

## **MEMBERSHIP/OUTREACH**

### **The Value of Your Belonging**

Dear Lovers of Justice,

Over this past year our lives have been greatly impacted, from meaningful personal moments to passionate expressions of the opportunities ahead for OZ. It is rather incredible that in the middle of a horrific pandemic we were able to see the value of our community so clearly. We have been through an extraordinary journey together, a journey that truly brought home the importance of OZ as our community. And today, as the future unfolds, we stand humbled by the dedication, contribution and passion of so many.

On July 1, Ohavi Zedek is starting its annual voluntary membership pledge campaign. It is only through your contribution of time and money that OZ can meet the needs of our members. This is a key moment for OZ, an opportunity for each one of us to find a place we can make our contribution known. To the extent that you can invest in our community, we promise you will be rewarded with a deep sense of meaning and belonging. And if you can make a larger contribution this year, whether an additional hour a month volunteering or an additional \$18 a month in your annual donation, you will be participating with an ever-larger group to meet the future needs of our congregants. You and we will be “paying it

forward,” much as did our forebears who gave us our building almost 70 years ago.

During a year ruled by isolation, OZ successfully touched many of us. As members of our congregation, we do not always see the dozens upon dozens of touch points provided by members, staff and clergy that support our community. Here are four that have made a huge impact this year:

**Our teachers.** Our Preschool, OZ’s Full Circle and our Hebrew School were laser focused on our kids and their parents. Our teachers, along with Erika and Naomi, were inventive and imaginative in bringing programming, learning and events to life. From celebrating Mitzvah Day, an incredible day that showcased community projects undertaken by our older kids, to our drive-thru costumed Purim Festival, to the musical support provided by Cantor Steve, to our start-up Family Facebook page, OZ was all about the kids and their families.

**The Shalom Shuk.** What a gem we have with the Shuk! And what a challenge to run a retail operation over the past year. Karen Robair and her staff went beyond courageous as they provided for hundreds of people while living the Shuk’s mission of “building bridges between people of all religious, social and economic backgrounds, through exchanges that foster dignity and respect and offer equal access for all to fine used clothing and household goods.” The Shuk has made an incredible impact in the greater Burlington community for over a dozen years

inspired by Kay Stambler's dedication. And if you know Kay, you know that a pandemic would not stand in her way.

**G'MaCH Volunteers.** Here is one of our quieter success stories. G'MaCh ("loving kindness"), is OZ's caring team. And when you have a community where many members are over 65 years of age, this quiet group led by two incredible volunteers, Eric and Karen Corbman, met many situations head on, with great energy and passion. With over a dozen other volunteers, they led OZ's efforts to reach out to all our senior members on the availability of the COVID vaccine and to help those who needed assistance in scheduling and traveling to their appointments. Throughout the pandemic this group also focused on creating as many in-home connections as possible with our members experiencing serious challenges.

**Our Clergy.** Our clergy of two provided the non-stop, 24/7 services of four clergy over this period. Our community owes them so much gratitude for their efforts. They led us through this nightmare. They stepped up and figured out how to take us virtual, while learning new technology skills for themselves. They guided us through Shabbat, musical events, learning opportunities and many life cycle events via Zoom! They have cared for us these many months. And now that we see the light at the end of the tunnel, they are finding new energy as we re-open and welcome the fall holidays. Yes, we should all say "thank you" for what they have provided for us, and now we can reciprocate and take care of them. That is what community is all about.

## **Support OZ and send in your pledge today.**

We are a thriving community of Jewish experiences because of our teachers, our staff, our clergy, and each one of us. And as the summer begins, we are asking for you to renew your membership pledge. It is through your membership that OZ stands with a firm commitment of support for our Jewish community and the greater Jewish community—a community that comes together to celebrate all parts of our vibrant Jewish life.

And while we are open to all and stand firmly on the foundation of voluntary financial participation based on what you can contribute to OZ, we ask you to remember that your contribution supports not just your needs, but the needs of so many in our community today and those who will be joining our community in the coming years.

Our annual membership pledge provides about 40% of our needed revenue. Our goal this year is to reach 50%. This year, if you can, please consider increasing your annual membership pledge. Every year we are asked to contribute to many organizations doing good in our community. We are working hard every day to make OZ worthy of your contribution.

*Thank you,*

*Your Board of Directors*

