

Education Committee Report-Nadine Chesnut VP May 2011

I want to start by thanking and commending all the Education Committee directors and members for their enthusiasm, creative ideas, and being a pleasure to work with all year! We started the school year with using a new Hebrew program, for 4th and 5th grades. It is the Mitkadem Hebrew program. It was greeted with cheers by most of the students and parents. One goal is to expand the program to the entire Religious School.

Debra Kellner, our Religious School Director, will not be returning to our school in the fall. She and her family will be moving out of state and we wish her the best of luck. She was on maternity leave for several months this school year, and Rachel, her second in command, took over. I will be handing over the V.P. position to Rick Schumacher's capable hands. Next year will be a great year full of excitement for the parents and staff.

We had Shabbat programs for the ECE, with Hazzan Stein. The children and parents enjoyed prayer and song together. Also, a Passover Seder and Hanukkah program with our Rabbis and Hazzans. The ECE and Religious School have Tzedakah projects on-going. Food for Sova and coins for the Tzedakah box are small reminders to our students that they can perform mitzvahs on a daily basis.

Our Welcome Back Bash was held on August 29. Many new and returning families enjoyed the various activities, food, and warm welcomes provided by our members. We invited parents to sign up for volunteer positions at our Temple and showed them how they can make a difference in their child's Jewish education.

Monthly in-service classes, for the Religious School teachers, were implemented to up-date and educate on new teaching methods. An e-newsletter has been provided to parents, to review what their children have been studying each month. Our enrollment forms are on-line, to make registration easier for parents.

Our fund raiser was the sale of personalized Haggadahs. Next year, we need to find a new way to raise money for the Religious School. This money goes to supporting teachers by purchasing special, extra materials for the classrooms that the children will use.

The Torah Project was a wonderful addition to the Religious School curriculum. The children were all able to have educational visits from the Sofer. He gave a workshop about writing the Torah. He is an amazing educator and the children were all very involved and excited.

We changed the dismissal procedures for the children, which keeps the children in the classes and has parents, come to get their kids in the rooms. This has keep order in the courtyard and had a beneficial effect on dismissal time. We had a minor electrical fire in two

classrooms this year. The children and teachers did a wonderful job using other spaces, for quite awhile, until the renovation was complete.

The OurSpace program hosted monthly parent chats which began in January. They had speakers on various topics of interest to parents, which were open to all, for no charge. There are also Parent Bagel N Chats at Valley Beth Shalom monthly on Sunday mornings.

The ECE had numerous activities throughout the year. Hanukkah parties, the Thanksgiving Feast, Open House, and the Trike-a-Thon. These are only a few of the successful events that the ECE puts on. Andrea and the ECE teachers did a wonderful job of training the children to be “good Jews” but also good citizens. The Book Fair was a big success and raised quite a bit of money for the ECE program to use.

It has been a very educational and exciting two years as V.P. The changes to the Religious School that are anticipated are very exciting. The new Director(s) will add even more to our program. I hope Temple Aliyah will always be known for its excellence in Religious School training. Thanks to all my committee members, the board members, clergy, and the parents for their support throughout the years!

Sincerely,

Nadine Chesnut