

For Immediate Release

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Brooklyn Heights Synagogue Declares Itself a Sanctuary Congregation

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There exists an immediate threat of detention and deportation for millions of immigrants who live and work in our country peacefully. The potential humanitarian crisis as families are torn apart and persons are deported to countries where they have not lived in many years is clear. As recently stated by the Union for Reform Judaism: “We are instructed in the Holiness Code to treat the strangers in our midst with justice and compassion: ‘When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall do him no wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself for you were strangers in the land of Egypt’ (Leviticus 19:33). This teaching permeates Jewish tradition and is echoed 35 times in the Torah – the most repeated of any commandment. The history of the Jewish people from Egypt through the Holocaust until today reminds us of the many struggles faced by immigrants throughout the world. As a community of immigrants, we are charged to pursue justice, seek peace, and build a society that is welcoming to all of God's creatures, regardless of their immigration status.” Today, the Brooklyn Heights Synagogue (“BHS”) has taken action to answer this call.

At its April 20, 2017 meeting, BHS’s Board of Trustees unanimously adopted a resolution declaring BHS a Sanctuary Congregation, joining other faith-based organizations in providing support to immigrants facing detention or deportation. In the coming months, BHS will look to collaborate with other faith-based organizations and community groups to provide an array of services to undocumented immigrants, such as “know your rights” and other educational sessions, participating in rapid response teams to address immediate threats of deportation, engaging in issue advocacy at the local, state and federal level, and other legal and supportive services. BHS will also review its capacity to provide physical shelter to one or more undocumented immigrants at risk of deportation. For further information, or to participate in our efforts to aid immigrants and refugees, please contact Barbara Arky, Chair of the BHS Immigration/Refugee Task Force at through the synagogue office at office@bhsbrooklyn.org.

About Brooklyn Heights Synagogue

Brooklyn Heights Synagogue is an inclusive, Jewishly diverse congregation dedicated to lifelong learning and to caring for the world and each other. We have shared celebration, learning, service, and worship since our founding in 1960. Today we are a community of over 470 member units made up of families, couples, and singles who live not only in nearby Brownstone Brooklyn

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neighborhoods and DUMBO, but also in Lower Manhattan and other neighborhoods throughout the city.

With a small full-time professional staff and an active membership, Brooklyn Heights Synagogue is proud to offer a full calendar of worship services, education programs, special events and opportunities to engage in Tikkun Olam that reflects the diverse interests and needs of this community.

Under the leadership of our Director of Early Childhood Education, our Preschool currently serves 100 children, about half of whom are from BHS families. Our Director of Congregational Learning oversees our Religious School for over 250 students in grades K-12 and includes post-b'nai mitzvah study featuring a 9th grade trip to Israel led by our Rabbis and opportunities to learn and socialize with students from other area congregations. Congregational learning extends, as well, to adults of all ages and interests.

Brooklyn Heights Synagogue is a member of the Union for Reform Judaism.

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