

FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

EIGHT DAYS, TWELVE STEPS | Rabbi Lisa J. Grushcow, D.Phil.



Last summer, I had the pleasure of officiating at a beautiful wedding. I was talking through the details of the ceremony with the couple, when I mentioned that they needed to bring two Kiddush cups and a bottle of kosher white wine. There was a pause. Then, the groom-to-be spoke up: "I quit drinking," he told me, "the night before we met."

We had grape juice under the *chuppah*. But the moment stays with me. As much as I felt aware and informed about alcoholism in the Jewish community, my assumptions betrayed me. It had not occurred to me that the cup of wine at the wedding could be a problem.

Sheldon B., an alcoholism counselor in New York, told of how a few years ago he approached his own rabbi with the idea of opening their temple to an Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) group. He thought that Jewish members in any A.A. group might be more comfortable about accepting help in a synagogue setting than in a church. The rabbi informed him that there was no need: "There are no Jewish alcoholics." When Sheldon B. said, "But I am an alcoholic," the rabbi thought for a moment and then replied, "are you sure you know who your real father was?"

As a Jewish community, we like to think we're different. But when it comes to alcoholism and substance abuse, we are not. At least as high a percentage of American Jews have addictions as any other cultural, religious, or ethnic group.

"Just like you need a minyan to pray, you need a community to stay sober."

More important than the statistics are the stories. We have congregants who are alcoholics. We have congregants who are addicts. These include our B'nei Mitzvah parents and our Adult Education students, our most avid learners, and our most dedicated volunteers. We have congregants who have almost died from drinking and congregants who have been arrested for buying drugs. And we have family members who have suffered through loved ones' addictions. Together, they teach us that alcoholism and addiction are illnesses, not character flaws, and that they are very real in our Jewish community.

For many, Twelve-Step groups like A.A. have been essential to their recovery. There is a general belief that such groups are fundamentally

un-Jewish, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Groups like Jewish Alcoholics, Chemically Dependent Persons, and Significant Others (J.A.C.S.) were founded to make it easier for Jews to get help. The fact is, according to Jewish law, almost anything that can save a life is permissible – and even required. Even beyond that, the notion of community is central to the Twelve-Step movement and Judaism alike. Just like you need a *minyan* to pray, you need a community to stay sober. There are exceptions and there are those who find their own way, but it is an even more difficult path.

Recovering alcoholics have taught me how powerful their illness can be: for a non-alcoholic, a glass of wine is something that can be taken up and then put down, but for them, once they start they simply cannot stop. Their reaction is chemical; it is physical; it is often genetic; and it is always real. Of course, it makes sense that to treat such an illness you need a community of people who fundamentally understand. And nothing is as significant as seeing someone else who has the same reaction, the same illness, but has found a way to stop.

As part of my own learning, I went to an open A.A. meeting. One of the stories I heard there has stayed with me, especially as we come to the holiday season. A man stood up and told us how, when he first tried to stop drinking, he decided he couldn't stop until after Christmas, because, even though he was Jewish, he thought Jews and Christians should come together for the holidays. This can be an especially hard time for people with addictions and their families.

Now and throughout the year, please know that our congregation is here to help. Our Mental Health Initiative has compiled a general list of resources, available on our website. Each of the clergy has referrals for therapists and resources who deal specifically with alcoholism and addiction. We can help you connect with J.A.C.S. or A.A. We can help you find others whose stories may resonate with your own. **We can help you take the first step.**

Whenever I meet with wedding couples now, I think of the bride and groom who had grape juice under their *chuppah*. I am grateful to them for speaking up. Thanks to them, I ask other couples whether they want wine or grape juice. It is a small step. But it is a step. And whether it is Twelve Steps or some other number, what matters is that they are in the right direction.

This holiday season, may we bring the lessons of Chanukah into our lives. May we bring light into our homes and light into our world. May we have the courage and strength we need to move forward in our lives. Andrea, Ariella, and Alice join me in wishing you a very happy Chanukah.

Note: This article was based on a sermon delivered in October 2011, in conjunction with the Mental Health Initiative of Congregation Rodeph Sholom's Caring Community.

IN THIS ISSUE | CHANUKAH GUIDE INSIDE

- 1 FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY
- 2 EXECUTIVE COMMENTARY
- 3 FEATURES

- 4 SAVE THE DATES
- 5 A CONGREGANT'S VOICE
- 6 DEVELOPMENT

- 7 SCHOOLS
- 8 COMMUNITY MATTERS

VOLUME 14 | NUMBER 2
WINTER 2011 | 5772

NEW MEMBER WELCOME | Michael Kimmel

Welcome to all new members of Congregation Rodeph Sholom. I know you will find a warm and welcoming home here and a Synagogue that can fulfill your spiritual, educational, and social needs. You are vital to our community's growth and wellbeing, and I encourage you to get involved. In the coming months please take the time to meet the clergy and staff, make new friends, and take full advantage of all the various learning opportunities and community service activities that are offered (see page 4 for the Adult Education schedule of courses and our upcoming events).

