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Irving J. Fain  
Social Action Awards:

*Models of Outstanding  
Synagogue Social Action Programs*



*Presented at the  
Consultation on Conscience  
Washington, DC  
by*

The Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism

Justice, justice shall you pursue  
Deut. 16:20

## 2003 Fain Awards

Active commitment to social justice is a hallmark of the Reform Jewish Community. That commitment has inspired Reform congregations across North America to develop and pursue a wide range of activities and programs that help l'taken olam, to mend the world. By reaching out to the needy and downtrodden, by forming coalitions of concern across religious and racial lines, by advocating for equity and justice, and in countless other ways, it is the congregations of our Movement that stand on the front line of the long, hard struggle to realize the vision of the prophets and to create communities informed by that vision.

The Commission on Social Action (CSA) of Reform Judaism is a joint instrumentality of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and affiliated organizations of Reform Judaism. The Commission assists congregations in establishing effective Social Action Committees and programs, encouraging the application of Judaic ethics to contemporary issues. The Commission also proposes policy positions to both the UAHC and the CCAR and oversees the work of Reform Judaism's Religious Action Center (RAC) in Washington, D.C., which pursues social justice and religious liberty by mobilizing the American Jewish community and serving as its advocate in the capital of the United States.

Irving J. Fain, who died in 1970, was a passionate proponent of social justice, and served for a decade as Chairperson of the Commission on Social Action. The Fain Awards, established in 1983 in his honor and memory, are awarded every two years to congregations whose work in the area of social justice

is exemplary. Specifically, awards are presented to congregations that have successfully involved large numbers of congregants in their social action programs or that have developed genuinely innovative and/or particularly effective projects.

The 2003 Fain Award winners fully meet the high standard that the awards are meant to advance. We hope and expect that they will inspire others to embark on the creatively and energetically on the road to justice. To that end, along with descriptions of their programs, we have included herein the addresses and phone numbers of the Award winning congregations. You may contact them directly if you want more information about their programs, and you may of course, learn more about the Fain Awards by contacting either the Commission of Social Action or the Religious Action Center (the contact information is located on the back page of this brochure).

<i>Robert M. Heller</i>	<i>Chair, Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism</i>
<i>David Davidson</i>	<i>Chair, 2003 Fain Awards Selection Committee</i>
<i>Rabbi Marla J. Feldman</i>	<i>Director, Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism</i>
<i>Rabbi David Saperstein</i>	<i>Co-Director, Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism</i>
<i>Mark Pelavin</i>	<i>Associate Director, Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism</i>

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### **Forgetting Chinese Food and the Movies: Spreading the Spirit of Christmas in the Community**

Larchmont Temple has a strong history of social activism. This particular program encourages Larchmont congregants to become involved in the community during the winter holiday season. Through its Adopt-a-Family program, the synagogue has worked with a local school social worker to improve the holidays for families in the temple's neighborhood. During Christmas 2002, forty-nine temple families and two Girl Scout troops "adopted" forty-two needy families, who were asked to provide information about their family demographics, such as

age, sex, clothing size, and "wish list." The temple members proceeded to generously fulfill these needs by purchasing clothing, toys, household necessities and other items. The Social Action Committee matched families who have children of the same age, so that the children of the congregation could help pick out items and join in these meaningful efforts. The committee hopes to expand this program by working with these children on a year-round basis. The success of this program depends upon cultivating strong congregational motivation in early October, and having a dependable local partner who can help connect the congregation with needy families.

In accordance with the holiday theme, Larchmont Temple also leads the annual Christmas Dinner at the YWCA of Brooklyn. This dinner, which has grown over the past thirteen years, served 1,500 people in 2001. In addition to the dinner, the guests receive clothes, new toys, and take-home meals. Overall, more than 500 temple members help in some way, including cooking turkeys for the event and donating clothes. This example of generosity, resourcefulness, and involvement demonstrates the helping spirit of Larchmont Temple.



## 2003 Fain Awards

*Mt. Zion Hebrew Congregation received a Fain Award for its outstanding commitment to social action, as exemplified by two programs, A Year of Tzedek and the Emergency Overflow Shelter.*

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### **A Year of Tzedek and the Emergency Overflow Shelter**

The congregation dubbed 5761 “The Year of Tzedek,” which began by Social Action Committee members distributing tzedakah cards at High Holiday services. These cards described ten tzedakah projects, such as adult literacy, disaster relief, congregational support and immigration, in which congregants could become involved by marking their area(s) of interest. The leader of each project then contacted the congregants to encourage their participation.

To further encourage congregant involvement, the adult education programs focused on the theme Sacred Texts, Sacred Obligations. For example, congregants attended a forum in which Senate candidates discussed topics related to Sukkot, and attended a class entitled Parenting 101: How to Instill Values of Social Action. In addition,

the cover of every monthly bulletin featured a Tzedek issue, and inside articles featured ways to become involved in it and highlighted the efforts of a socially active congregant.

One result of the Year of Tzedek initiative was the Emergency Overflow Shelter, which provided eighteen beds for homeless families for two months last year. Mt. Zion congregants volunteered in large numbers to help with this program and partnered with a local church organization to gain further resources. Each time the shelter was open, over 110 Mt. Zion families participated in some way, including organizing all aspects of the shelter, as well as cooking meals and donating items. To keep this effort going, the Social Action Committee led Project Sukkot, which it developed to educate, inform and activate the congregation around issues of homelessness.



## **Muslim-Jewish Relations**

*Temple Beth El, Congregation Shir Heharim, and Temple B'nai Israel share a Fain Award for their contributions to furthering Muslim-Jewish relations.*

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Temple B'nai Israel's Muslim-Jewish dialogue group began as a response to September 11. The Social Action Committee reached out to the Muslim community to show its congregation's solidarity and to counter the country's growing anti-Muslim sentiments. The two groups began meeting monthly for lunch to discuss their common values, their religions, and the situation in the Middle East. Though the groups had disagreements, they were determined to find a common ground. A few participating individuals, under the name Muslims and Jews for Peace and Justice worked on a candlelight vigil to support a two-state solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

The two communities shared in each other's religious traditions, as members of Temple B'nai Israel attended a break-the-fast dinner during Ramadan, and the groups collaborated on a Shabbat service. The Social Action Committee also planned a women's interfaith seder that triggered a vibrant discussion on women's roles in religion.

