

Good morning and Shanah Tovah. My name is Arwen Agee, and I am president of Temple Beth El. As we enter this high holiday season, I wanted to give you a peek into what the Temple Beth El board has been thinking about and working on recently. You may know that Temple Beth El holds an annual board retreat every summer, and the goal of the retreat is to do strategic planning for the year ahead. This is also a time for the board members to share a meal together and get to know each other. When we met as a board in July, we picked our top 2 goals of things that we would like to do better this coming year. The 2 goals that the board chose to focus on were increasing participation in temple events and increasing volunteerism. I am going to share what came up in our group when discussing increasing participation and Jamie Orenstein, Vice President of the board will be talking on Yom Kippur about increasing volunteerism.

Our group had some great discussions about increasing participation and some great ideas. We felt that increasing participation was important because participation helps us to build a Jewish community. We agreed that events felt better if there was higher attendance, and that people will come to events because it makes them feel good to be part of the community. Our goal was to increase participation by 10% over the next year and to have new attendees on a regular basis. For being a relatively small congregation, Temple Beth El has some

excellent events. In addition to services and holiday events, we have the annual Hannaford scholars' program which just happened a few weeks ago, the summer movies, Shabbat hikes and the Goos event, just to name a few. We couldn't do all of these great events without our Temple Beth El volunteers.

Our plan to achieve the goal of increased participation is to use social media to advertise events, share experiences of event attendees with quotes in the weekly email and newsletter, highlight board members experiences attending events, reach out to provide individual invitations to events, and work towards removing any barriers that might prevent someone from attending an event.

In order to figure out if there were barriers and what they were, we decided to do a poll of congregants. The poll was sent out as part of a weekly email and inquired if there were barriers related to days and times of events, and if there were any barriers related to transportation or gas. The results from the poll told us that there were some barriers. Barriers included that some congregants cannot drive in the dark, some congregants did not drive, some congregants had difficulty ambulating which limited what type of events they could attend, and some congregants have trouble attending events because they live far from the temple.

It was helpful to find out that there are barriers and what they were, so that we can incorporate addressing those barriers when planning temple events.

While we are hoping to see more of you and see you more often at Temple events in the coming year, we really appreciate all of you that are already regular attendees. For those that are not regular attendees, we would love to hear what changes and additions we can make to have you become a regular attendee. We are always open to hearing feedback about events and would love to hear creative ideas about new events. We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you and Shanah Tovah.