Also, please be our guests on Friday, December 9 at 7:30 pm to welcome new members and celebrate Chanukah together at the annual Congregational Shabbat Dinner and Latke Party, co-sponsored by Brotherhood and the Membership Committee (see page 3). Please RSVP to membership@crsnyc.org or 646.454.3045.

If you have any other questions about community programming and for other ways to get involved, please contact me directly at mkimmel@crsnyc.org or 646.454.3010.

My door is always open. I look forward to getting to know you and help to make your experience at Rodeph Sholom enjoyable and meaningful.

WE ARE PLEASED TO WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS*New Members from July 1 – October 18, 2011*

Andrea & Shaun Abrahamson	Soo & Daniel Greenstein	Shayne Minick	Deborah & Jason Selch
Jennifer & Alex Abrams	Stephanie Phillips & Bradley Gross	Josephine & Eric Mogelof	Keren Perry-Shamir & Shai Shamir
Sandra Abush-Ciklik & Eduardo Abush	Jessica Moss & Micah Gutman	Justin Ferate & Louis Newman	Adam Sheer
Rebecca & Scott Ackerman	Julia & David Gutstadt	Olivia Oran	Anna Livak & Michael Shopsia
Alexandra Alter	Kathy Bostjancic & Jeffrey Haber	Elizabeth & Murray Orbuch	Samuel Shrank
Laura Stuken & Haim Attias	Erica & Michael Held	Judith & Ronald Osur	Mishael Shulman
Beverly & Daniel Bartfeld	Chari & Scott Hirshson	Allison Paley	Lisa & Joshua Siegel
Emily Stein & Jonathan Berenbom	Joanna & Michael Hoffenberg	Louise & Christopher Pennington	Amy & David Silverstein
Jamie & Richard Birkenhead	Jaime & Eliot Horowitz	Andrea Levinger & Peter Phelan	Kimberly Styler & Michael Sinder
Isabel & Rishon Blumberg	Rennie & James Howard	Christina Hurtado & Matthew Pierson	Sydney Paley & Bradley Sitko
Joanna & Marc Brody	Robyn & Benjamin Joseph	Sabine Dower Plavnik & Jonathan Plavnik	Annie & Adam Sloyer
Lisa & Scott Broock	Clarita & Abraham Kaufman	Erina & Stansilav Polovets	Qian Wang & Levi Sokol
Blair & Adam Casdin	Jezel Kelly	Stacey & Mike Ranere	Michal & Marc Sperling
Songyun Hang & Jae Chang	Karen & Robert Kennedy	Nicole Schumann & Daniel Rapaport	Lisa & Spencer Spinnell
Anna Shtromberg & Alex Chertorisky	Jessica & Daniel Kirzane	Laurie & Joseph Rayman	Kerith & Jeffrey Stewart
Ted Diskant	Leslie & John Korff	Annie Reinish	Laurie Izes & Stephen Switzky
Alison & Peter Dorfman	Anne Mannix & David Korzenik	Judith Rimerman	Christy & Robert Tanner
Julia Levy & Ari Edelson	Kristin & Jeffrey Krantz	Randy Shapiro & Daniel Ripp	Leon Tsinberg
Tori & Scott Eisenberg	Gina Pulice & Aaron Krasner	Hilary & Matthew Robbins	Dara Walls
Eve & Jeff Epstein	Carey Socol-Kregmsman & Jonathan Kregmsman	Frederick Roden	Caroline Baron & Anthony Weintraub
Rachel Bressler & Scott Fein	Amie & Louis Kreisberg	Jenna & Micah Rosenbloom	Dara & Steven Weiss
Mia Sarohia & Matt Friedman	Yanina Feldman & Robert Levitan	Wendy & Matthew Ross	Rebecca Westall
Diego Funes	Tara Liberman	Tara & Michael Rothenberg	Kenya Wiltsie
Nancy & Stephen Gates	Cheryl Malat & Andrew Lorin	Raphael Ruttenberg	Deena & Marc Winters
Linda Gelfond	Roberta Lowenstein	Ariel Ruttenberg	Rona & Michael Yaeger
Michelle & Jason Gere	Carol & Albert Lowenthal	Suhyung & Lawrence Sage	Dora Straus & Shlomi Yedid
Libi & Richard Gerson	Nancy & Les Marshak	Victoria Sanger	Susan & Alan Yoss
Mary Esses & Fabio Gheilerman	Donna & Elliot Matlin	Amy Schachter	Alyssa Zeller
Lisa Levy & Jon Goldberg	Francine & Bernard Medoff	Jennifer Fleischner & Alex Schwartz	
Debra Goldstein	Ann & Daniel Melinger	Alissa & Gideon Schwartz	
Magda Goodman	Caroline & Marcelo Messer		

FROM THE PRESIDENT AT CHANUKAH | Karen Berman



A man is stranded on a roof during a great flood. Another man comes by in a boat and says, “Get in.” The first man replies, “No need, God will grant me a miracle.” Later, the water is up to his waist when another boat comes by. The rower tells the man to get in. Again he replies that he has faith in God who will save him. Finally, as the rain worsens and the waters rise, a helicopter throws down a ladder. The pilot calls to the man to save himself. “Save others,” he calls back. “God will grant me a miracle.” Hours later, unable to survive the storm, the man is greeted by God at the gates of Heaven, his faith broken. “I believed in you,” he weeps. “How could you have let me down? Where was my miracle when I needed it?” “What do you mean?” God says, “I sent two boats and a helicopter.”