These programs have had an impact on the entire Charleston community. Members of the dialogue group have been invited to speak in different forums, and various organizations have invited their joint participation in a variety of activities. For example, a rural community center in Big Ugly, West Virginia asked the group to speak. In order to educate individuals in this area, which has no Jews or Muslims, one representative from the temple and one from the mosque showed a film and spoke about the two religions. The program also featured Israeli dancing, lighting Chanukah candles, teaching Hebrew and Arabic phrases, and reading from the Koran. As demonstrated by these efforts, Charleston's Muslims and Jews have formed a strong and steadily growing relationship that will continue to impact the greater community positively.

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Shir Heharim, a congregation of 118 members, also decided to devote its efforts to Muslim-Jewish relations during this time of increased international tension. Congregants felt determined to aid the peace effort in the Middle East, and they began exploring the possibility of interfaith cooperation through their weekly Torah study. They then paired with the School for International Training (SIT) to show a film called Promises about Israeli and Palestinian children. The viewing of the film was widely advertised, attracted a large audience, and was followed by a lively panel discussion. Encouraged by this response, the two organizations developed a remarkable week of workshops called Salaam Shalom, which consisted of



sessions on Hebrew and Arabic language, Jewish and Muslim history, culture, art, music, and discussion groups. Each workshop was filled nearly to capacity with both Jews and Muslims, and the reports about most of them were glowing.

The two groups then decided to collaborate on an interfaith service. In planning this service,

they made a particular effort to address the historic exclusion, both in traditional Judaism and traditional Islam, of female leadership. Accordingly, two women and two men, all lay leaders in their respective communities, led the service. It was held on a Friday evening and included Shabbat prayers as well as traditional Muslim prayers. The leaders pointed out certain commonalities between the prayers, such as the connection between the Bar'chu as the call to worship and the Muslim call to worship by an imam.

The service leaders added an educational component to this well-attended service. They underlined the connections between Judaism and Islam throughout the ages, beginning with Isaac and Ishmael. The emotional service, which brought many lapsed members back to the congregation, concluded with singing and a potluck dinner. Those involved with Salaam Shalom agreed that they have to continue working together in order to someday achieve peace.

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Temple Beth El's program began after September 11th when its members decided to reach out to the local Muslim community. A neighboring church also joined this effort, which became known as the Living Room Dialogue. In December, this group planned a triple celebration event at the synagogue, which featured educational pieces on Chanukah, Advent, and Ramadan. Following this celebration, 400 people from the three religious communities met for dinner. Later that year, the three communities gathered for an evening of comedy featuring both a rabbi and a young Arab Muslim comic.

The Living Room Dialogues continued and eventually inspired two spin-off projects. A member of Temple Beth El created SARAH (Spiritual and Religious Alliance for Hope), a group of interfaith women committed to making a difference in the community. Members of SARAH work together to better understand women's spiritual experience in the home, community, and the world. They meet their goals through volunteer work, organizing events featuring guest speakers, and book discussions. These programs inspired Temple Beth El's further collaboration with the interfaith community. A group of Muslims and Jews went to Mexico to construct a home for a needy family under the auspices of an organization called Corazon. Because of the hard work of this interfaith group, it was able to hand over the keys to the family in just one day, although the impact of this cooperative venture will last much longer.

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### Middle/High School Social Justice Club

Temple Israel launched the Middle/High School Social Justice Club in order to encourage the next generation of Jews to advocate for social justice. The core group of fifteen young people learn methods of effective advocacy, initiate strategic social action in alliance with other groups, engage in interfaith dialogue, and inspire others to pursue social and economic justice. Temple Israel came to realize that the basic methods of promoting youth community involvement, such as religious school lessons about tzedakah and required bar/bat mitzvah community service, were not enough to fully engage the minds and souls of its young people. The congregation decided to incorporate social action in all facets of its activities and began by encouraging its youth to assume a leadership role.

In this spirit, a father/son team started the Social Justice Club, which meets monthly for a working dinner prior to religious school. Through discussion, they identify priority social problems they want to address. Seeking to go beyond collecting cash and winter coats, the members engage speakers, study texts, and learn about social issues in order to strengthen their actions. For example, they studied the challenges facing underprivileged youth in their area and collected and delivered supplies to Youth Emergency Services throughout the year. They went

on to encourage the congregants to donate their used cell phones to a local women's shelter so that battered women could call for help.

In the fall of 2000, the Social Justice Club investigated a proposed amendment to the Nebraska Constitution that denied constitutional protection to individuals in same-sex relationships. Quite a few members protested this amendment and decided to become more involved in a local faith-based consortium for social justice. In that same year, the group engaged in a series of activities with Muslim students, including sharing meals, ice-skating, and discussing current events. These activities planted a seed for what has become the Omaha TriFaith Initiative, an adult-based group that promotes discussion among three local religious institutions.

Temple Israel has come to expect great things from the members of its Social Justice Club and has become motivated by the hard work, passion, and commitment to *tikkun olam* of its youth.

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**A.S.K. Asking Saves Kids**

Monmouth Reform Temple based its program A.S.K. Asking Saves Kids on the Talmud's teaching that to save a life is to save the world. This is a multiyear effort that has already educated over 1,000 people on the importance of open and honest communication about guns in order to ensure the safety of children. Monmouth Reform creatively partnered with a national not-for-profit alliance, PAX (Real Solutions to Gun Violence), to start this grassroots advocacy effort.

This program began when Monmouth Reform presented a gun safety and awareness forum featuring the founders of PAX, U.S. Senator Jon Corzine, and a family in the congregation whose child was shot at a neighbor's house. As a result of the overwhelming response to this forum, the Social Action Committee decided to train over fifty volunteers in advocacy techniques. Committee members volunteer at A.S.K. events in the community and urge parents to make informed decisions about where their children play. The congregation is approaching the issue of gun violence from a nonpartisan, public health standpoint.

In order to facilitate community involvement, the congregation sought people to speak at Parent-Teacher Associations. Three middle school students became early spokespersons, introducing the A.S.K. campaign

to parent-teacher groups at four local schools. Since these initial presentations, members of the congregation have given similar talks at a nursery school, a drug and alcohol alliance, and another Jewish congregation. The volunteers continued to spread their message by giving workshops at two UAHC Regional Biennials, where they distributed information and offered to coach other groups seeking to start their own A.S.K. community action programs.

In order to decrease the visibility of any kind of guns in their neighborhood, Monmouth Temple organized a toy exchange. Children exchanged their toy guns for nonviolent toys at the temple. Congregants then took the toy guns and made a sculpture spelling out the words "Please Ask!" which has been an effective publicity tool for their efforts. The congregation has also supported PAX through fund-raising, so that other communities can have the materials necessary to become involved in this cause. Monmouth Reform's admirable diligence in this campaign serves as a role model for congregations that hope to educate others on issues of public concern.



