

The Commission on Social Action
of Reform Judaism

2009 / 5769
Irving J. Fain
Social Action Awards

Models of Outstanding
Synagogue Social Action 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 *l'taken et ha'olam*, to mend the world. By reaching out to the needy and the downtrodden, by forming coalitions of concern across religious and racial lines, by advocating for equality and justice and in countless other ways, 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 work in the area of social justice is exemplary. We hope and expect that the 2009 Fain Award winners will inspire others to embark creatively and energetically on the road to justice.

**Congregation Gates of Prayer Metairie, LA
New Orleans Women's Shelter**

The New Orleans Women's Shelter began in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to provide transitional housing for homeless women and mothers with young children. The synagogue is the shelter's fiscal sponsor and is working hard to help end intergenerational cycles of poverty.

**Congregation Or Ami Calabasas, CA
Foster Care Outreach**

The Foster Care Outreach program pairs congregants with foster children for birthday celebrations, prom preparation and back to school events. Information sessions were held for Jewish adults to explore the possibility of becoming foster parents, raise funds to subsidize costs for foster parents in need and create opportunities for political activism.



**Leo Baeck Temple Los Angeles, CA
HEAL: Homelessness Ends At Leo Baeck**

This program began with a conference that brought together top political leaders, including Mayor Villaraigosa, to address the city's homelessness problem. Leo Baeck now partners with Imagine LA, to end homelessness by connecting needy families to houses of worship. Leo Baeck continues its involvement through advocacy, education and direct service.

**Mount Zion Temple Saint Paul, MN
Children's Initiative—Connecting to our Community**

Mount Zion congregants discovered too many local at-risk families were unaware of the resources available to them, leaving public dollars unused. To combat this, congregants helped over 200 social service agencies put families in touch with resources through the Children's Defense Fund website, "Bride to Benefits."

**Temple Beth El Charlotte, NC
Children of Jerusalem Families of Faith**

This program was a series of interfaith events to promote greater awareness and dialogue related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The program featured a lecture by a war-affected Israeli and Palestinian, an exhibition of Israeli and Palestinian children's paintings and community dialogues among the three Abrahamic faiths.

**Temple Judea Mizpah Skokie, IL
Changing the World Together One Block at a Time**

Temple Judea Mizpah developed a partnership program with a local church and women's shelter to clean and beautify a neighborhood block. Relationships were fostered as volunteers swept the streets, pulled weeds, planted flowers, painted over graffiti and washed windows.



**Temple Sharey Tefilo-Israel South Orange, NJ
S.O.S. Save Our Soldiers**

S.O.S. Save Our Soldiers raised awareness about the 2006 three captured Israeli soldiers. Spearheaded by the synagogue's teen mitzvah club, the project included lobbying efforts and a religious school educational program. This project is the force behind the worldwide campaign, "Light One Candle for Gilad Shalit."

**URJ Member Congregations of GBIO
Boston, MA**

Vote No on Question One

In 2008, the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO) members organized to defeat Question One, a proposition to eliminate the state income tax which would have led to cuts in state infrastructure, health care, education, elder care, and other essential services. The clergy and leadership of Temple Israel (Boston), Temple Isaiah (Lexington), Temple Shalom (Newton), Temple Shir Tikvah (Winchester) and Beth El Temple Center (Belmont) joined together in this effort.

SHARED AWARD: DARFUR AWARENESS

**Congregation Beth Israel
Walla Walla, WA**

**Genocide in the Human Heart:
From the Holocaust to Darfur**



This program featured a moderated dialogue between a rabbi and an African politics professor focusing on two incidents of mass killing where ethnicity, race and religion were implicated. Through this event, the congregation raised awareness about the ongoing tragedy in Darfur.

Temple Beth-El San Antonio, TX

Darfur Calls

"Darfur Calls" is a play written by Temple Beth-El theatre group members based on the tragic events occurring in the Darfur region of Sudan. The play, now featured on the Save Darfur coalition website, portrays an average American being tried for not taking action to stop the genocide in Darfur.



SHARED AWARD: FAMILY PROGRAMMING

Temple Adat Elohim Thousand Oaks, CA

CHESED Social Action Program for Youth

CHESED introduces families with children to age-appropriate monthly social action activities such as serving meals at a shelter and visiting a senior's center. The monthly events are run by volunteer parents and provide opportunities to integrate social action into the folds of family life.

Temple Beth Elohim Wellesley, MA

Mishpacha Mitzvah Missions (M3)

Mishpacha Mitzvah Missions creates hands-on service opportunities for whole families. Each project includes an educational component to teach about the organizations and people being served. Over 100 families have taken action on issues of hunger, homelessness, civic participation, disabled youth, conservation, sacred aging and more.

SHARED AWARD: GLOBAL ACTIVISM

Temple Beth El Hollywood, FL

Hollywood CARES

Temple Beth El, in partnership with a local church, raises funds and awareness to support an orphanage in Haiti for children suffering from HIV/AIDS. They are providing long-term monetary support, school supplies and medical assistance to the orphanage.

