



2017  
5778



IRVING J. FAIN

# Social Justice Awards

*Models of Outstanding Congregational Social Justice Programs*

*Active commitment to social justice is a hallmark of Reform Judaism.*

That commitment has inspired Reform congregations across North America to develop and pursue a wide range of activities and programs designed to mend the world, *Itaken et ha'blam*. By reaching out across lines of difference and advocating for equality and justice, the congregations of our Movement help realize the vision of the prophets and create communities informed by that vision.

Irving J. Fain was a passionate proponent of social justice and served for a decade as chair of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism. The Fain Awards, established in 1983 in his honor and memory, are awarded every two years to congregations whose social justice work is exemplary. We hope and expect the winners of the 2017 Fain Awards will inspire others to embark creatively and energetically on the road to justice.



## ADVOCACY

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### 3x3 Social Justice

*Temple Israel of Hollywood | Los Angeles, CA*

Through advocacy, action, and education, Temple Israel of Hollywood addresses issues of bias/criminal justice reform, hunger and homelessness, and gun violence prevention through its 3x3 Social Justice Agenda. By reaching out across lines of faith, race, and class, Temple Israel demonstrates an ongoing commitment to affecting meaningful change. The 3x3 Social Justice Agenda has changed the landscape of what it means to be a member of Temple Israel of Hollywood by effectively integrating social justice into all aspects of congregational life.

### Justice Jams

*Temple Beth Shalom | Miami Beach, FL*

Temple Beth Shalom engages the congregation in its Justice Jams initiative to determine the social justice issues on which to act. Lay leaders work in conjunction with the rabbi to create engaging interactive evenings at which attendees learn about and discuss potential advocacy work. Justice Jams are held in congregants' homes. Justice Jams galvanize Temple Beth Shalom by raising awareness around issues and empowering individuals to come together to act.

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

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### Community Organizing: Connecting LA Face-to-Face, Not Bumper-to-Bumper

*Leo Baeck Temple | Los Angeles, CA*

Leo Baeck Temple engages congregants in creating deeper relationships and participating in campaigns based on the interests and concerns of members, as well as develops leaders and builds power by partnering with other faith groups. Their effort to build mass transit along the 405 freeway corridor will create green jobs, reduce carbon emissions, and connect Angelenos to their work, families, friends, and communities, face-to-face.

### Greater Cleveland Congregations

*Anshe Chesed Fairmount Temple | Beachwood, OH*

Within Anshe Chesed Fairmount Temple and the entire network of Greater Cleveland Congregations, Jews, Christians, and Muslims come together to study a range of issues and identify opportunities for advocacy to build a more just and prosperous Cleveland. The Greater Cleveland Congregations' network comprises more than 40 Cuyahoga County congregations and organizations that use community organizing tools and methodologies to make lasting and sustainable change. Anshe Chesed Fairmount Temple actively participates in campaigns that engage their members in local social justice initiatives.

## ECONOMIC JUSTICE

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### School Food Pantries

*Temple Emanuel | Winston-Salem, NC*

The School Food Pantry was created to address the problem of childhood hunger and food insecurity in Forsyth County, NC. The Food Pantry aims to provide food for entire families rather than individuals. Temple Emanuel partnered with a local church to staff, fund, and stock this food pantry with supplies, including food, school supplies, recipes, and birthday bags, while also partnering with local grocery stores to secure donations for the families. In partnership with the nearby Moore Elementary School, Temple Emanuel helped identify and follow-up with families experiencing food insecurity. As of May 2017, the School Food Pantry served 239 families in the area.

## ENVIRONMENT

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### Sea Level Rise Higher Ground Initiative

*Temple Solel | Hollywood, FL*

A group of dedicated leaders at Temple Solel launched the Sea Level Rise Higher Ground Initiative to educate and engage congregants and the community-at-large about the present and looming threat of sea level rise. This community-based organization holds monthly educational meetings, presentations, and events, including the successful annual King Tide Tour of areas of East Hollywood, FL, that flood during the King Tides.



## JEWISH-MUSLIM DIALOGUE

### An Evening of Sadaqah/Tzedakah

Oak Park Temple | Oak Park, IL

Oak Park Temple works to build and strengthen relationships with the local Muslim community by modeling openness, tolerance, and shared values while working together to help those in need in the greater Chicago area. Through ongoing events, which include dinner, text study and an action program, participants connect with and learn from one another, while forging meaningful relationships with their neighbors.

## RACIAL JUSTICE

### Create Change Together

Temple Shalom of Chicago | Chicago, IL

Through Create Change Together, Temple Shalom of Chicago raises congregational awareness of racial disparity by partnering with community-based organizations. The congregation uses text study, facilitated discussions, advocacy, and partnerships to meaningfully engage the congregation on issues of racial injustice. Through this program, Temple Shalom has acted on restorative justice and implicit bias issues, participating in activities to support small businesses in low-income communities and reaching out to members of the Illinois state legislature.