There are times when only a big miracle will do. At Chanukah, we are reminded of a series of events that even a Hollywood screenwriter could not have imagined: the defeat of a seemingly more powerful army by a small band of rebels, a drop of oil that lasts for eight days, and the powerful commitment of the Jewish people to survive and, in the course of time, flourish. Indeed, these were miracles.

And we are thankful for Chanukah miracles. But we don't have to wait until the next Kislelev to celebrate the miracles that are in our lives. Although we are familiar with the accounts of the burning bush and the parting of the sea – dramatic moments, for sure – Judaism is also about appreciating the common occurrences: the birth of a baby, a recovery from illness, the touch of a loved one, a family meal. These are miracles we can appreciate every

day. Our most important holiday, Shabbat, serves as a weekly reminder to appreciate such blessings and, by doing so, derive greater meaning in our lives.

In this time of uncertainty, Rodeph Sholom serves as a beacon in an otherwise stormy sea. It is here, perhaps during a Shabbat Service, a class, or a community project, that you may find relief from your personal burdens and gain some perspective. Throughout the year, Rodeph Sholom provides countless opportunities to nurture your mind and your soul. Study opportunities, ritual experiences, and community service programs fill our calendar. Through our community, miracles large and small happen here.

I look forward to seeing you in the coming weeks and wish you and your families a Chanukah filled with joy and blessings.

CHANUKAH HAPPENINGS

LIGHT THE 1ST CANDLE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20

EREV SHABBAT B'SHIR SERVICE | Friday, December 9 at 6:00 pm

We will celebrate Chanukah, the Festival of Lights, in the Sanctuary with our Cantors, choirs, and musicians through song.

CHANUKAH CELEBRATION | Friday, December 9 at 7:30 pm

Join us for the Congregational Shabbat Dinner and Latke Party, co-sponsored by Brotherhood and the Membership Committee, with a Candlelighting Celebration following the Erev Shabbat Service.

CHANUKAH SERVICE AND CELEBRATION FOR FAMILIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS Saturday, December 10, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Share prayer, Torah, music, and dreidels! Designed to be accessible and sensitive to a variety of needs, the Service will be interpreted in Sign Language. Open to the entire community and all ages are welcome.

Bring Hope on Chanukah: 8 Nights, 8 Ways

- VOLUNTEER** to spend a night in our Homeless Shelter. Contact Jay Kranis at 212.362.9341 or jkranis@verizon.net to sign up.
- PROVIDE** food for those in need this holiday season. Make a donation to the CRS Food Drive.
- PREPARE** for Chanukah. Join us for spirited musical Services on Friday, December 9, followed by the Congregational Shabbat Dinner and Latke Party. Please bring a toy (new and unwrapped). Toys will be distributed to families transitioning out of homelessness through Women In Need – Project Moving On.
- MAKE** a minyan. Come for our Tuesday night, lay-led Ma'ariv Service at 6:30 pm. Congregants often come to say Kaddish for a loved one and you can help make that experience possible.
- WELCOME** guests and visitors to CRS. Volunteer to be a Shabbat Greeter. Email membership@crsnyc.org for more information or to volunteer.
- VISIT** an ill or homebound congregant. Please contact bikkurcholim@crsnyc.org for more information or to volunteer.
- SUPPORT** the Israel Committee's mitzvah projects. This year, the Israel Committee is supporting programs for children with special needs at Congregation Yozma, a Reform community in Modiin, and Economic Empowerment of Women (EEW), an organization working to supply battered and low income women in Israel with the knowledge and tools to create their own small business as a means for gaining self-sufficiency.
- GIVE** the gift of life. Make sure you are registered as a bone marrow donor at giftoflife.org and as an organ donor at organdonor.org.

SAVE THE DATES

Saturday, December 3, 5:30 – 8:00 pm: CRUSTY'S 15TH ANNUAL BEIT CAFÉ. Silent Auction and Talent Show, an evening of food, friends, and fun benefits the Rodeph Sholom Youth Scholarship Fund and ensures that any Rodeph Sholom child can attend Youth Group events, Israel trips, and Religious School. Contact Youth Director Hannah Ellenson: crusty@crsny.org or 646.454.3082.

Thursday, December 8, 1:00 – 4:00 pm: MAH JONGG. Novices and veteran players are welcome. Cards will be available for purchase. The next dates are January 12 and February 9. RSVP: mahjongg@crsny.org.

