

# CONGREGATION HAR SHALOM RABBINIC SEARCH VISION STATEMENT

March, 2009

## AVODAH: WORSHIP

Worship is the core of any synagogue community. Har Shalom is a synagogue with a wide range of individual preferences regarding Tefillot (prayer) and other forms of ritual observance, but for all, worship is a primary point of connection linking the synagogue to its members.

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Har Shalom must address the needs with respect to prayer and ritual of a large and diverse membership with varied levels of knowledge and commitment, beliefs, interests, and resources, while observing its commitment to Halakhah (Jewish law).

Worship should convey a sense of joyfulness, learning, respect and inclusive of other opinions, and be welcoming to accommodate a wide range of constituencies. Worship should respect observances of those more traditional while reaching out to those less observant.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Expand the variety and offerings of traditional prayer services, including changes in the format and frequency of prayer services.
  - Capitalize on the knowledge of clergy, congregants, and other organizations sharing a common interest, such as United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, and Jewish World Watch to develop new ideas for ritual.
  - Evaluate the option of offering multiple minyanim.
- Services should include a service with more flexible structure.
- Rabbi should be a teacher and a scholar with a breadth of Talmud knowledge to inspire the congregants to think and to stimulate thought and conversation.
- Identify opportunities for ritual events that bring together congregants of different ages, social groups, and minyanim, including events in different venues.
- Enhance the role of each Har Shalom minyanim by appointing a working group within it to focus on fostering inclusiveness, expanding involvement, and developing a more welcoming presence for newcomers.

- Offer a regular schedule of events from speakers to special Kiddush luncheons that accompany and enhance Shabbat prayer services.
- Publicize ritual events through every appropriate channel of communication toward broadening participation in tefillot. Tefillot should encourage members to display increasing acceptance of others and promote engagement of others in Jewish ritual life.

### **KEHILLAH: MEMBERSHIP**

Participation in Har Shalom’s spiritually rich and diverse community is a primary motivation for synagogue membership. Members value the deep personal and lasting connections with other synagogue members.

#### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Har Shalom will enhance outreach to prospective members and improve efforts aimed at retaining members thus ensuring long-lasting, multi-generational connections within our community.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Enhance Har Shalom’s outreach effort to prospective members, including a well defined mentor program to welcome new members.
- Maximize involvement of clergy, senior staff, and key leadership in motivating new members to play an active role in synagogue affairs.
  - Clergy should actively participate in outreach to engage potential members to encourage synagogue membership.
  - Clergy should offer frequent “meet and greet” opportunities to engage new families.
  - Clergy should provide skills training for members
- Develop creative initiatives to welcome new members on Shabbat and Festivals.
- Introduce new and prospective members on Shabbat to existing members.
- Periodically review and implement new membership-recruitment techniques.
- Develop programs to specifically retain members post-bar/bat Mitzvah.
- Utilize social networking and photo directories, including name tags, to facilitate introductions among members.
- Foster creative initiatives to re-engage long-term members in congregational activities and honor outstanding volunteer efforts.

- Schedule regular events to stimulate personal interaction between clergy and members.
- Facilitate pastoral contact in every appropriate way toward meeting the spiritual and pastoral needs of each congregant.
- Develop collateral materials to market Har Shalom to prospective members.
- Deepen intergenerational ties through career education and mentoring from older to younger members.
- Develop neighborhood-centric programming to connect members to each other.

### **ADULT EDUCATION**

Learning built on a foundation of Torah is a core Jewish value and a life-long mission. Har Shalom must meet the needs of a large, diverse membership with varied levels of knowledge and commitment, beliefs, needs, interests, and resources.

The synagogue is committed to responding to this challenge with outstanding Jewish educators and curricula that seek to enrich member knowledge and commitment to Jewish practice and thought.

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Har Shalom will expand and enhance Adult Education as a core value into every aspect of congregational life and experience.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Rabbi should inspire congregation to learn, and be actively involved in teaching classes.
- Offer learning opportunities – ranging from studies of classic Jewish texts to ritual observances, including Holidays and Life Cycle events.
- Expand programming content of teen and parenting issues.
- Be responsive to the varied interests and time availability of different groups.
- Integrate learning into Shabbat services.
- Draw on scholars from within and outside the Har Shalom community and, develop learning partnerships with other Jewish institutions.

- Regularly assess the quality of programming and seek endowment and sponsorship opportunities.
  - Identify individuals responsible for soliciting feedback from participants and instructors about adult learning programs.
  - Update learning programs on a regular basis to reflect needs of congregation.
- Widely publicize opportunities for adult learning.

## **YOUTH EDUCATION**

Learning begins in childhood. Preschoolers, grade-schoolers and teens are the future of the Jewish people and should be a priority within any Jewish community.

