

Magnifying the Connectivity Lens

A practical application to building your caring and hospitality communities with the purpose of connecting your members.

Presented by:

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First... a little housekeeping:



Please note that this webinar is being recorded.

Both this recording and this power point presentation will be housed at www.pdrj.rj.org

The webinar broadcast has begun with all attendees in “Listen only mode”. Since most computers do not have a microphone selecting the telephone for you audio mode is often the best bet. When using the telephone component be sure to enter your audio pin, which is displayed in the the audio pane.

If you have a question about any of the material presented, type your question in the bottom box of the panel during the course of the conversation and I will stop periodically to review questions. I have also left some time at the end of my presentation for questions. This is also a good way to indicate any technical problems without addressing the entire group.

Thank you for your attention and patience.
Now let's get started

Why do we bother with community programming

- Our congregants can now pray, study and repair the world online, they need another reason to enter our buildings
- Loneliness is one of the major issues facing congregants of all ages. Community is a way for us, as institutions to combat the loneliness that our congregants feel.
- Social networking is a low hanging fruit for connectivity as members can see who is coming to what event.

Changing the focus of your programming has to start with the staff.

Our staff directive:

In the coming year, we will endeavor to develop a Theology of Relationships at Beth Torah. This Theology of Relationships will be based on nurturing meaningful and sacred connections through which each member may be recognized, validated and supported.

The URJ thought community important enough to include this quote from
—Fern Chertok, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis
University in its latest Membership newsletter.

“Beyond mere survival, the most fundamental strivings of human beings are toward two seemingly paradoxical goals: To be part of something larger and more important than one’s self, and at the same time to be recognized and valued as an individual. It is this dual striving toward individual significance within the context of meaningful connection or Sense of Community that often brings people to synagogue affiliation and it is the experience of its loss that is, all too often, the reason for their leaving our sacred communities.”

Feeding people for Oneg Shabbat and caring for congregants at times of personal fragility are two major functions of almost every synagogue. So how do we turn these into community projects?

It starts by using the term community. Our caring is done by our K'sharim community and our Oneg Shabbat food is supplied by our Hospitality community.

And every member of our synagogue is a member of both communities!!

Before our Hospitality Community, we bought our Oneg sweets from a big box store.



So in April 2011 we started the Hospitality community and signed the entire congregation up.

- Publicized the new attitude that although our connection to our synagogue may change as we go through our lives, Shabbat is forever and therefore owned by every demographic of the congregation.
- Split the congregational roster into 12 communities. Each monthly roster is split into 4 or 5 Oneg dates.
- Letters go out to members the last week of each month with their Oneg assignment and a request of 2-3 dozen treats, either home made or store bought.

The publicity:

What is this Hospitality Community Committee and why am I getting this letter?

From the April 2011 Tekiah:

Stop me if you have heard this one: A young boy shares Shabbat dinner with his father, who is complaining, once again, about going to services the next day. "I don't even know if I believe in God," states the father. The young boy asks his father, "If you don't go to talk to God, then why do you go to synagogue at all?" His father looked down at him and explained, "I go to synagogue each week with my old friend Shlomo. Shlomo goes to talk to God, and I go to talk to Shlomo."

As adults, we do not get recess like we did as children. I remember having so much to tell my friends that some days it was hard to get through morning classes. At some point, recess becomes less about swinging and four square and more about connecting with friends to make plans for outings and catch up in each other's lives.

Every Erev Shabbat, after worship, we all head into the ulam and sanctify Shabbat and thank God for sustenance with Kiddush and Motzi; and then we enjoy Oneg. Oneg Shabbat is my adult recess. I love to see our members and catch up. The fact that there are cookies and cakes makes Oneg even sweeter.

Over the years, our Hospitality Committee has faded. People don't have the time or maybe the inclination to bring their favorite sweets to share. In order to keep serving sweets, we have been purchasing the Oneg Shabbat food from a big box store.

We are, however, not a big box community. Therefore, we will be reinstating our Hospitality Committee here at Beth Torah beginning with April. Now, don't rush to the phone and call me to let me know you would love to be on this committee, because the beauty of how we do things here is that you are already on the committee.

Like our current K'sharim Committee, the Hospitality Committee is made up of the entire congregation. For the K'sharim Committee, you get a letter from me once a year letting you know of the K'sharim responsibilities. Now you will hear from me twice a year. You will keep your K'sharim month, and then 6 months later you will get a letter from me asking you to help out that month with an Oneg Shabbat.

Any questions?

Q: Does this mean I have to bake once a year? A: No, you don't have to bake at all. It does mean that you are responsible for donating sweets for an Oneg. You can bake or buy the sweets.

Q: Does this mean I can only bake for Oneg once a year? A: Absolutely not. If you have an itch to bake and it isn't your month, we would love to have the sweets. Shabbat can never be too sweet.