Tuesday, December 13, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm: LUNCH TOGETHER. In the Eisner. A dairy lunch will be served. A contribution of \$8 is suggested. The next dates are January 17 and February 14. Co-sponsored by Adult Education, the Caring Community Committee, and Sisterhood. Please join us for great socializing and engaging presentations. Contact: lunchtogether@crsny.org.

Friday, January 13, 6:00 pm: COMMEMORATING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. EREV SHABBAT B'SHIR SERVICE. Annual Shabbat Service honoring Dr. King's dream of hope.

Friday, January 20, 7:30 pm: BROTHERHOOD FILM FESTIVAL. Following Erev Shabbat Services, join us for a screening of the documentary film, *New York Says Thank You*, about the organization founded by our congregant, Jeff Parness, that sends volunteers from NYC on each 9/11 anniversary to help rebuild communities around the country affected by disasters. A complimentary dinner will be served. Contact: brotherhood@crsny.org.

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, January 23, 24, and 25, 7:00-10:00 pm: CRS THEATER COMPANY ADULT AUDITIONS FOR DAMN YANKEES. Children's auditions to be announced. Contact: rstheater@crsny.org.

Saturday, January 28, 12:30 – 2:00 pm: BROTHERHOOD FILM FESTIVAL. Following Shabbat Morning Services, we will screen the film, *Ahead of Time*, about Ruth Gruber's remarkable seven-decade career as an international journalist. Now 100, she will join us for a discussion following the screening. A complimentary lunch will be served. Contact: brotherhood@crsny.org.

Friday, February 3, 6:00 pm: EREV SHABBAT YOUTH SERVICE.

Saturday, February 4, 12:30 – 2:30 pm: SISTERHOOD PROMINENT WOMEN LUNCHEON. Annual program featuring CRS women discussing their careers and Jewish journeys. Complimentary lunch following Shabbat Morning Services. In the Eisner. Contact: sisterhood@crsny.org.

Thursday, February 9, 5:00 – 7:30 pm: RSS PA ANNUAL SKATING PARTY AT CHELSEA PIERS. Kids and adults alike have the opportunity to take skating lessons, eat great food, and socialize. Form is on the RSS website. If you would like to volunteer or have any questions: skatingparty@rsshny.org.

Friday, February 10, 6:00 pm: EREV SHABBAT B'SHIR SERVICE.

Saturday, February 18, 12:30 – 3:00 pm: CHAMBER MUSIC AT RODEPH SHOLOM. Artistic Director Eliot Bailen brings back another season of superlative chamber ensemble concerts highlighting both the best of the chamber music repertory and our Jewish heritage in music and features world class musicians in the congenial and intimate setting of the Schnurmacher Chapel following Shabbat Morning Services. Contact: chambermusic@crsny.org.

Monday, March 12, 6:00 – 8:00 pm: PLANNED GIVING EVENT.

“When I pray, I speak to God.
When I study, God speaks to me.”

(Rabbi Louis Finkelstein)

ADULT EDUCATION COURSES

The Jewish Experience in Spain

Rabbi Lisa J. Grushcow, D.Phil. and Dr. Jane Gerber | Tuesdays, 7:15 pm
January 3, 10, 17

All are welcome whether or not you are going on the congregational trip to Spain in March. Session 1: Sephardic Jewish history. Session 2: The “Golden Age” of Muslim Spain, Andalusia and Jewish culture. Session 3: The Jews of Christian Spain from Golden Age to expulsion.

A Time to Prepare: Jewish Approaches for the End of Life

Rabbi Sari Laufer | Tuesdays, 7:15 pm
January 24, 31, February 7

Part of our End-of-Life Initiative, learn about Living, ethical, and legal wills, health care proxies, cemetery plots, insurance, organ donation, and the spirituality and rituals of death and loss.

Brotherhood Torah Study: Miracle, Tragedy, and Prayer – The Search for God

Rabbi Robert N. Levine, D.D. | Tuesdays, 8:00–9:00 am
February 28, March 20

In the highs and lows of life, we go in search of God and yearn to see a glimmer of the divine in our lives. Join us as we explore this search together. All are welcome. For venues and details, contact: brotherhood@crsny.org.

The Art of Chanting Torah

Cantor Shayna De Lowe | Wednesdays, 6:00 pm
January 11, 18, 25, February 1, 8, 15

With our focus on the trope of the Torah, learn how to chant the ta'amei hamrika, the trope symbols. A basic reading knowledge of Hebrew is required.

Esa Eynai: I Lift Up My Eyes

Rabbi Jacqueline Ellenson | Fridays, 12:00–1:30 pm
December 9, February 10, March 16, April 20

A personal approach to text study, based on selections from the Book of Psalms, will be supplemented by poetry and song. Learners of all levels are welcome!

