

## **Tikkun Olam update – August 2021**

Please read about the ways our fellow congregants are engaged in Tikkun Olam, consider joining, and email [tikkunolambethel@gmail.com](mailto:tikkunolambethel@gmail.com) if I've missed anything. *Thanks to all for your important and holy work!*

- **Criminal Justice Reform:**

The committee has been collecting household goods, office supplies, and art, including an original from a Beth El member and copies of paintings from African, Caribbean, and Jewish sources. The committee (with the assistance of members of the Anti-Racism Working Group) delivered three carfuls of items donated by Beth El members (*Thank You, donors!*) to Kimya's House, now called Women's Empowerment. The house, for post-incarcerated women, is run by New Beginnings Reentry Services in Boston. The director and founder, Stacey Borden, gave us a tour, and reviewed its history, philosophy and inspiring plans for the house and program. Click [here](#) to see an article in Metrowest Daily News about the delivery.

Stacey Borden also suggested future work on the cause of treating people like humans, even if they made a mistake. We will be working against Massachusetts' proposed construction of a large prison for women. Elaine, CRJ chair, will be sending the congregation information on the harm that would do and how we can fight it.

Borden is a Trustee for several local and national organizations working on reducing mass incarceration, especially that of women. We will update you when we find a pertinent bill to support. For more info, please contact Elaine Barnartt-Goldstein at 978-443-8084 or [ebarnarttgoldstein@gmail.com](mailto:ebarnarttgoldstein@gmail.com).

- **Blood Drive:** Our commitment to host a blood drive on July 26 with the American Red Cross truly made a difference! Our team registered 34 total donors, collected 33 pints of blood and recruited 6 first-time donors. Our efforts have helped boost the community blood supply and ensure hospital patients have the lifesaving blood they need. Thanks to everyone involved and a big thanks to Jordan Oshlag for organizing the blood drive!
- **Green Team:** Green Team continues to be active on many fronts:
  - The Green Team is honored to name Liz and Barry David as this month's Climate Menschen of the Month. Not just for what they've done this month – it's how they've lived their lives. In their words, *"Having been born during depression times, we were brought up not to waste anything, so striving to be green was simply a way of life...it's a natural and meaningful way to live."* They've installed insulation and a green thermostat in their home, they drive a PZEV (look it up!), they follow the 3 Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) in their food and other consumption. *"Simply a mind set to treat all resources as sacred and to be responsibly used, whether food, energy, or manufactured product, in line with Judaic teachings. A shirt without a button does not require a new shirt, only a button...It is being green from the core out!"* Read more at the Green Team webpage under Repair the World: <https://bethelsudbury.org/beth-el-green-team/>
  - What can you do? You can do a lot! Take a look at Beth El's Green Challenge: <https://community.massenergize.org/JCAN/>. And, for the latest, sign up for the GreenTeam list-serv by emailing [greenteam-subscribe@members.bethelsudbury.org](mailto:greenteam-subscribe@members.bethelsudbury.org).
  - Just thinking: *"One side effect of the pandemic is the uptick in waste going to landfills. As we order supplies online, order in takeout, and stock up on toilet paper, pasta, and frozen pizza dough, we're bringing more and more packaged products into our homes than ever before."* Ever hear of "Extended Producer Responsibility" or "EPR"? Read the article: <https://blog.arcadia.com/get-rid-of-plastic-EPR/> (thank Jocelyn Bailin for the link)

- Are you composting? You can, you know. Easy to do it yourself or by subscribing to Black Earth Compost's composting service. <https://blackearthcompost.com/> Beth El will compost its kitchen waste when the kitchen is back up and running. Contact Linda Klein with your questions at [lindaklein840@gmail.com](mailto:lindaklein840@gmail.com).
- Have questions on solar, composting, heat pumps, advocacy, recent laws? Contact John Harper at [jpharper47@gmail.com](mailto:jpharper47@gmail.com) to connect with a Green Team person following that action.
- **Sanctuary Committee:**
  - We continue to work with the Ayalas in the process of helping them get better jobs to become self-sufficient. They are very motivated! We have met with them several times. This is an ongoing task, unfortunately. We continue to ask our fellow congregants to be as generous as possible given the difficult financial situation. Our thanks to everyone who has given so generously! The Ayalas, and the committee, are truly grateful.
  - We will be pursuing working with HIAS on more general refugee issues starting in the coming month.
  - The Sanctuary Committee together with the Anti-Racism Working Group sponsored a Bystander Intervention Training led by Beth El member Craig Ross on July 11.