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### **Partnership with Social Workers at Legal Services**

Temple Emanu-El's Social Action Committee began a partnership with Legal Services of New Jersey to help impoverished clients work toward self-sufficiency. Legal Services provides counsel to persons in poverty involved with civil cases such as domestic violence, health-care access problems, and child welfare. The Social Action Committee encourages all members of the congregation to donate items requested by these clients. It promotes this cause by

making announcements at services, writing articles in the temple bulletin and sending e-mails.

The youth of the congregation also participate in this mitzvah of community involvement. Each grade of the religious school is matched with children close to their age and is given a wish list from these clients. At holiday time, each child is asked to bring in a new children's toy. In 2001 the congregation gave gifts to five children, and in 2002 it collected over 100 new gifts for children in need. The New Jersey Gay and Lesbian Chavurah, which meets at the synagogue, has also become involved in helping these clients.

In addition, the congregants of Temple Emanu-El enthusiastically donate furniture they no longer use in order to help these clients in their time of need.

These donations have made a difference. For example, some single mothers were able to reunite with their children after receiving the items they needed to better run their household, and formerly homeless clients were able to return to their homes with necessities supplied by Temple Emanu-El's congregants. At this time, Social Action Committee members hope to expand the synagogue's involvement by developing a fund to provide additional help to the clients, thus furthering their fight for social justice.



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### **Michelle Mitzvah Group**

The Michelle Mitzvah Group, a strong component of Temple Beth Haverim's social action program, was formed after the long-term illness and death of a child congregant. The monies donated at that time as well as subsequent contributions were set aside to create a special fund to aid children. The group now hosts three annual events at Blythedale Children's Hospital, a long-term care facility. Most of the patients are restricted to gurneys and wheelchairs but have remarkable attitudes, and the Michelle Mitzvah Group delights in hosting these events.

At each function, the group brings noninstitutional food, such as hero sandwiches or pizza, which the hospital staff has approved. They encourage as many temple members and children as possible to participate in order to foster one-on-one relationships with the patients. The volunteers provide a seasonal arts and crafts project, entertainment by clowns, appearances by local sports figures, and other fun-filled programming. In February the group hosts a "We Love You" party at the hospital. In October, they "trick-or-treat" with the patients and provide face painting and games. During the

summer they organize an outdoor picnic, barbeque, and softball game, during which Beth Haverim volunteers help the children score home runs.

On Christmas Day volunteers help at another pediatric hospital, providing entertainment and gifts. Because of the debilitating illnesses in this facility, the volunteers are not permitted to bring food, so they focus on activities such as singing, performing magic tricks and celebrating the holiday spirit.

Volunteers send all of their photographs from these events to the hospitals to decorate the recreation rooms and to keep the relationship between them and the children strong between events. Beth Haverim has continued to honor the memory of the child it lost by helping to brighten the lives of these disabled young people.



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### Justice For All Seasons

For over a decade, Sinai Temple's Social Action Committee has implemented an ongoing program of *tikkun olam*. Throughout the year, the members devote their efforts to helping others in their community. To begin the year, on Erev Rosh HaShanah, the congregants go home with the first name and shoe size of a child from an inner-city community center. On Yom Kippur, the congregants bring in boxes filled with new shoes for the children.

On Chanukah each year, the congregation either has a board game or book drive for distribution to needy children. Later in the winter, the committee distributes two monetary awards. The first is a \$1,000 award to an individual or agency in the Springfield area that is engaged in bettering the community. The second is awarded to help a high school or college student who wants to pursue a *tikkun olam* project in the summer. One of these award winners organized an art project for Latino children, while another organized a local chapter of COEJL (Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life).

In the spring during Purim, the Social Action Committee introduces Project Baby, a program to collect food and clothing items for infants. Also, instead of using the traditional metal noisemakers, the congregants bring boxes of macaroni and cheese to shake and then donate them to a local agency. In

their Esther's Closet program, congregants donate special occasion dresses to inner-city teens before the prom season begins.

In the summer, Sinai Temple members focus on food collection and the homeless. They learned that donations to food pantries diminish during the summer and therefore thought of a new program called At Your Door, to alleviate this problem. Every year, volunteers send an explanatory letter and shopping bag to congregants, asking that they leave a full bag of food by their door on a designated Sunday morning. The Social Action Committee picks up the bags and replenishes local food banks. Also during the summer, the congregation works with Habitat for Humanity and another housing organization, Rebuilding Together.

Throughout the year, Sinai Temple contributes to the Pioneer Valley Project, which is a grassroots organizing body. As members of this group, they have helped expand the hours of the local library and invigorated the Parent-Teacher Associations in Springfield's inner-city schools. In response to issues on an international level, the congregation created the World Crisis Fund. This fund pays for congregational mailings whenever a "world crisis" arises. In this way, congregants can respond monetarily to crises in a timely fashion. Once the donations have arrived, volunteers send the tzedakah to the chosen agency and leave just enough in the fund for the next mailing. During the last decade, they have raised over \$33,000 to send to such places as Bosnia, Puerto Rico, and India.

Sinai Temple's innovative, year-round efforts demonstrate the congregants' unwavering commitment to those in need, at home or abroad.

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### **Ohel Tzedek: Tent of Justice**

In the fall of 2001, a group of Temple Israel's clergy and laypeople met to discuss a vision for the next incarnation of their commitment to social justice. This group, the Social Action Steering Committee (SASC), developed a strategic plan for social action at Temple Israel, which included a set of three-year goals. By the temple's 150th anniversary, this committee planned to infuse the key facets of synagogue life (including life-cycle events, youth education, adult learning, worship, and the capital campaign) with social justice learning and action. In order to meet these ambitious goals, the temple Board hired a staff organizer to conduct an advocacy campaign focused on shared concerns of social justice.

Beginning in January 2002, Temple Israel launched an unprecedented, eight-week community-building campaign focused on social justice. More than 120 members participated in twelve house meetings in and around Greater Boston. The goal of these meetings was to identify and develop the social justice stories of Temple Israel's members. These stories highlighted the issues about which the members felt passionately, and having discussed their stories through *Ohel Tzedek*, they discovered shared values and concerns.