Zohar, Zo Good? Mysticism Through a Litvak's Eyes

Rabbi Andrea Myers | Thursdays, 8:00 am
Session 1: December 2, 8

Session 2: January 26, February 2, 9, 16, 23, March 1

Start your day with study and increase your literacy in Jewish texts and history.

Seminar in Jewish History

Rabbi Lisa J. Grushcow, D.Phil. | Thursdays, 12:00–1:30 pm
January 19, March 15, May 17

Join us for an engaging approach to our history and identity as Jews. The books we will study: Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza by Adina Hoffman and Peter Cole (January 19), The Balfour Declaration by Jonathan Schneer (March 15), and When They Come for Us, We'll Be Gone by Gal Beckerman (May 17).

How to Raise a Mentsch: The Parenting Discussion Group

Rabbi Lisa J. Grushcow, D.Phil. | Tuesdays, 9:00–10:30 am

November 29, December 13, January 3, 17, 31, February 14, 28, through June 12

Baby Mentsch

Rabbi Ben Spratt | Thursdays, 9:00–10:30 am

December 8, January 5, February 2, March 1, April 19, May 3, 31

Basic Judaism**Section 1: The Jewish Home and Life Cycles**

Rabbi Leora Kaye | Wednesdays, 7:00–8:30 pm
November 30, December 7, 14

Why Jewish rituals have developed and how they create meaning in our lives.

Section 2: Shabbat and the Festivals

Rabbi Sari Laufer and Rabbinic Intern Brian Immerman | Wednesdays, 7:00–8:30 pm
January 11, 18, 25, February 1, 8, 15, 22, March 28

Beginning Hebrew

Sara Rosen | Mondays, 6:15–7:15 pm, Thursdays, 9:00–10:00 am

Continuing Hebrew

Sara Rosen | Mondays, 7:15–8:15 pm, Tuesdays, 9:15–10:15 am

Modern Hebrew

Sara Rosen | Mondays, 8:15–9:15 pm, Tuesdays, 8:15–9:15 am

For more information, go to crsny.org, the Adult Ed brochure, Shabbat Shalom or call Sigal Stark at 646.454.3029.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE PROGRAMS AND OTHER EVENTS AT CRSNYC.ORG

OUR JOURNEY | Lilly Golberg

On September 3, our son, Mark Simon Golberg, became a Bar Mitzvah. He is the first American-born and the first in three generations to become a Bar Mitzvah.

My parents brought me here in 1979 as refugees from the Ukraine, at that time part of the Soviet Union. I was brought up in a Jewish home, but we couldn't freely practice our religion. My parents left Russia primarily for that reason.

When we first came here it was a tough beginning. My parents and others like them had to leave everything behind. They could only bring \$750 and 35 kilos (77 pounds) of belongings per person. The United States is truly a land of opportunities and whoever wants to succeed can and will. My parents did.

My husband, Alexander, came here as a young physician in 1989 after graduating from the medical school in St. Petersburg, Russia. Not knowing any English, he went to work as a waiter and started his long journey of

becoming a doctor in the United States. Our son, Mark, was born after my husband attended medical school (again), now in the United States, and was in residency.

Once my husband opened his own practice, we decided that Mark should have what we never had – the opportunity to be who we were born to be. Mark's Bar Mitzvah was a special moment in our lives. When we were preparing for it, the questionnaire for parents asked what the ceremony meant to us. We responded by saying that the optimum level of happiness, after the physiological needs have been met, is to **belong**.

To me, the fact that our son became a Bar Mitzvah met that level of happiness. Now he can truly join the ranks of Jewish men who live by Jewish law. And now he *belongs, belongs* to the Chosen People.

I would like to express our gratefulness to Rabbi Levine and Cantor Garfein for making the ceremony so beautiful and even more special. Now we are looking forward to our family's first Bat Mitzvah for our daughter, Ilana!

*“Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame.
Blessed is the flame that burns in the secret fastness of the heart.”*

(Hannah Senesh)

WINTER SHABBATON: ENCOUNTERING MODERN ISRAEL

Friday, December 2, 6:00 pm
Erev Shabbat Service

Co-sponsored by UJA-Federation of NY, Israeli Ambassador Danny Biran will speak on "Israel: The Future and Current Climate of Change."

Saturday, December 3, 12:30 pm
Following Shabbat Morning Services

Please join us for lunch and a film screening. Held captive in Gaza for five years by Hamas, Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit was finally released on October 18. We will screen "Family in Captivity" (Israel 2011), the film which followed the daily efforts of the Shalit family to cope and bring Gilad home. Our special guest speaker, Isaac Zablocki, producer of the film, will speak about the Shalit family's experience since Gilad's return home.

INCLUSION & OUTREACH MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to cultivate and sustain an inclusive environment in which all current and prospective members of the Rodeph Sholom Synagogue and School communities feel welcome and embraced, regardless of their attributes including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity. With respect to religious diversity, we welcome all people who seek a connection to Jewish life, we value non-Jewish individuals who are part of our community and we encourage their involvement.