For info on the Ayala family, contact Judy Katz ([judy16k@gmail.com](mailto:judy16k@gmail.com)) or Judy Sletzinger ([jsletzinger@gmail.com](mailto:jsletzinger@gmail.com)). For info on legislative action, contact Kath Bean ([kathleenbean@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenbean@gmail.com)). For info on Friday afternoon stand-outs or other Sanctuary Committee activities, contact Carl Offner ([carl.offner@comcast.net](mailto:carl.offner@comcast.net)).
- **Anti-Racism Working Group:** This month:
  - In partnership with the Beth El Sanctuary Committee, we organized a bystander intervention training workshop at Beth El. The workshop was led by Craig Ross, PhD, MBA, a Beth El member and director of the Boston University School of Public Health Bystander Intervention Training Program. The workshop gave participants skills for safely intervening when they witness public harassment.
  - Elaine Barnartt-Goldstein, a member of the Antiracism Working Group who also leads Beth El's criminal justice reform initiative, organized the collection and delivery of household goods, office supplies, and home decorations to Kimya's House, now called Women Empowerment, in Dorchester. Founded by a formerly incarcerated woman, the program will help women leaving prison or other parts of the criminal punishment system to regain control over their lives by providing housing, social supports, skills training and other supportive services.
  - Members of the Antiracism Working Group are engaging in State-level advocacy on two pieces of legislation: Bill S230/H230 to support a five-year moratorium on prison construction; and Bill S365/H584, to support anti-racism, equity and justice in education.
  - Lisa Goodman is organizing an antiracism learning session for Elul titled "Being White and Being Jewish." Aimed at Beth El members who have not yet become deeply engaged in antiracism work, the session will help participants examine the privileges of whiteness, while looking squarely at the intertwined problems of racism and anti-Semitism.
  - The Antiracism Book Group organizers, Lisa Breit and Ann Barysh, are exploring ways to expand the scope of the group in the coming year. The book group, having almost completed its first year, has proved to be an incubator and anchor for people who want to learn more about anti racism work. Lisa and Ann hope to broaden next year's work to include movies, documentaries and other forms of art and information to deepen our learning. The Book Group will be discussing *So You Want To Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo in September and *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison in October. New participants are warmly welcome.

- The Antiracism Programming team - Lisa Breit and Ann Barysh - is exploring the following programming for the coming year: environmental justice, antiracism legislation/policies at the state level, criminal justice reform, film and culture, and Jewish multicultural adoption. Antiracism programs will be open to the Metrowest Jewish community.
- Individuals in the group are pursuing their own antiracism activities including volunteering at mobile covid clinics in underserved communities in Boston; volunteering at the Metrowest Free Medical Clinic; exploring ways to support Black-owned businesses in Boston; exploring a project to help homeowners in Roxbury, Mattapan and Dorchester make improvements on their homes to enhance their home equity; and, as a member of multiracial board of a local theater, participating in deep exploration of what it means to become an antiracist theater.

Contacts: Judy Goldberg and Karen Blumenfeld

- **Inclusion Committee:** The Inclusion Committee is engaged in several areas:
  - We will begin a congregational discussion about gender neutral bathrooms with information sessions and focus groups to share information and hear feedback from congregants.
  - We are excited to bring in Bamidbar, an organization that focuses on strengthening peoples' mental health coping skills, among youth and adults. We will bring them to Beth El to do two sessions in the fall:
    1. September 1st from 7:00-8:15pm. "The physiology of Stress" - an interational workshop where participants will map their stress and how it evidences itself in their bodies and then coping skills. *This session will be on-line only and will be limited to 15 people.*
    2. Oct. 18th from 7-8:30: an intergenerational program with high schoolers and congregants. The title is "Burnout and Boundaries." *This session will be offered hybrid, in person and on line.*
  - Beth El continues to Zoom services and classes to maximize accessibility and will continue to discuss the benefits for everyone in doing this.

For more information, contact Susan Tohn at [susanleetohn@gmail.com](mailto:susanleetohn@gmail.com).