Q: Does this mean I have to be at worship the night I get assigned an Oneg? A: No. Although we would love to see you at worship, we understand that sometimes you just can't get here. Drop off your sweets any time during the week at Beth Torah. Please label your container for Oneg along with the date and place your donation in our freezer. If you forget to label it at home, just borrow some of our masking tape. We have plenty.

Q: What if I just can't participate at all the week I am assigned? A: Call me. We will switch you with someone else.

Q: Why are we doing this? A: There are many reasons to have our weekly joy come from our own congregation. This connects our community, it makes for a larger variety of items and it reduces our annual food costs

I can see the last line of my opening joke being: "Shlomo goes to synagogue to share his baked goods with the community. I go to eat them." Please call me if you have any questions regarding this new committee and your part in it.

Yours in community,

Laura Intfen

The roster

Ronald & Julie Altman	2-Mar	Lawrence & Ronnie Lerner	16-Mar
Steve & Paula Becker	2-Mar	Harry & Peg Levitt	16-Mar
Michael & Jenifer Blum	2-Mar	Robert & Nancy Milgrim	16-Mar
Monty & Karen Brown	2-Mar	Cary & Dawn Minkoff	23-Mar
Alice Capson	2-Mar	Robert & Elisa Mora	23-Mar
Suzie Carter	2-Mar	Michael Orenburg	23-Mar
Kathleen Coenen	2-Mar	Roger & Lisa Payne	23-Mar
Kenneth Cohen	2-Mar	Sylvie Radvinsky	23-Mar
J.C. & Lana Cole	2-Mar	Celia Richey	23-Mar
Raymond Davidson	9-Mar	Jeffrey & Carole Rosen	23-Mar
Kevin & Jennifer Davis	9-Mar	Mark & Janice Schonwetter	23-Mar
Dr. Martin & Meggin Emert	9-Mar	Barry and Chris Shapiro	23-Mar
Michael and Jill Fine	9-Mar	Steve Siegel and Bob Koch	30-Mar
Stanley & Melynn Gasswint	9-Mar	Dan & Kelly Somberg	30-Mar
Stanley & Hedy Goldman	9-Mar	Stanley & Beverly Singer	30-Mar
Eric & Sara Gonsler	9-Mar	Ben & Jessica Stamey	30-Mar
Brian and Julie Hakan	9-Mar	Howard Stark	30-Mar
Gregory Herman	9-Mar	Michael & Andria Stokes	30-Mar
Mark & Vicki Herman	16-Mar	Dan & Ari Weindling	30-Mar
Tim & Laura Intfen	16-Mar	Sheila Wikas	30-Mar
Michael and Janet Kaplan	16-Mar	Lorri Willens	30-Mar

The letter

“Let all who work with the congregation, do so for the sake of Heaven...”

Pirke Avot 2:2

2/22/12

The Hospitality Committee has been reinvented this year to include each and every member of Congregation Beth Torah. The Mission Statement for this committee is: *To provide assistance to the congregation by building community through coordination of Oneg Shabbat and other receptions for holiday as needed.*

Over the years, the congregational Oneg Shabbat treats have included items purchased at a local “big box” store. But we are not a “big box” synagogues. Our own Covenant of Membership states:

“Lend your time and talents to Beth torah programs and activities.”

At Congregation Beth Torah, we believe that each of us would welcome the opportunity to reach out and bring joy to the Beth Torah community. The name of the committee has even been changed to include the word “community”. You will find attached the March Hospitality Community roster. Your name is on the roster along with a Shabbat date. You will be receiving this request once a year. I am asking you to please supply Beth Torah with 2 dozen sweet treats (either home made or store bought) for the Shabbat you have been assigned. Please remember that, although we would love to see you at worship, we are NOT requiring that you attend services on the week you are assigned. I have enclosed a copy of my April, 2011 Tekiah article which describes the new community and provides a detailed explanation of your role.

If you have any questions regarding the March Hospitality Community, please call or email me at the Beth Torah office.

Laura Intfen

Member Services Coordinator

(913) 498-2212

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The result:

- Recognition: table tents and announcement sheet acknowledge the March Hospitality Community and when food is dropped off, congregant is thanked in person.
- Validation: The treats that are brought in are used. The congregant knows they literally are feeding the community and helping our bottom line.
- Support: Many congregants who drop off treats have not set foot in our building since High Holy Days. A reconnection is made. There is no pressure to attend worship, but many, many do and our Erev Shabbat worship numbers have increased and connections are being made over Oneg treats.

A community of caring: k'sharim

From the URJ publication *Becoming a Kehillat-Chesed: Creating and Sustaining a Caring Congregation:*

First step to building a Caring Community:

“The goal is not just a committee but to engage the whole congregation in this mitzvah of reaching out to others.”



Creating a congregational k'sharim community.

- Publicize: Let the congregation know through newsletter and emails so there is not surprises.
- Split the congregation: Twelve communities. There will be the same community each year. Recruit a team leader two weeks before month starts.
- Letters: Let the community know who the leader is and offer options for participation.