The campaign culminated during the Temple Pesach seder, when 220 members gathered around a twelve-

foot-tall Tent of Justice, which was adorned with illustrated examples of the members' social justice stories. The SASC had developed initiatives based on the members' collective narratives. These initiatives included providing affordable housing in Boston, improving public education, fighting for equal rights for the gay and lesbian community, health care advocacy, supporting Israel, and caring for senior citizens. Members formed *hevres* (groups), which currently work toward their specific mandates. For example, the senior citizens *hevre* addresses pressing transportation needs, while the affordable housing *hevre* advocates for city and state governmental support. Hundreds of members have participated in this campaign to improve living conditions for all in the Boston community. Now, thanks to a grant from the Jewish Fund for Justice, Temple Israel currently integrates *Ohel Tzedek* into the religious school and bar/bat mitzvah experience. *Ohel Tzedek* is continually growing and changing as more and more members of the Temple Israel family enter the tent to share their commitment to social action.

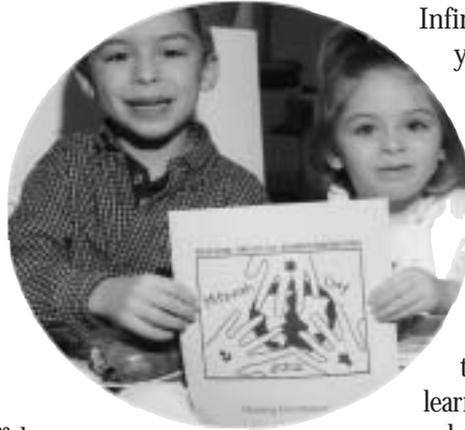


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### **Interfaith Mitzvah Day**

In the spirit of friendship and service to the greater community, Temple Beth Zion, Westminster Presbyterian Church, and Masjid Nu'man Mosque perform mitzvot together throughout the Greater Buffalo area. Temple Beth Zion began its annual Mitzvah Day in 2000. In 2001 they invited other religious organizations in the community to participate. This program invigorates the hundreds of Beth Zion congregants who participate in it because they are working with other faith communities toward a common goal.

The planning for Mitzvah Day begins a year in advance. The leadership team, comprised of members of all three congregations, selects various sites around the Greater Buffalo area that need help with special projects. All members of the mosque, church, and synagogue are invited to participate as volunteers. Mitzvah Day begins with a service prepared by the clergy and team leaders, which specifically highlights the important work that needs to be done. Some examples of the chosen projects include building a gazebo in Buffalo's community park, serving lunch at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute, running a blood drive, painting the walls of St. Andrews Manor (a residential care facility), entertaining the residents of Erie County Home



Infirmary via the musical talents of the youth and adult choirs, and preparing gifts for members of the three congregations who are homebound.

Beth Zion's Mitzvah Day creates opportunities for all of the synagogue's members to become involved. Congregants can spend time together, bring happiness to others, and learn from one another's experiences. For example, at a center for homeless children, members of all three faith traditions gathered with the residents for an open discussion about their hopes of creating a peaceful tomorrow.

Mitzvah Day has become an established event in Buffalo. Every year, the budget expands in order to provide supplies and equipment for the growing number of volunteers. Many local businesses support the program through both monetary and food donations. Because this program has become such a success, Temple Beth Zion's Social Action Committee has instituted the Mitzvah of the Month project, which offers smaller groups, such as the youth group and Sisterhood, the opportunity to explore areas of interest on which to focus. The temple board, for example, cleaned and decorated a new building at the Weinberg Campus, a nursing facility. Temple Beth Zion hopes to expand its cooperation with the church and mosque in order to work together more often during the year. Mitzvah Day has infused Temple Beth Zion with the need to serve and support others and to create bridges of understanding with other religious and cultural groups in its area.

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### **Book Connection Literacy Project**

Four years ago, members of Congregation Beth Israel-Judea decided to express their religion through action and formed a Social Action Committee. The committee became interested in launching their own project through the local Jewish Coalition for Literacy (JCL), but first they had to deal with several challenges because of the nature of their demographics. Beth Israel-Judea is a small congregation, whose members believe in both Reform and Conservative ideology, live in two very different counties, and are also separated by a generation gap. The Social Action Committee sought to create a program that addressed these potentially divisive issues and was designed to bring the synagogue's congregants closer together.

Since that time, members have established an expansive library at McLaren, a children's center in a depressed San Francisco neighborhood. They chose this center because they have a special interest in improving local relations between African-Americans and Jews. Situated near the Sunnydale housing projects, where shootings often occur and frequent emergency police action is necessary, this center was in desperate need of help. Because of Beth Israel-Judea's hard work, JCL has added this center to the list of schools to which it sends to prospective tutors.

The Social Action Committee has connected this project to members of all ages. Volunteers, mostly senior citizens, have been trained by the JCL to tutor on a weekly basis in truly needy schools. The committee has also reached out to the temple's youngest members by creating a Birthday Club. Volunteers send a small birthday package to each of the temple's 140 children and invite them to "share their joy with a toy," old or new, to donate to children in need.

The Social Action Committee has depended on only minimal Temple funds to buy basic recreational supplies, such as jump ropes and beanbag chairs for library reading. Although the volunteers have come to realize that they can never become part of their students' culture, and vice versa, what they have discovered is that they can try to create a "third world" based on their shared experiences. The volunteers feel motivated by the power of these experiences and are truly meeting their goal of expressing their Judaism through action.



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### **Project Mercy**

Temple Adat Shalom began its work with Project Mercy in 1999, and the Social Action Committee continues to commit to this project. Project Mercy is a nonprofit organization that strives to improve the basic living standards of impoverished families who live in the shantytowns of Tijuana, Mexico. Committee members act as a continuous source of financing and support for the building of basic but sturdy houses for these poor families. In addition, by arranging for Project Mercy's director to speak at the temple, the committee helped educate other members about the untenable living conditions of a community that is so close to their own.



The Social Action Committee raises funds and plans trips to Tijuana. Its goal is to raise sufficient funds for one or two houses per year (\$2,600 each), as well as to assist in the building, finishing, and painting of these houses. The committee takes five to twenty people, which often includes school-aged temple members, on each trip. In spite of the language barrier, the interactions between the Tijuana residents who also help build the houses and the temple members have been powerful for both communities.

The rest of the congregation helps this project by donating items to the annual Blanket and Stuffed Animal Campaign. In a heartwarming example, the Project Mercy organizers asked temple members to assist a young girl from the Tijuana community. She needed money for a lifesaving surgery, and the temple's seventh grade religious school class helped to raise the necessary amount. Temple Adat Shalom also works with a few local churches and The Rotary Club on this project, thereby building strong alliances with equally civic-minded groups. Temple members feel motivated to continue this work because

providing shelter and helping others work toward self-sufficiency fulfills an important Jewish value.