### Dismantling Racism Team

Congregation Beth Elohim | Brooklyn, NY

Congregation Beth Elohim's Dismantling Racism team aims to organize its members to employ the tools and strategies of faith-based community organizing, in alliance with others across faith, race, and class to dismantle systemic racism in New York City and throughout the state. The Dismantling Racism Team organizes the larger congregation to bring about positive, substantive change through long-term incremental and systemic change.

## REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

### And You Shall Love the Stranger: Mobilizing Our Community for Refugees

The Temple, Congregation B'nai Jehuda | Overland Park, KS

Congregation B'nai Jehudah instituted a multi-pronged approach to impact the broader non-Jewish local community on refugee issues through education, advocacy, and providing aid to the local refugee community. Through this initiative, Congregation B'nai Jehuda collected and distributed hundreds of coats, educated more than 100 community members, and partnered with local organizations to support local refugee families.

### Because We Were Strangers

Congregation B'nai Israel | Sacramento, CA

Congregation B'nai Israel instituted a policy to provide direct assistance to refugee families, and physical shelter to those facing immediate deportation. By partnering with state, local, and national organizations across lines of difference, the congregation's members have strengthened their efforts and broadened their reach. They also engaged in local- and state-level advocacy to address the systemic problems impacting immigrants and refugees.

### Capital Area New Mainers Project Temple Beth El | Augusta, ME

The Capital Area New Mainers Project (CANMP), an all-volunteer project, welcomes immigrants and refugees, and helps them thrive in Central Maine. CANMP embraces immigrants and refugees, viewing them as "New Mainers" — who bring much needed diversity, energy, and vitality to the area. Through a network of volunteers and family mentor teams, the congregation helps to meet the immediate and long-term needs of these newly arrived families by coordinating support services, soliciting resources, hosting events, and more. CANMP also works with local elected officials to advocate for policies that support New Mainers.



## **Hineni: Welcoming New Americans**

*Congregation Shaare Emeth | Saint Louis, MO*

Through its longstanding partnership with the International Institute of St. Louis (IISTL), Congregation Shaare Emeth successfully engages its congregants in a refugee assistance program that provides a welcoming community and orients them to life in St. Louis. Participating congregants underwent education and training about IISTL and the issues that new Americans face as they begin to build new lives in St. Louis. IISTL has welcomed more than 1,200 families, and congregants of Shaare Emeth have supported these efforts by setting up homes, teaching English, assisting with employment, and more.

## **Open Hearts/Open Doors: Beth El Temple Center Refugee Response Effort**

*Beth El Temple Center | Belmont, MA*

Beginning with a sermon challenging Beth El Temple Center to act in support of refugees, the community came together to serve the needs of refugees, asylum seekers, and other recent immigrants and to educate members about the global refugee crisis. Through this initiative, congregants coordinated mitzvah days to enable others to take action, and held benefit concerts, panel discussions, and started a grant program, all to help serve the needs of newly arrived refugee families.

## **Paying It Forward in Durham, NC: And You Shall Love the Stranger**

*Judea Reform Congregation | Durham, NC*

Judea Reform Congregation welcomes refugees into its community and helps them build a foundation of self-

sufficiency. The congregation donated backpacks filled with school supplies for students and gift cards to families, as well as engaged in advocacy with local representatives, raised money to purchase monthly bus passes, wrote welcome cards, and hosted refugee families at a Passover seder. Through this work, Judea Reform Congregation also successfully educated the congregation and partnered with organizations to support local resettlement efforts.

## **Refugee Task Force**

*Temple Beth Shalom | Austin, TX*

The Refugee Task Force is a grassroots community group at Temple Beth Shalom that partners with local refugee aid organizations to ensure the state of Texas continues to support and welcome refugees. Congregants raise awareness about the global refugee crisis and actively welcome refugees into the local Austin community through a multi-pronged approach that includes education, philanthropy, advocacy, and direct service. Temple Beth Shalom successfully engages their community, from children to adults, around this issue.

## **Syrian Refugee Sponsorship**

*Temple Emanu-El-Beth Shalom | Westmount, Quebec*

Temple Emanu-El-Beth Shalom worked to identify and sponsor two Syrian refugee families in Montreal. Prior to their arrival, congregants educated themselves about the challenges of sponsorship and the challenges facing refugee families and with the congregation, immigration lawyers, social workers, and others helped support and settle the families. As part of this initiative, Temple Emanu-El-Beth Shalom organized a symposium on the refugee crisis and the experiences of Syrian refugees in Canada.

*For more information about these and other programs, visit [rac.org/fain](https://rac.org/fain)*



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For nearly six decades, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (the RAC) has been the hub of Jewish social justice work. As a joint instrumentality of the Union for Reform Judaism and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, we represent the values of the largest and most diverse Jewish Movement in North America. The RAC mobilizes around federal, state, and local legislation; supports and develops congregational leaders; and organizes communities to create a world overflowing with justice, compassion, and peace. As part of a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, our work is completely nonpartisan.