Publicize

The Congregation Beth Torah k'sharim community is a unique community in that every member of the congregation is a member of their. The entire membership is split up into twelve smaller communities.

Each monthly community will have a leader. The commitment for each leader is only one month a year. All team leaders receive a letter with the team roster and tips to use during their month.

Two weeks before the beginning of a month, the entire monthly community receives a copy of the monthly community roster with a reminder that their month is coming up and a self addressed and stamped postcard listing the different k'sharim opportunities to see which ones the community member feels most comfortable doing. These opportunities include: cooking meal, driving congregants to appointments, attending shiva services and assisting with phone call necessary. As the postcards return to the synagogue office, the Member Services Coordinator shares the volunteer information with the community leader.

When the rabbi or synagogue office learns of a life changing experience, such as an extended illness, hospital stay, death, birth or divorce, the information is passed onto the Member Services Coordinator, who then contacts the community leader who calls the congregant to offer the services of the k'sharim committee. The leader then has the entire roster to call upon congregants to encircle the Beth Torah member that has the need.

Split the congregation

April, 2012 - K'sharim Community

Leader: Miccole Bowen xxx-xxx-xxxx

Name

Phone

Jenny & Jon Ball

Dr. Richard & Ilene Benson

Kevin & Stacy Berman

Miccole & Nathan Bowen

Raymond & Debbie Brill

David & Jane Burnett

Leon & Karen Butler

Bette Caviar

Letters: team leader recruiting email sent to the entire month's community.

Good afternoon,

I wish you all a peaceful and thoughtful Thanksgiving Day tomorrow.

The Beth Torah k'sharim community has been expanded over the years to include every member of the congregation. K'sharim means connecting in a caring way and this community is the personification of caring for one another. Every congregant is placed on a team roster for one month only. You are on the December team roster. As lives change in our Beth Torah community, the team leader will be calling the people on the team roster to help fulfill our congregational vision.

I am in need of a k'sharim team leader for the month of December. This volunteer opportunity is an easy one. Early next week, a mailing, including a letter and team roster will go out to the forty five people on the December k'sharim team, including you. As team leader, should a k'sharim issue come up, you would assist me in calling some of the people on the list to step forward and help (such as cooking a meal, or driving someone to a Dr.'s appt). I will be available to suggest volunteers based on proximity and relationships. You will not have to do any "cold" calling.

If this opportunity sounds like something that you can do, please email me back and let me know.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Laura Intfen

Member Services Coordinator

Congregation Beth Torah

(913) 498-2212

Lintfen@beth-torah.org

Letters: Letter sent out to the monthly community.

“Deeds of Kindness weigh as much as all the commandments”

so says the Talmud

3/23/2012

The k'sharim community has been expanded over the years to include every member of Congregation Beth Torah. Members of the Beth Torah community have already volunteered to be in charge of one month of the year. Every congregant is placed on a team roster for one month only. As lives change in our Beth Torah community, the team leader will be calling the people on the team roster to help fulfill our congregational vision:

We are a caring community (Gemilut Chasadim) where diversity is respected, where everyone is included and made to feel welcome and where members celebrate together and support one another.

On the other side of this letter, please find a roster of the March community members. Feel free to call upon one another to coordinate your efforts to complete the Beth Torah vision. If you have a food item “specialty”, please contact the team leaders and let them know. Please return the enclosed postcard to Beth Torah as soon as you can, so your team leader will know how you would like to help. Your team leader is Beth Jordan 913/648-6460.

At Congregation Beth Torah, we believe that each of us would welcome the opportunity to reach out and be a part of each other's lives. It is also our belief that when acts of kindness in our community are given to one another and shared by all, we truly become a caring community.

If you have any questions regarding your role in the March k'sharim community, please call me at the Beth Torah office.

Laura Intfen

Member Services Coordinator

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Letters: The return postcard.

**Congregation Beth Torah
6100 West 127th Street
Overland Park, KS 66209
913 - 498- 2212**

Please fill out and return this card, the postage is paid

The K'sharim community has been a Great Success.

**I am happy to be a member of the March community
and am excited to be a part of the Beth Torah family.**

My name & phone number where I can be reached:_____

I can be contacted during my k'sharim month to:

Cook _____

Attend a Shiva_____

Drive a congregant to an appointment_____

Make a phone call or two to a congregant _____

Assist my caring community leaders should they need it _____

Results

- **Recognized:** Over the years, friendships have been made as members have connected to create meals for members. These bonds have gone beyond k'sharim.
- **Validation:** Community members have been creative in their donations, such as calling a members who is housebound. These mitzvahs have been noted in thank you cards and even mentioned in my monthly newsletter articles.
- **Supported:** The postcard and flexibility built into the program makes it easy for everyone to participate. I have moved congregants from one month to another to serve with friends and have even put whole havurah groups together.

- Thank you to Sara Samuels
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212-650-4228
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of Reform Judaism, please contact Shelly
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Questions?