*Congregation Or Ami won the 2003 Irving J. Fain Award for two programs, Creating a Positive Learning Environment, and Make Our Tzedakah Grow both of which demonstrate this congregation's strong sense of community responsibility.*



also used the corporate-gifting program to provide shoes, holiday clothes, backpacks, and gym clothes.

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**Calabasas, CA 91302**  
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**[www.arami.org](http://www.arami.org)**

### **Creating a Positive Learning Environment at the 75th Street School**

In order to make a direct impact on their community, Congregation Or Ami adopted the 75th Street Elementary School in South Central Los Angeles. This school is located in a rough, gang-dominated area, and many of its students do not have adequate clothing, school supplies, or daily nutrition. Volunteers have set up several programs, to assist the school.

For the Back-To-School clothing drive, congregants are asked to purchase school uniforms in a variety of sizes and bring them to High Holy Day services. One congregant bought 500 clay pots, seeds, and dirt for the Hands-On Science Program. For Museum Day, students from the 75th Street Elementary School and Or Ami families spent the day together at the California Science Center, with lunch donated by the families. Or Ami's youth group works on the Peace Garden, which commemorates alumni of the school who have been victims of gang violence. To help the hard-working teachers, Or Ami volunteers obtained pencil and pen sets from their established corporate-gifting program. Congregants have

Or Ami's involvement with the 75th Street Elementary School has benefited both communities. For the schools' students, teachers, and administrators, the addition of new supplies has substantially impacted their learning environment. For the Or Ami congregants, this outreach program has taught them that they can organize for social change.

### **Make Our Tzedakah Grow**

The "Make Our Tzedakah Grow" program begins each year during the community Chanukah service. A few congregants find a special sign under their seat that instructs them to join the rabbi on the bimah after the sermon, which focuses on the mitzvah of *tikkun olam*. Each of these selected congregants is given \$100 from the rabbi's discretionary fund. The rabbi then instructs them to transform the \$100 into a vehicle for social action. The program aims to change Chanukah from a holiday of receiving presents into a festival of giving tzedakah. Since the Chanukah service is one of Or Ami's best attended services throughout the year, the rabbi's message spreads throughout the congregation.

The rabbi instructs the participants that they cannot give this money back to the congregation. This rule encourages them to research new avenues for righteous giving, an endeavor that the rabbi advises. The participants' experiences are publicized in the bulletin so that other families may learn new ways of giving tzedakah and reaching out to others.

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**310.476.2861**  
**[www.leobaecktemple.org](http://www.leobaecktemple.org)**  
**[bhanley@leobaecktemple.org](mailto:bhanley@leobaecktemple.org)**

### **Public Education Advocacy**

A centerpiece of Leo Baeck Temple's work has always been social action, and an ethical imperative dominates the temple's activities. This attitude compels the congregants, including the youth, to speak out and become involved. Presently, members work on the temple's AIDS Lunch Program, repair homes in South Central Los Angeles, collect food and clothing, and participate in many other projects. In recent years, the Social Action Committee focused on the theme of Children in Need and has developed programs and institutional relationships with the American Jewish Committee, the Venice Family Clinic, Jewish Big Brothers, and the Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition.

In recognition of Leo Baeck Temple's extensive involvement in the community, the Progressive Jewish Alliance (PJA) has joined forces with the temple's Social Action Committee. PJA is an organization of liberal Jews who draw from Jewish values to promote social and economic justice. When the leadership of both groups met, the issue of public education was at the top of their agenda. To begin their advocacy work, they invited educators and administrators to their meetings in order to learn about the situation of the Los Angeles Unified School District. The group then developed a three-part Social Action Shabbat Lecture Series, which helped inform over 600 people



about public education issues. A state assemblywoman, a syndicated columnist, and a professor of sociology at Hebrew Union College spoke about empowering topics such as The Jewish Stake in Public Education, and A Vision for Change: Society's Commitment to Education.

The Social Action Committee became a force of political advocacy by working with a liaison from the superintendent's office. With the help of this liaison, the committee began to lobby the local government for funds to repair the schools. The group highlighted the issues of public education and successfully mobilized support for school bonds, individual schools, and teachers. The group also supported the teachers union by gaining public support for their work through press conferences and community meetings. Leo Baeck Temple's relationship with the PJA has involved hundreds of congregants in education and advocacy, and the group plans to continue to expand their efforts. In addition to addressing the issues of public education, the temple has built a coalition to address social and economic injustice throughout Los Angeles.

**Congregation Shir Ha-Ma'alot**  
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**Irvine, CA 92614**  
**949.857.2226**  
[www.shmtemple.org](http://www.shmtemple.org)  
[info@shmtemple.org](mailto:info@shmtemple.org)

### **Adopt-a-Family**

Congregation Shir Ha-Ma'alot began working with Century High School, an inner-city school, in response to the 1990 Los Angeles riots. One of the congregants teaches at the school and developed a program in which families of the congregation assist families from this school. This year, for example, congregants volunteered as mentors, career guides, lecturers and tutors at the school. In addition to these efforts, members also dedicate themselves to the successful Adopt-a-Family program.

During Thanksgiving, Congregation Shir Ha-Ma'alot members provided dozens of Century High School families with a full holiday dinner. The next month, for the holidays, congregants adopted over two hundred families and supplied them with gifts and household essentials. In addition, each grade in the religious school sponsored a family. Each grade received a description of its family, with ages, clothing sizes, wish lists, and needed household items. Students also learned about the family's living conditions, such as the parents' work schedule, their occupations, and the number of family members who share a room.

Many congregants adopt the same family year after year and have ongoing relations with the families. One congregational family, for example, has its adopted family over for dinner once a month to share

food and conversation. By assisting in these ways, congregants hope to bring encouragement and feelings of increased self-worth to these hardworking families. Well over half of Shir Ha-Ma'alot's 380 families participate in these efforts, which help them become more involved in their congregation as well as the greater community.

**Congregation Oheb Shalom**  
**555 Warwick Drive**  
**Wyomissing, PA 19610**  
**610.375.6034**  
**[www.ohebsholom.org](http://www.ohebsholom.org)**  
**[office@ohebsholom.org](mailto:office@ohebsholom.org)**

### **Social Action Fair**

Congregation Oheb Shalom's Social Action Committee hoped to foster and support the dynamic engagement of the synagogue's members within the local community. However the committee was struggling with a common problem: fewer congregants were volunteering their time. Having identified this problem, the committee realized that it had to remove barriers to volunteerism by showing congregants the range of local possibilities, facilitating opportunities, and motivating them into action. In order to communicate this message, the committee planned to bring their fellow congregants face-to-face with community leaders so that they could obtain information about local opportunities. The committee planned to show Oheb Shalom members how to tailor their involvement so it fits into their lives and how they could become part of the greater community through a Social Action Fair.