DEVELOPMENT | Deborah Siegel

When my nieces, nephews, and cousins' kids were small, each Chanukah everyone gathered at my parents' house for a gluttony of latkes, chocolate fudge cake, and gifts piled high in a corner of the family room. All of the kids are grown now, with kids of their own, and when we get together and recall those long-ago Chanukahs, what they speak about are the warm memories of large rambunctious family gatherings – their great granddad (Pops), the tumult, and the many cousins to share with. They also laughingly bring up the gifts, none of which they can actually remember. (As it turns out, they are remembered in the spirit of the evening and the fun of giving and receiving and ripping off the colorful paper.)

Gift giving at CRS is somewhat the same. We are thrilled to see fundraising efforts succeed, dollars accumulate, and, especially at this time of year, see how the Yom Kippur Appeal has thrived. After all, it is the Appeal that spans the gap created by the mere 65% of the budget covered by membership dues. But more than the dollars raised, I suspect that it is the shared participation in the community welfare that makes memories that are passed on to the next generation. What a good feeling to know that you have "put your gift on the pile" so to speak, helping to create opportunities for someone to participate in a Special Needs Worship Service, or an Adult Education program, or an outing for our Religious School kids or CRuSTY

UNDERWRITING OPPORTUNITIES

There are opportunities to fund new initiatives or provide budget relief for costly projects so that more funds are available for education and other activities. Here are two suggestions that you may totally or partially underwrite:

Family B'nei Mitzvah Program Dinners As children attend this important and required program after school and parents often come directly from work, the evening would be more pleasant and productive for all with "real food" rather than the cookies and beverage currently budgeted. A gift of \$15,000 would provide falafel or pizza to 75 individuals over the five weeks of the program; a portion of this amount would also be welcome.

Chamber Music Series This series of three concerts extends our Shabbat peace following Shabbat Services and brings a taste of Lincoln Center uptown to Rodeph Sholom! Your gift will help underwrite these concerts. \$7,500 for the year or \$2,500 per concert.

Please contact Deborah Siegel, Director of Development, at 646.454.3050 or dsiegel@crsnyc.org to discuss how you may help.

members. And how proud this community can be that, because of the Appeal, we are able to respond to the many families who must seek dues assistance, Religious School scholarships, or B'nei Mitzvah fees assistance during these continuing challenging times.

So my message this month is to urge you to include Rodeph Sholom in the memories you are creating during this month when the gifts might be piling high at your house. If you haven't yet made a gift to the Yom Kippur Appeal, why not take care of it before the end of the year? Your gift will not only help to balance the budget, sustain our programs, and maintain our facilities. It will also pull up the percentage of participation in the Appeal, spreading needed support more evenly amongst all your fellow members and reflecting the amazing spirit of this community.

Gifts can be made via the CRS website or mailed to the Development Office. You can also call me at 646.454.3050. Please note that the last day for credit card donations to qualify for 2011 tax credit is December 23 via the Development Office; you may also make a secure online gift through December 31 at rodephsholom.org/secure/donate. To transfer stock, be sure you have the latest information by contacting the Development Office and leave enough time for the transaction to be completed during this busy season.

THANK YOU, COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Congregation Rodeph Sholom has always benefited from the generous and willing participation of its congregants to make the programs and services we offer even better. And never is this more evident than when asked to chair a Committee. An honor, sure. But more than that, it is an opportunity to share one's particular expertise and experience to make our spiritual home more welcoming, more inclusive.

As some of our chairs and co-chairs are stepping down from their roles (a few are even tirelessly moving on to chair other committees), we take this opportunity to recognize their service. Thank you to the following: **Donna Bascom** (*Community Concerns*), **Dr. Ann Beaton** (*Religious School*), **Stuart Glass** (*Insurance*), **Andrea Kretchmer** (*Membership*), **Janet Levy** (*Sisterhood*), **Clare Sheridan** (*Youth*), **Robert Steinman** (*Yom Kippur Appeal*), and **Melinda Wolfe** (*Inclusion and Outreach*).

Having built foundations from which we may achieve future goals, your accomplishments will continue and enable our community to go from strength to strength. *Yasher Koach!*

CRS HELPS TO FIGHT HUNGER | Yvette Perry

CITY HARVEST COLLECTION

Your response to Rabbi Levine's impassioned plea to fill this year's City Harvest trucks to the brim on Yom Kippur morning was gratifying *beyond* measure. What we can measure, however, is the amount your generosity made possible: **32,837 pounds of food!** Thanks to you, City Harvest was able to deliver a substantial amount of food to its 600 community food programs throughout the City – soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, and senior and children's daycare centers – feeding over 300,000 people each week.

In this challenging economic environment we still need to do all we can to help. For us as a community, this embodies Isaiah's prophetic call to us on Yom Kippur—to respond to the needy in our midst and feed the hungry. Please continue supporting the CRS Food Drive throughout the year.