Temple Beth Jacob Newburgh, NY

Lauren's Regalo

After seeing a congregant's photos of a Guatemalan clinic's deplorable conditions, synagogue members donated more than one ton of clothing and school supplies and 100 school desks to PEILE, a Guatemalan nonprofit that builds schools in underserved areas.



SHARED AWARD: HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS INITIATIVES

Temple Beth El Huntington, NY

Huntington Interfaith Homeless Initiative

Temple Beth El is a winter respite site, providing meals, clothing and sleeping accommodations to approximately 20 individuals once a week as part of the Huntington Interfaith Homeless Initiative. They have spearheaded services for guests including English tutoring, substance abuse counseling and dental screening.

Temple Isaiah Lafayette, CA

Winter Nights

Winter Nights is an interfaith county-wide rotating homeless shelter program in operation from October to April housing over thirty homeless individuals. Temple Isaiah hosts the last two weeks in December, providing meals, sleeping accommodations, programmed activities, holiday events and tutoring.

SHARED AWARD: SUSTAINABLE HUNGER RELIEF

Congregation B'nai Yisrael Armonk, NY

Roxbury Farm Partnership

After engaging in a study of kashrut and Jewish thought around eating, Congregation B'nai Yisrael formed a CSA (Community Sustained Agriculture) partnership with Roxbury Farm. Families purchase farm shares and receive fresh, local produce with excess going to community organizations fighting hunger.

Congregation Emanu El

San Bernardino, CA

Tu B'Shvat Gleanings: Saving Trees and Oranges for the Hungry

Upon learning that local orange trees were being destroyed for development, the synagogue partnered with Inland Orange Conservancy to protect existing trees, educate the community about the plight of local farm workers and teach the Jewish value of gleaning. Today, Emanu El continues to build alliances with ecological organizations.



Temple Israel Rogersville, MO

Temple Israel Community Garden

The Community Garden was created through an interfaith effort of Temple Israel and three churches. Fresh produce from the garden is donated to Ozarks Food Harvest, the only food bank in Southwest Missouri. Over three years, the community garden has yielded nearly three tons of food.



Temple Sinai of Roslyn Roslyn Heights, NY

Gleaning Has Never Been Better!

Nearly 1,800 pounds of produce were collected and donated through Temple Sinai's gleaning project. Partnering with the Garden of Eve Farm, which supports local farmers, congregants collect food each year to give to charitable agencies.

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION
ON THESE
AND OTHER
PROGRAMS,
VISIT
WWW.RAC.ORG/
PROGRAMBANK.**

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Chicago Sinai Congregation, Chicago, IL
Chicago Sinai/Schiller School Partnership

Congregation Keneseth Israel, Allentown, PA
Interfaith Coalition for Community Service

Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester, Chappaqua, NY
Environmental Advocacy Forum

Temple Emanuel, Greensboro, NC
Run for Shelter

Temple Israel, Omaha, NE
God's To-Do List

Temple Rodeph Torah, Marlboro, NJ
TRT Cares



HURRICANE RELIEF

Since the 2005 hurricane season, Reform congregations have been active in rebuilding the ravaged communities along the Gulf Coast. We proudly acknowledge the following congregations that have led volunteer missions to the area:

Adath Emanu-El, Mount Laurel, NJ
Am Shalom, Glencoe, IL
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, Baltimore, MD
Barnert Temple, Franklin Lakes, NJ
Beth Haverim Shir Shalom, Mahwah, NJ
Chicago Sinai Congregation, Chicago, IL
Community Synagogue, Port Washington, NY
Congregation Beth Emeth, Albany, NY
Congregation B'nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim,
Glenview, IL
Congregation B'nai Yisrael, Armonk, NY
Congregation Rodef Sholom, San Rafael, CA
Congregation Rodeph Sholom, New York, NY
Congregation Shaarai Shomayim, Lancaster, PA
Jewish Center of the Hamptons,
East Hampton, NY
Main Line Reform Temple, Wynnewood, PA
North Shore Congregation Israel, Glencoe, IL
Temple Beth El, San Pedro, CA
Temple Beth El, Rochester, NY

Temple Beth Shalom, Needham, MA
Temple B'nai Or, Morristown, NJ
Temple Chai, Long Grove, IL
Temple De Hirsch Sinai, Bellevue, WA
Temple Emanuel, New York, NY
Temple Emanuel, Greensboro, NC
Temple Emanu-El, Edison, NJ
Temple Emanu-El, Westfield, NJ
Temple Israel of New Rochelle,
New Rochelle, NY
Temple Ner Tamid, Bloomfield, NJ
Temple Shaaray Tefila, New York, NY
Temple Shaaray Tefila, Mt. Kisco, NY
Temple Shalom, Succacunna, NJ
Temple Shir Tikvah, Winchester, MA
Temple Sholom of Chicago, Chicago, IL
Temple Sinai, Rochester, NY
Woodlands Community Temple,
White Plains, NY

**Be sure to submit your program for the 2011 awards.
See WWW.RAC.ORG for updates.**

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