- **Tzedek Scholarship Fund:** The Tzedek Scholarship Fund Committee is reviewing applications and plan to select a new scholarship recipient for the fall term. To date we have funded seven students, all of whom have graduated.
- **Support and Connection for Beth El members:** Phone buddies and light meals:  
With summer in full swing and a return to more normal patterns of interaction, it might seem that all is well. While things certainly are better for many of us, not everyone has the blessings of liberty and health. Some of our congregants cannot be vaccinated, and others face ongoing health or living situations that keep them isolated. If you or another congregant you know could benefit from a friendly call or a light meal, please contact Carol Sheingold or Jocelyn Bailin.
- **MetroWest Free Medical Program:** Our Program has passed some significant milestones as we return from our long Covid hiatus and *begin seeing small numbers of patients in person*. We saw our first Women's Health patients on July 17<sup>th</sup> and will see our first Adult Medicine patients on August 10<sup>th</sup>. The visits are taking place at 110 Edgell Road in Framingham on the campus of First Parish Church, our other partner congregation. 110 Edgell is separate from the main church building which makes it more feasible to maintain Covid precautions. We're taking the usual Covid precautions you would encounter in any doctors' office (pre-screening, patients waiting in their cars, etc.). We are continuing to meet the needs of many other patients virtually. Another milestone is that the Program just signed an agreement with AthenaHealth to acquire their Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system provided at no cost to free clinics. This system will support appointment scheduling and follow up and telemedicine as well as medical record keeping.

With all that's happening, ***we need more volunteers and staff***. We're especially looking for physicians in adult general medicine and Psychiatry to add to our volunteer staff. We're also looking for nurses in

adult medicine and Psychiatry for volunteer or paid part-time positions. For more info, please contact our Clinical Coordinator, Sandra Dickie ([sandra@metrowestfreemedicalprogram.org](mailto:sandra@metrowestfreemedicalprogram.org)). We also need someone for a communications position including maintaining web site and sending out newsletters. This could be a volunteer or possibly paid part time. Anyone with experience in implementing an EMR system like AthenaNet would also be very helpful. Please contact Gary Hirsch at [GBHirsch@comcast.net](mailto:GBHirsch@comcast.net) if interested.

- **Help for Congregants Who Need Food Assistance:** Any congregants who could use some food assistance should contact Deborah Oppenheimer directly at [deb\\_oppenheimer@alumni.pomona.edu](mailto:deb_oppenheimer@alumni.pomona.edu); all information will kept confidential. If any need assistance getting pantry (or other) groceries delivered to them, contact Neighborhood Brigade (with whom Deborah has partnered). Any congregants who live in Lincoln or Sudbury should contact Sudbury Neighborhood Brigade about home deliveries, at Sudbury MA Neighbor Brigade <[sudburyma@neighborbrigade.org](mailto:sudburyma@neighborbrigade.org)>.
- **Tzedaka Hevra:** The Tzedaka Hevra has had a busy and productive year, giving away about \$28,000. 60% went to 3 organizations and the remaining 40% to 22 other organizations. The Hevra meets regularly and is open to any Beth El member. We hear from speakers representing organizations that we donate to, or that we may donate to. To learn more, contact Ira Silver [isilver@framingham.edu](mailto:isilver@framingham.edu)
- **COVID-19 Support Services From CJP:** If COVID-19 has affected someone you know financially, the [CJP WarmLine](https://www.cjp.org/warmline) (1-800-CJP-9500) may be able to assist. With one phone call or by filling out a simple online form, trained Warmlines counselors can begin to help navigate available services across the Jewish community. JewishBoston.com also has additional information about community resources during the COVID-19 crisis. Anyone feeling overwhelmed with sadness, anxiety or stress, or who wants to harm themselves or others, can access the mental health, emotional support and suicide prevention program Call2Talk by dialing 2-1-1, calling 508-532-2255 or by texting C2T to 741741.
- **Kiddush donation opportunities:** In lieu of hosting Kiddush at the temple, consider joining a Beth El Kiddush group, which plans to donate funds to food pantries, including [Sudbury Food Pantry](#), [Greater Boston Food Bank](#) and [Feeding America](#).
- **Covid-19 volunteer opportunities:** Our community rises to the current Covid-19 challenge! The JCRC, Jewish Family & Children's Service, and others offer many volunteer opportunities. If you're able to help, please take a look at their websites:  
<https://www.jfcsboston.org/Volunteer/Volunteering-at-JF-CS>  
<https://www.jcrcboston.org/covid-19/>

**Thanks to everyone for your holy work!** If I've missed anyone's Tikkun Olam efforts at Beth El, please let me know. We'd like to share the news with the community! If something here interests you, and you don't see contact information, let me know and I'm happy to connect you.

L'shalom,

Michelle Fineblum, VP, Tikkun Olam [tikkunolambethel@gmail.com](mailto:tikkunolambethel@gmail.com) [Beth El's Tikkun Olam web page](#)