The committee decided to limit the first Social Action Fair in 2000 to twelve local agencies in order to create an intimate atmosphere and allow time for in-depth discussion. At the 2000 Fair, the agencies included the Literacy Council, the Red Cross, Y.E.S. Mentoring, Volunteer Home Care, Jewish Family Service, Highlands Nursing Home, and the Kennedy

Soup Kitchen. The representatives from these agencies discussed the purpose of their respective organizations and focused on ways the volunteers could contribute their time and efforts. After the representatives made their presentations, participants had the opportunity to speak personally with them.



This event takes place every other year and has become an ongoing program that educates the congregation about local needs while promoting compassion and social change. New agencies participate at each fair in order to provide new information to the congregation, and to encourage attendance. Many congregants volunteered with such agencies as a Visiting Nurse Association, Planned Parenthood, Refugee Resource Project, Olivet Boys and Girls Club, and the Greater Berks Food Bank.

Congregation Oheb Shalom has fewer than 200 families, yet the attendance at both fairs was quite high. All those who attended learned hundreds of different ways in which they could help. Many members signed up with more than one agency and have kept their commitments for a significant time period. Agency representatives felt the intimate format was very successful because it gave them the ability to speak with many members in one setting. This format also generated commitment from temple members and will inspire even more commitment to the community in the future.

*Temple Shalom members demonstrate their inspiring sense of community responsibility through their devotion to both the Friendship House and to the Sunrise Community.*

**Temple Shalom**  
**4630 Pine Ridge Road**  
**Naples, FL 34119**  
**239.455.3030**  
**[www.naplestemple.org](http://www.naplestemple.org)**

### **The Friendship House**

The Friendship House, based in poverty-ridden Immokalee, is a homeless shelter for abused women, children at risk, migrant workers, and the working poor. Temple Shalom first got involved with the Friendship House during its 2000 Mitzvah Day but quickly realized that it could not confine its efforts to just one day a year. Temple members have served the Immokalee community by focusing on three comprehensive projects: La Casa, Breast Cancer Awareness, and the annual Christmas Eve celebration.

Temple Shalom members opened a thrift store, called La Casa, to help the Friendship House community become more self-sufficient. The establishment of La Casa created job opportunities, money for the shelter's supplies, and access to affordable clothing, appliances, and furniture. Temple Shalom members have played a pivotal role in this effort with bookkeeping, legal assistance, painting, and organizing.

In another project the temple's Sisterhood invested in the health of the Immokalee community by distributing breast examination pamphlets in Spanish. The Sisterhood and a Temple Shalom physician also sponsored a series of lectures on breast cancer prevention. In addition, every Christmas

Eve, Temple Shalom partners with local churches to provide holiday cheer to the homeless and working poor of Immokalee. Attendance has grown from 1450 guests to a projected 2,400 for Christmas 2004. Temple Shalom has been a good friend to the clients of the Friendship House, and in return the Friendship House has helped Temple Shalom define itself as a congregation.

### **The Sunrise Community**

Temple volunteers also decided to work with the Sunrise Community after serving its clients on Mitzvah Day. One of the congregants has a daughter who is a client of the Sunrise Community, an agency for developmentally compromised adults. Not including the temple volunteers, the only visitors to the Sunrise Community were family members, as this population makes many feel uneasy. The volunteers structured their visits around monthly birthday parties, which feature the musical talents of Temple Shalom congregants, homemade cakes, and different themes. The religious school students contributed by making birthday cards and small gifts for the clients.

This year, the program was expanded to include not only a Christmas but also a Chanukah party, at which clients ate latkes, played dreidel, and celebrated together. Volunteers also started an arts and crafts program, landscaped the yard, and hosted the agency's "graduation" banquet. This opportunity to bring joy into the Sunrise Community has also brought considerable joy to Temple Shalom.



**Temple Emanu-El**  
**P.O. Box 55403**  
**Birmingham, AL 35255**  
**205.933.8037**  
[www.ourtemple.org](http://www.ourtemple.org)

### **Outreach to the Graysville Community**

In the spring of 2000, Temple Emanu-El organized an outing for fifteen young adults to work on a nature trail at Brookville Elementary School in Graysville, AL. What began as an afternoon's outing to this rural area, less than twenty minutes from downtown Birmingham, escalated into a major project whereby the Social Action Committee began to re-think its commitment to traditional philanthropy. As a result, the committee decided to focus its efforts on this impoverished community with a number of different programs.

By working with the nurse practitioner at Brookville Elementary School, the Social Action Committee discovered that the mental health issues of



the students were overwhelming. To learn more about this problem, it organized a “summit” that included local political leaders. After hearing about this summit, a county commissioner offered to hire and train a full-time school therapist. In this way, Temple Emanu-El helped empower the students and their families to deal with these serious issues.

In addition, the congregants worked together to open Allison’s Thrift Store in Graysville in an effort to bring new vibrancy to this dilapidated area. The congregation received a grant to begin building the store, and temple members helped renovate the building for use over the course of several months. During Temple Emanu-El’s Mitzvah Day, congregants donated clothes and furniture and brought them to the store. A Graysville family now runs the store, which sells items donated from the Birmingham Jewish community.

In further efforts to support the Graysville community, a group of retired Temple Emanu-El members go to Brookville Elementary and host the Grandparents Reading Program. The congregants encourage students to read since many of the children do not live with adults who can read. Also, many temple families have contributed to the project on the occasion of their children’s bar or bat mitzvah. For example, several families have opted to use baskets of books, games, toys, or clothing as centerpieces for their parties, which they then donated to the project. These efforts by Temple Emanuel to support the Graysville community demonstrate the congregation’s commitment to Maimonides’ injunction that the highest form of tzedakah is to help people help themselves.

Temple Sinai  
1802 Kenilworth Street  
Sarasota, FL 34231  
941.924.1802  
[www.temple Sinai-sarasota.org](http://www.temple Sinai-sarasota.org)  
[office@temple Sinai-sarasota.org](mailto:office@temple Sinai-sarasota.org)

### **Seder of Hope: An Interfaith Passover Gathering for People Touched by AIDS**

The mission of this uplifting program, now entering its seventh year, is to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS in the local community and to bring support, healing and comfort to those affected. Approximately 150 people attend this event each year. Those who attend are from all segments of the Sarasota community, especially those individuals who are afflicted with HIV/AIDS, their friends and family members, and those who have lost someone to the disease.

