

Eugene Stein 2021

Shanah Tovah.

Twenty years ago, our country came under attack. I remember standing in the middle of Madison Avenue in Manhattan looking downtown toward the towers – difficult to comprehend what I was looking at.

That night, as a family, we watched TV and let the news roll over us. At the time, my family was living in Bayside, New York. Not long after, we found ourselves drawn to our temple, Temple Israel of Jamaica. I recall arriving at the temple, seeing so many other families, and feeling good knowing that we were not alone. That night, I remember feeling the power of community.

I know that this is precisely what happened here at Beth Shalom, as well.

This past year, we endured a different crisis – one that, as we know, continues. The lockdowns that began in March 2020 challenged us individually, as families, and as a congregation.

Thankfully, our TBS community was able to respond with resilience. We organized ongoing outreach to one another – especially our most vulnerable members. We found creative ways to educate our children – both in person and online. Community connections continued with over 100 events in our parking lot and dozens of programs hosted online. Shabbat became a weekly haven amidst chaos and uncertainty. We creatively marked important life moments so that we could celebrate joys and bring comfort during illness or loss. The pivoting that took place was extraordinary. It was truly a team effort, with our clergy, educators, professional staff, and so many lay leaders guiding our path. For me, it was a sure sign of how devoted we are to one another as a community.

Inspirationally, when the need for additional financial support became clear, our congregation responded without hesitation. Our Emergency Relief Fund helped support those impacted by Covid. The inaugural year of our Annual Fund was a tremendous success. Thanks to your generosity and our incredible community advancement leadership, we raised over 180% of the totals from previous Shofar Appeals. In the

coming days, you will receive our first-ever Annual Fund Gratitude Report that expresses our heartfelt appreciation to all those who donated as part of any of the circles of giving. This year's Annual Fund, as you may know, is already underway. You will receive invitations over the coming weeks to contribute. These funds are essential for us to continue to engage outstanding staff and do all that we do together as a community. As you consider your philanthropic giving for this year, I ask that you please remember your TBS community.

I know that I speak on behalf of the entire Board of Trustees when I say "Thank you!" to all who have given of yourselves in any way over this past year to strengthen our congregation.

Looking ahead, our wonderful lay leadership team remains dedicated to ensuring that our congregation remains strong spiritually, educationally, programmatically, communally, and organizationally. Among the MANY things that we will be doing together, we are excited to continue to expand programming directed to adults with either no children at home or with older children. Our new TBS ConNEXTions

program has been enthusiastically received. As well, we look forward, as part of our 2020 Vision Strategic Planning work, to engaging in an extensive program/parking space assessment. And, as Rabbi Jay spoke about on Rosh Hashanah, we eagerly look forward to gathering around our writing of a brand new Torah scroll.

As we make our way through this time of Covid, we will continue to innovate, create, and connect in ways that we believe will make a lasting impact. As we do, I remain truly grateful to all of you for the opportunity to serve as TBS president. I feel blessed.

My wife, Miriam joins me in wishing you and your families a sweet, happy, and healthy new year.

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