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Har Shalom should prioritize the education of the youth in the congregation in order to ensure their passion for Judaism and create lifelong members.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Rabbi should inspire children and teens to learn. Rabbi should be proactive in the ECEC and Religious School, and be active in Kadima and USY.
- Rabbi should proactively engage all day school children.
- Integrate all generations into traditional Shabbat services and create interactive opportunities within the service for children and teens to participate.
  - Shabbat services should be run by the youth groups at least once a year.
- Regularly assess the quality of programming and seek endowment and sponsorship opportunities.
  - Identify individuals responsible for soliciting feedback from participants and instructors about ECEC and Religious School programs.
- Widely publicize opportunities for preschool, gradeschool and post- B'nai Mitzvah learning.
- Promote attendance at Jewish summer camps.

## **GEMILUT HASADIM & TIKKUN OLAM: SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAMMING**

As a Jewish community, Har Shalom has a responsibility to engage in Gemilut Hasidim (Acts of Loving Kindness) and Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World.) The Gemilut Hasidim Committee provides hands-on activities to help the needy within our greater community. The Tikkun Olam Committee provides information about and opportunities to support programs that address issues of national and international concern.

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Har Shalom will seek to expand participation by congregants of all ages, from pre-school to seniors, in social action projects, and will continue to evaluate and establish new programs based on need and current events.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Provide opportunities for congregants to engage in Tzedakah projects to help our community.
- Promote tikkun olam awareness in connection with celebratory life cycle events.
- Develop and promote tikkun olam guidelines for activism.
- Sponsor forums and panel discussions on social justice.
- Seek out opportunities to participate in programs that provide physical and spiritual support to children, the elderly, the homeless, the sick, and the hungry.

## **ISRAEL**

Israel remains central to Jewish identity. As the "spiritual center" of the Jewish people, it is a symbol of the principle of Jewish unity.

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Har Shalom will make every effort to strengthen support for the State of Israel and increase the congregation's awareness of this principle.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Counter arguments put forth by news media that justify attacks on Israel, and condemn measures it takes to defend itself.
- Expand learning opportunities in Adult Education focusing on the history, literature, culture, and politics of Israel.

- Sponsor special events open to the community, such as forums, panel discussions, Israel Fairs, Israeli food nights and other activities that highlight Israel's challenges and achievements.
- Promote family-oriented Har Shalom missions to Israel.
- Promote participation in student study programs in Israel, such as those offered by NATIV, Pardes Institute, and the Hebrew University.
- Encourage participation in organizational rallies and other community-wide events in support of Israel.
- Support Israeli consumer products where appropriate.
- Publish list of families traveling to Israel and children's attendance in Israeli summer or academic year programs.
- Create map highlighting locations of Har Shalom members and extended family in Israel.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Effective channels of communication are essential to sustain and further enhance community support for synagogue programs.

#### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Har Shalom will seek every opportunity to enhance coordination and effectiveness of all channels of communication to members and the community at large.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Assess and evaluate the need and impact of all Har Shalom printed and electronic materials.
- Craft and coordinate a carefully designed media plan to enhance the synagogue's image and publicize programs and events both within the congregation and the community at large.

### **BAYIT: FACILITIES**

Har Shalom has an active worshipping community coupled with excellent school multiple-units intertwined within a single entity. Preservation of the building and its systems are of paramount concern. Improve accessibility for physically challenged and modernize design of older part of building.

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Capital improvements will be evaluated wherever needed to make Har Shalom more conducive to prayer and life-cycle events.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Renovate the Social Hall to create a more attractive environment for life-cycle events, with the additional goal of increasing rental income.
- Update ECEC and Religious School to enhance learning environment, with the additional goal of attracting new families and remaining competitive in the preschool market.
- Periodically review and recommend other improvements in the appearance and functioning of public space for prayer and leisure within the facility.
- Maintain enhanced security and safety procedures to protect members, staff, and visitors.
- Promote “greening” of the environment and appropriate energy efficiencies and expand recycling program where appropriate.
- Improve internet connectivity within building.

## **TERUMAH: FINANCES**

Har Shalom’s large and active membership expect inspiring clergy, efficient and effective staff, robust level of programming, and a well maintained and up-to-date facility. This requires substantial resources while keeping the cost of membership reasonable and in line with peer institutions.

- Explore new efficiency methods and technologies for increasing funds, including endowment funds, and membership numbers.
- Review and enhance annual and long-term plans for fund raising to maximize giving and expand the donor base, with particular emphasis on major gifts.
- Recognize and appreciate all donations.
- Develop training guidelines for effective fund raising by lay leadership.
- Maintain a consistent line-by-line review of all accounting and financial management practices, carefully projecting budgetary needs and future expenses for personnel, capital improvements, repairs, and strategic planning goals.

- Adhere to budget constraints.
- Enhance coordination of fundraising efforts by implementing peer professional groups.

### **LAY LEADERSHIP**

A synagogue provides a significant opportunity for members to develop their leadership skills by shaping how an institution affects and interacts in their lives.

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Har Shalom will encourage personal growth by service to the community and improve governance procedures to broaden member participation in the management of the shul.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Develop training guidelines and processes for the development of new lay leadership, including formal mentoring and training orientation.
- Train Board of Directors on their oversight responsibilities.
- Improve regularization and accountability of committees.