Temple Sinai's Social Action Committee created a unique Haggadah for the Seder of Hope. Instead of discussing the ten plagues sent by God to liberate us from Egypt, this Haggadah enumerates the plagues that hinder liberation from AIDS. These plagues are ignorance, denial, hypocrisy, bigotry, apathy, shame, gossip, recklessness, impatience, and fatalism. In addition to readings from the Haggadah, music plays an important part in the ceremony. The temple's cantorial soloist and Faith Out Loud, a local gay chorus with HIV-positive members, have performed at the seder. At another point in the seder, every participant holds up a candle and sings "This Little Light of Mine," and then they call out the names of loved ones whom they have lost to HIV/AIDS.



The program requires the participation of many of the temple's 500 members. Volunteers decorate the social hall with AIDS memorial quilts, and every guest is greeted with a red AIDS ribbon. The volunteers also decorate the tables with donated flower centerpieces and seder plates. Members prepare the complete seder meal, clean up after the event, serve as hosts, collect contributions from local merchants, and handle the financial records. The seder has also helped the congregation build alliances with many diverse organizations, like the Diocese of Venice, Florida, Sun Coast Cathedral, PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), and the Doctors Hospital of Sarasota, which help to support this event.

The Seder of Hope was initiated at Temple Sinai by a program chair who had lost her son to AIDS in 1992. It has become an inspiring vehicle through which many temple members have put their Jewish values to work. The seder has served to educate both the congregation and the community-at-large about the problems associated with this disease. There is no charge or solicitation of money at the seder, but many feel moved to make a donation to various AIDS organizations, to further help the cause. The Seder of Hope promotes social justice for a part of the population that is often persecuted by defending their civil rights, relieving their mental suffering and building positive community relations.

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6930 Alpha Road  
Dallas, TX 75240  
972.661.1810

[www.templeshalomdallas.org](http://www.templeshalomdallas.org)  
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### Evolution of a Social Action Congregation

In 1999, members of Temple Shalom's Social Action Committee decided to rededicate themselves to *tikkun olam*, and they have experienced amazing results. The committee renamed itself the Social Action Steering Committee and chose to regard every member of the Temple's 1,000 families as social action participants. By offering organized social action programs that represented a wide spectrum of activities, beneficiaries, time commitments, and scheduling options, the Social Action Steering Committee hoped to eliminate any obstacles or excuses that might inhibit the congregants' involvement. An annual budget of \$10,000 provides resources for twenty-five projects serving the Dallas community and beyond. Over 1,300 temple members of all ages now participate in these social action efforts.

As a result of this major recommitment to social action, the Steering Committee initiated two comprehensive projects. The first was Camp HOORAY, an annual three-day trip for underprivileged students, that takes place at UAHC Greene Family Camp. Most of the one hundred campers from a local public school receive free lunches and speak English as a second language. This event fosters self-esteem and provides positive role models, new experiences, and fun for the students. It takes place in a safe environment for



students who might otherwise be home alone during their school's spring break. Approximately forty teens staff the cabins and plan the activities, while one hundred adults volunteer year-round to organize the event, which is free for the participants.

As a fund-raising effort, the committee began offering intra-congregational *shalach manot* baskets, thereby performing the mitzvah of sending food packages to friends and relatives on Purim. Volunteers delivered the \$5 packages, filled with an assortment of seasonal goodies, to the recipients' homes. The majority of the contents are donated each year by local organizations and Temple Shalom members. Over 600 gifts were delivered in 2002, raising more than \$8,000, which helped fund social action and youth projects.

In addition to these projects, the Steering Committee created the Mitzvah Messengers program to encourage Temple Shalom's children to become involved in the community. This program engages the temple's 600 religious school students in at least two mitzvah projects per school year. Chosen efforts have ranged from clothing, blanket, and book drives to various art projects that brighten the lives of the elderly and the homebound. Through this myriad of efforts, the children not only help countless others but also learn about local charitable organizations and socialize with fellow temple members. Temple Shalom has discovered that being a true Social Action Congregation requires ongoing dedication, evaluation and modification, and the members are determined to keep this momentum going.

## 2003 Fain Awards

### Honorable Mentions

#### Interfaith Shelters

*Temple Har Zion of Ontario, Canada, Temple Emanu-El of University Heights, OH, and Temple Solel of Encinitas, CA, share a Fain Award Honorable Mention for their work in interfaith shelters.*

**Temple Har Zion**  
**7360 Bayview Avenue**  
**Thornhill, ON L3T 2R7 Canada**  
**905.889.2252**  
[www.templeharzion.com](http://www.templeharzion.com)  
[information@templeharzion.com](mailto:information@templeharzion.com)

Temple Har Zion's Social Action Committee decided to help the homeless one night a week during the harsh Canadian winters. In order for the committee to run this program and overcome concerns by the temple membership, it joined Out of the Cold (OOTC). This organization is a loose coalition of churches, community centers, and synagogues that provide a concrete, hands-on program to meet the needs of the homeless. In order to expand this program and serve more people, the committee members asked MOSAIC, a group of interfaith congregations, to become involved. With the help of MOSAIC, several other congregations began to provide shelter, as well as financial support and volunteers. OOTC staff provided extensive training for the numerous volunteers, who provided security, transportation, food, clothes, and entertainment for their guests. In 2002, Temple Har Zion's shelter housed twenty-four guests, and its efforts with the interfaith community continue to expand.

**Temple Emanu-El**  
**2200 South Green Road**  
**University Heights, OH 44121**  
**216.381.6600**  
[www.teecleve.org](http://www.teecleve.org)

Temple Emanu-El partners with a local church, two to four times a year, to house homeless families for

one week in a program called The Interfaith Hospitality Network. In addition to supplying shelter, temple volunteers provide meals, supplies, and emotional support for their guests. At least one hundred congregants enthusiastically volunteer during each week that the temple hosts this effort. Temple Emanu-El became a leading homeless advocate in its area by encouraging four other congregations to support the shelter. Many volunteers stay in touch with the guests they have met, and if a family finds a permanent home, members provide them with a "care package" of household essentials. This project inspired the congregants to partner with the greater community to support the homeless.

**Temple Solel**  
**552 South El Camino Real**  
**Encinitas, CA 92024**  
**760.436.0654**  
[www.uahc.org/congs/ca/ca017](http://www.uahc.org/congs/ca/ca017)

Temple Solel's members have coordinated a two-week homeless shelter with the local Interfaith Shelter Network (ISN) for twelve years. The ISN helps screen and refer the guests to the shelter and provides follow-through services. Temple Solel runs the shelter over the Christmas holiday to afford the ISN churches a holiday break and provides a special Christmas experience for its guests. On Christmas morning, the temple Men's Club serves a feast, volunteers give each guest a small gift, and the entire group explores Sea World in the afternoon. A different temple family serves as hosts each night, while bar/bat mitzvah students put together toiletry packets for each guest, and a qualified member gives the guests haircuts. Solel volunteers certainly demonstrate the mitzvah of *hachnasat orchim* (hospitality) and will continue to help others attain self-sufficiency as a result of this community project.