A MAZEL TOV FOR A MITZVAH

At its 2011 Harvest Dinner on November 15, West Side Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH) honored Congregation Rodeph Sholom with its Social Justice Award "...for continuing support from one of the founding houses of worship that have nurtured the West Side Campaign Against Hunger since 1979."

WSCAH, at West End Avenue and 86th Street, provides food for one million meals a year to low-income New Yorkers. A pioneer in delivering emergency food with dignity, WSCAH treats people as customers, not charity recipients, where one selects food from shelves rather than receiving a prepackaged bundle. WSCAH also provides social service counseling and wellness programs so that customers may find solutions for themselves.

Religious School

MOMMY, CAN WE CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS? | Kerith Braunfeld

Soon after Thanksgiving, when the Christmas decorations go up, the conversation begins anew as I walk my son and daughter to school. How many days is Christmas? How many days is Chanukah? How many presents do you get for Christmas? For Chanukah? (Yes, even for a Jewish educator's young children, it has a lot to do with presents.)

Living in Manhattan where the evergreen trees line the concrete sidewalks and the store windows are decorated with Santa Claus and snow, there's no denying the prevalence of Christmas in our society. As the years have passed, the Chanukah section at Bed, Bath & Beyond has become larger and more sophisticated, yet it still pales in comparison to the Christmas section. And although these may be material things and not the essence of these two important holidays, kids do notice which holiday gets the bigger billing.

Over the years, my answer to these questions has evolved – in the early years, I simply tried to avoid it by saying, “we celebrate Chanukah and that's that.” Then I began to say that Christmas is also a special holiday, it's just not ours and that we have our own holiday, Chanukah. I saw how much more difficult navigating this conversation became when my son was old enough to realize that his beloved

aunt, who is Jewish, celebrates Christmas with her Catholic husband and his family.

To me, actions speak louder than words. So as I address my children's questions at this time of year, I will also continue to provide them with joyous Jewish holiday and ritual experiences throughout the year, which, ironically, mimic a number of the Christian and pagan holidays, just at different times: we dress up in costumes on Purim instead of (or in addition to for many families) on Halloween, we have Tu B'Av instead of Valentine's Day, on Passover we do a leaven hunt in our house before the first night instead of hunting for eggs on Easter, and so on.

The bottom line for me regarding this conversation with my children is that we are not talking about which holiday is *better*. It's that they are *different*, and Chanukah is *ours*. Our ancestors, the Maccabees, felt so strongly about maintaining their Jewish identity within the larger culture that they stood up and fought for this right and for that we are proud.

And happily, as Chanukah approaches and the decorations go up, the latkes start frying, and the dreidels start spinning, the evergreen trees lining the sidewalks are beautiful to smell and look at as we pass them on our way home to celebrate our special holiday.



Family Workshop at the Shofar Factory

Rodeph Sholom School

The Rodeph Sholom School gratefully acknowledges the support received from The Fund for Jewish Education.

Sponsored by Caroline & Joseph S. Gruss, Life Monument Funds, Inc. and UJA-Federation of New York.

“Hope is like peace. It is not a gift from God. It is a gift only we can give one another.”

(Elie Wiesel)

PURIM CELEBRATIONS

Wednesday, February 29

3:00–7:00 pm Purim Carnival
In the Schafler

Saturday, March 3

4:30–8:00 pm CRuSTY Purim Event
In the Schafler

Wednesday, March 7 – Erev Purim

5:30–7:00 pm Erev Purim Service & Shpiel

Thursday, March 8 – Purim

10:00 am Purim Morning Service and Megillah Reading

Saturday, March 10

11:00 am–12:30 pm Purim Service and Celebration for Families with Special Needs

Open to the entire community and all ages are welcome. The Service will be interpreted in Sign Language and there will be healthy snacks (hamantaschen, too!). Costumes are welcome, but no masks or groggers (noisemakers).

Community Matters

UNION FIELD CEMETERY

Owned and operated by Congregation Rodeph Sholom, Union Field Cemetery is located at Cypress Avenue in Ridgewood, Queens. The Cemetery Committee invites you to visit anytime to experience the quiet serenity of our grounds, to meditate, to remember departed family members, and to consider plans for the future. There is a refurbished chapel on the premises for memorial services. Grounds hours are 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Sunday through Thursday (closed on Shabbat and major Jewish and secular holidays). Contact Antonio Jones during office hours, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm (3:00 pm on Fridays) at 718.366.3748 or ufc@unionfieldcemetery.org.

CRS WEBSITE CRSNYC.ORG

Along with current CRS happenings, you will find the latest information on all the exciting events and program offerings. Refer to the monthly worship and events calendars. Our website reflects the diversity within our spiritual home. We encourage you to check it as often as possible. In fact, why not make it part of your daily routine?

Find us on Facebook at: [Congregation Rodeph Sholom](#).

CRS BLOG: TORAH TURNS

Looking for a little more Torah in your life? The blog features a taste of some of the Torah that is taught within our walls by congregants every week. Comments and conversation are encouraged! Go to rodephsholom.org/blog or click the link on our homepage. And to contribute, contact: 646.454.3025 or rabbigrushcow@crsnyc.org.

KAHAL, CULTURE & CAMARADERIE

Join other Rodeph Sholom 60's+ in KCC's monthly activities such as guided museum visits, shows and concerts, special exhibitions, and walking tours. Contact: 646.454.3118 or kahal@crsnyc.org.

HOMELESS SHELTER

The Rodeph Sholom Shelter for Homeless Men, which has been providing a clean, safe and caring temporary home for homeless men since March 1, 1983, will remain open, Monday through Friday, until at least through May 2012. Thousands of congregants have participated as volunteers for one or two nights each Shelter season. Please help by participating in this worthy congregational cause. Contact Jay Kranis: 212.362.9341 or jkranis@verizon.net.

GET INVOLVED AT CRS!

If you are interested in getting to know your fellow congregants better, making friends, having a voice in what happens, contributing to events, or sharing your expertise, we want to know! Taking an active part in our synagogue community can be a deeply rewarding experience. For information on ways to get involved, contact: membership@crsnyc.org.

CRS BOOK CLUB

Join us on the first Thursday of every month for an interesting and lively discussion. Meetings are at the synagogue at 7:00 pm. Check the website for the books we are reading. Contact: bookgroup@crsnyc.org.

COUNSELING & SUPPORT SERVICES

Ruth Kobrin, LMSW, is a social worker on staff part-time at CRS. All inquiries and consultations are strictly confidential. Contact: 646.454.3180 or rkobrin@crsnyc.org.

WEEKLY MA'ARIV SERVICE

The Ma'ariv Services are held throughout the year, weekly on Tuesdays at 6:30 pm in the Hahn Chapel. Whether you are looking for a spiritual mid-week break or the chance to say Kaddish, come to pray and to learn, to support and to connect. If you want to be contacted when we need help to make a *minyán*, contact: rabbigrushcow@crsnyc.org.

VOLUME 14 | NUMBER 2
 WINTER 2011 | 5772

**HAPPY
 CHANUKAH**

**CHANUKAH
 GUIDE
 I N S I D E**

ABOUT CONGREGATION RODEPH SHOLOM

Rodeph Sholom, one of New York's most distinguished Reform congregations, embodies a strong commitment to purposeful Jewish living and the pursuit of human dignity. Our congregation is a true community, excelling in meaningful worship, educational opportunity for all ages, social and tzedakah programs. We strive to be an extended family of people who care about each other and our community.

Founded in 1842 on the Lower East Side, Rodeph Sholom has always sought to blend the teachings of our Jewish heritage with the best lessons of modern culture. We are proud of our beautiful worship services, our commitment to social action, and our emphasis on Jewish education for people of all ages. Rodeph Sholom was the first Reform congregation to open a Jewish Day School. Our schools, like our congregation, are flourishing. Remaining true to our name which is Hebrew for "pursuer of peace," Rodeph Sholom takes great pride in our history and is hard at work to fulfill the promise of our future.



Congregation Rodeph Sholom

Robert N. Levine, D.D. Senior Rabbi
Lisa J. Grushcow, D.Phil. Associate Rabbi
Sari R. Laufer Associate Rabbi
Benjamin H. Spratt Associate Rabbi
Rebecca Garfein Senior Cantor
Shayna De Lowe Associate Cantor
Ephraim Biran Cantor Emeritus
Brian Immerman Rabbinic Intern
Benjamin Ellerin Cantorial Intern
Michael Kimmel Executive Director
Marc Fried Chief Financial Officer
Deborah Siegel Director of Development
Rabbi Leora Kaye Program Director
Gail Becker Sexton

Rodeph Sholom Religious School

Tirza Arad Director
Kerith Braunfeld Associate Director
Rodeph Sholom School
Paul Druzinsky Head of School
Susan Weiss Newman Head of Schnurmacher Early Childhood Division
Colleen Dundon Head of Hirschberg Elementary Division
Maxine Borenstein Head of Middle School Division
Erin Korn Director of Admissions



7 West 83rd St., New York, NY 10024
 tel: 212.362.8800 | fax: 212.877.6526
 email: chronicle@crsnyc.org

Officers

Karen Berman President
Paul Arnsten Vice President
David Fleischer Vice President
Harry Frischer Vice President
Linda F. Vogel Kaplan Vice President
Sally Kaplan Vice President
David Resnick Vice President
Brian Perman Treasurer
Martin Flumenbaum Assistant Treasurer
Roger Meltzer Chairman of the Board
Janet Neuberger Honorary President for Life
Nancy Solomon Past President
Mark Biderman Past President
Jack Levitt Past President

Auxiliaries

Brad Zimor Brotherhood President
Suzanne Waltmann Sisterhood, Chair of Women's Steering Committee
Maya Levine Sr. Youth Group President

The Chronicle

Yvette Perry Editor

VISIT OUR WEBSITE CRSNYC.ORG