
3. Shabbat afternoon B’nei Mitzvah—being sure that all costs to the shul are being covered by this special service
4. High Holy Day services—how to improve distribution of honors, how to keep more people in shul for longer periods of time
5. How to invigorate the Shabbat morning traditional services
6. Ruach Rally—how to keep it fresh and keep congregants invested
7. New triennial haftarah cycle

Shir Lanu: Inclusion Committee
Submitted by: Amanda Clayman and Michele Tararen, Committee Co-chairs

Rabbi Ragozin has described our inclusion work and purpose stating: “Congregation Shirat Hayam holds that inclusion extends beyond the fundamental belief that all human beings are of infinite value.” Inclusion is a clarion call to honor the uniqueness of each one of us. As a Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Project Partner we commit to the creation of a warm, accessible, safe, and sensitive spiritual home. When we love our neighbor as ourselves, we all thrive!

Our 15 member inclusion committee, Shir Lanu: “One Song-Every Voice,” includes our rabbi, executive director, director of the Hebrew School, membership director, parents of children with special needs, educators, members of the LGBTQ community, and other interested community members.

This has been an exciting and productive year for our Shir Lanu committee. We have undertaken the following:

- We meet regularly to address the needs and concerns of our congregation as shared in survey results and ongoing meetings with staff and community members. We are devoted to the improvement and implementation of our inclusion offerings including new programs and opportunities for members with special needs.
- We have worked to make our synagogue more welcoming and accessible. Our committee designed an accessibility handout itemizing available inclusion supports for people with sensory, physical, and other special needs.
devices, large print siddurim, fidget toys, preferred seating, a quiet room and more assists are available. Of note, Shirat Hayam is an accessible building with an extensive handicap parking area. The front door is automatic and we have handicap accessible bathrooms throughout the building. The chairs in our sanctuary are movable and our bimah is fully accessible.

- The rabbi addresses and supports inclusion through his sermons and other more intimate community communications such as individual meetings with members and upcoming parlor gatherings of parents of children with special needs.
- Our Hebrew school director, Janis Knight, leads Torah study focused on inclusion as a Jewish value and has invited trainers to work with staff and teens through Gateways: Access to Jewish Education.
- Our congregation uses inclusive language in our worship services, prominently displays accommodations, and publicizes our accommodations throughout the building, on our website, in bulletins and e-mail announcements.
- We have recently been accepted as a Ruderman Partner Synagogue entitling our congregation to a grant of $5,000, access to events and workshops, and consulting from Ruderman professionals to help us realize our inclusion goals.
- We have invited Neshama Carlebach to join our congregation on October 27th and 28th to inspire us with her moving words and music as together we travel on our journey to inclusion.

“We hear you!” our inclusion pamphlet states. Now we want to hear from you! Please advise Michele, Amanda, our staff or greeters how we may better serve you. If you wish to participate in our committee, join our events, or support our efforts, you are most welcome!
Family Life Committee
Submitted by: Jessica Heller and Alex Shube

The Family Life Committee has focused on the goal of increasing activities and events for families. The monthly Share-a-Shabbat program for families with young children which we introduced last year has been a huge success. Once a month, dozens of families gathered in the chapel for a kid-friendly meal, a spirited, interactive service with Rabbi Michael and Cantor Elana, and ending with a yummy dessert. We have also supported or sponsored other programs for families, including a hike to Great Woods in Lynn, “Baking with Lauren Katz”, Sukkot Pizza Dinner and Edible Sukkah Making with Rabbi Michael, and more.

A big thank you to the many families who generously sponsored a Share-a-Shabbat dinner, allowing us to keep this a free program. We also would not have been able to organize the Shabbats without the help of Cheryl Schwartz, Sherri Crowley, Barri Stein, and of course our CSH custodians Gus Ventura and Yanira Romero! We would love to line up sponsors for next year’s dinners, so please let us know if you are interested.

Family Life Committee Co-Chair Jess Heller spearheaded a successful, community building Mishloach Manot program. For the first time ever, every single household in our congregation received a Purim bag. We also succeeded in raising over $5,000, thanks to the generosity of our congregants.

This coming year, Family Life hopes to add more events for families, teens, and parents. If you would like to get involved or have any suggestions, please feel free to contact Jessica Heller or Alex Shube at FamilyLife@ShiratHayam.org.
Chesed Committee
Submitted by: Nancy Sarles, Chair

As chair of the Chesed Committee, I was hopeful that we could be of service to our congregants over the past year. However, there has been little call for action or response. We provided a few meals, no rides, and a few Shiva calls.

I have started a ‘Reach Out’ program to:
- assist in emergency situations with meals
- provide rides
- proved emergency child care
- attend Shiva

I try and call each family when there has been a congregational notice of a death to see if any Chesed help is needed and offer condolences. The calls are greatly appreciated but in almost all the calls this year, family members have taken care of those needs.

Chesed ‘Reach In’ program is to bring our members more on-going connection, such as a phone call, a visit, a meal, a ride to services, a new member buddy, new parent outreach, simply being in touch and lending a helping hand.
We have had few Chesed calls this year. Barri and Marla have been wonderful in letting me know who needs some help. When I receive the information, I call and ask what is needed, and usually it is nothing. When there is a need, I put it out to our committee in an email. I get very few responses. Members have asked if I could call members on the Misheberach list and we have. However, many of those names or others are concerned with privacy that we are treat with the highest respect. We were able to assist in a few Shiva needs such as watching a home during the funeral, and being part of the minyan.

Chesed is available with information in The Wave, is listed on the Shabbat program, and the staff is aware. However, we get very few requests. On the volunteer side, we need to encourage more participation. The emails I do put out to the committee activate little action. That was very disappointing.

I am hopeful that Chesed can become a vibrant asset to our members but we need action and commitment from both our members who need the help and our congregational volunteers.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Sarles, Chesed
May 1, 2017
Contact Information

CSH Staff Contact Information
Main number: 781.599.8005 | Fax: 781.599.1860
www.ShiratHayam.org | CSH@ShiratHayam.org

Rabbi Michael Ragozin
RabbiRagozin@ShiratHayam.org

Cantor Elana Rozenfeld
CantorElana@ShiratHayam.org

Diane Levin, Executive Director
Diane@ShiratHayam.org

Barri G. Stein, Director of Events and Facility
Barri@ShiratHayam.org

Sherri Crowley, Director of Membership and Engagement
Sherri@ShiratHayam.org

Richard Kelleher, Bookkeeper
Richard@ShiratHayam.org

Marylou Barry, Office Manager
Marylou@ShiratHayam.org

Center for Jewish Education
Janis Knight, Director
Direct line: 781.346.6075
CJE@ShiratHayam.org

Center for Early Education
Cheryl Schwartz, Director
Direct line: 781.598.3311
Preschool@ShiratHayam.org

Baruch HaLevi, Rabbi Emeritus
Dr. Edgar Weinsberg, Rabbi Emeritus
Emil Berkovits, Cantor Emeritus