## 2003 *Fain Awards* *Honorable Mentions*

**Temple Beth Elohim**  
10 Bethel Road  
Wellesley Hills, MA 02481  
781.235.8419  
[www.bethelohim-wellesley.org](http://www.bethelohim-wellesley.org)  
[elawrence@bethelohim-wellesley.org](mailto:elawrence@bethelohim-wellesley.org)

### Israeli Campers

In spring 2002, as terrorism threatened Israel's security, Temple Beth Elohim's Social Action Committee wanted to show the congregation's solidarity with Israel. The committee joined forces with the executive director of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism to investigate possible volunteer opportunities. The executive director reported that during school holidays, parents kept their children in the house because of their concern for the young people's safety. As a result, the committee decided to sponsor twenty Israeli children to spend the summer at Jewish overnight camps in the New England area. In order to implement this decision, more



than 100 temple members demonstrated incredible generosity and commitment in a very short time period. The temple's fund-raising efforts provided half of the cost of the air travel, camp tuition, and supplies for the Israeli campers. Upon their arrival, the campers stayed with host families for a few days, and these families sent them "care packages" during their stay at camp. This project has created an amazing relationship among Beth Elohim, the Israeli families, and the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism and provided twenty Israeli campers with a safe and fun summer.

**Temple Beth Sholom**  
4144 Chase Avenue  
Miami Beach, FL 33140  
305.538.7231  
[www.tbsmb.org](http://www.tbsmb.org)

### Mitzvah Weekend

The members of Temple Beth Sholom have sponsored a Mitzvah Day for the past eight years, and in 2002 decided to expand their efforts into a Mitzvah Weekend.



By having extra time, organizers could include more educational opportunities about the weekend's theme, Foster Children. Mitzvah Weekend began at Friday night services with a speaker, who updated congregants on the status of Florida's foster care system. The next morning, congregants met for a panel discussion that outlined the needs of foster children in the local area. Finally, on Mitzvah Day, volunteers participated in ten hands-on projects that directly benefited foster children, in addition to thirty other community projects. Representatives from several local foster care agencies attended the post-Mitzvah Day Ice Cream Party and Mitzvah Mall, which raised money for this cause. Temple Beth Sholom has added depth and education to the traditional Mitzvah Day experience, and over half of its 1,100 members joined in these efforts.

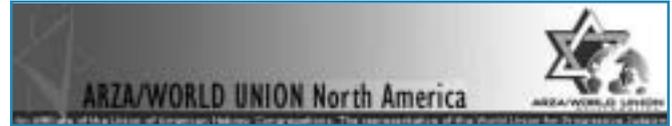
*2003 Fain Awards  
Special Recognition*

**Congregation NCI/Emanu-El**  
**Tronador 1455 Buenos Aires 1427**  
**Argentina**  
**54.11.4555.4004**  
**[kol\\_emanuel@iname.com](mailto:kol_emanuel@iname.com)**

**Chavurah: Providing Local Social Welfare Services**

For the first time, the Commission on Social Action (CSA) is giving special recognition to a congregation affiliated with the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ). Congregation NCI/Emanu-El of Argentina deserves acknowledgement for its efforts to alleviate the effects of poverty that have devastated its community. Currently, sixty percent of the country's thirty-seven million people live in poverty, and twenty-five percent have reached the alarming "indigent" status. Rabbi Sergio Bergman leads the congregation's chavurah effort that provides social welfare services to the congregants and the greater community. He is helped greatly by a group of young adults who share and embrace his vision of not only tzedakah, but also of the synagogue as a safety net in a time of great crisis.

The group initially cared for twenty dispossessed families by providing food supplies, clothing, eyeglasses, medicine, and after school tutoring for children and teenagers. The 120 volunteers now serve over 315 families and provide Community Teas, cultural entertainment and workshops to help the newly unemployed congregants learn new trades. Congregational volunteers use their professional expertise to create a web of support to help others in their community.



In addition, the congregation developed an income producing taxi service, and organized a knitting program to provide blankets and clothes for the homeless. College students also have formed a group, Ani V'Atah, that lends support by volunteering at a local school. Congregation NCI/Emanu-El's exemplary efforts shine during this period of hardship, because the congregants continue to work together as part of one vibrant Jewish community.

## Log On To: [www.rac.org](http://www.rac.org)

The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC) has been the hub of Jewish social justice and legislative activity in the nation's capital for over 40 years. It has educated and mobilized the American Jewish community on legislative and social concerns as an advocate in the Congress of the United States on issues ranging from

Israel and Soviet Jewry to economic justice and civil rights, to international peace and religious liberty.

The RAC's website, located at [www.rac.org](http://www.rac.org), is the hub of social justice on the Internet. Through the years, the site has received numerous awards and has grown to nearly 1,000 pages. The RAC site is a great social action resource tool. The site contains RAC's legislative priorities, press releases, Chai Impact Action Alerts, the social action program bank, publications, as well as updates on the nearly sixty legislative and policy issues monitored by the RAC staff.

Make sure your congregation has a link to the RAC's site on their site!



## **Social Action Program Bank**

Is your congregation looking for more ways to reach out to the community or engage projects on a particular social action issue? Visit the RAC's online social action program bank, located on the RAC's website at [www.rac.org](http://www.rac.org), to find examples of successful programs conducted by other congregations, including winners of the Irving J. Fain Social Action Award.

If you have a program you'd like to add to the RAC's program bank, please contact the RAC at [rac@uahc.org](mailto:rac@uahc.org) or visit the social action program bank page on the Rac's website and download a submission form.

## **Stay Informed - Join RACNews**

RACNews is a terrific way to stay informed about the work of the RAC. This free email list delivers Chai MPACT Action Alerts, the RAC's Weekly Legislative Update, all RAC press statements, program announcements, web updates, and other timely information to anyone with an e-mail address.

To join visit, the RAC's website at:  
[www.rac.org](http://www.rac.org)



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**Central Conference  
of American Rabbis**



**Union of American  
Hebrew Congregations**



**Religious Action Center  
of Reform Judaism**

The Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism is a joint instrumentality of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, its affiliates, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis.