

Bring Your Heart, Head and Energy to “Heart to Heart”

Shir Libeynu is one of the sponsors of the Heart to Heart program, which brings a group of 20 Israeli teenagers to Canada in the summer. Half of the group identify as Palestinian Israeli and the others as Jewish Israeli. The goals of the program are to foster civic leadership, promote dialogue and mutual understanding and to be part of a process of creating an equitable, shared society in Israel/Palestine. The program began in 2011 as a partnership between the Givat Haviva Education Foundation in Israel and Hoshomer Hatzair/Camp Shomria. After six years the program has over 100 alumni who are working to build bridges from their communities to the larger society.

This past March I co-chaired the third annual “Building Heart” fundraising dinner. This year the dinner at the District Oven restaurant raised over \$30,000, a milestone! During the evening guests had an opportunity to hear from program alumni about the impact Heart to Heart made on their lives.

Our congregation, Shir Libeynu, is one of the many sponsors of the event and has had a close relationship with the program for the past few years. We advertise the dinner in our newsletter and in the past members of the congregation have hosted the teenagers and/or volunteered at the end of the program reception.

I wanted to let Shir Libeynu members know that there are other ways in which you can be part of this program. You could join one of the committees working to support Heart to Heart; the Steering Committee, Community Advisory Group, the Building Heart event committee, Fundraising Committee or the Evaluation Committee. Or, you might consider hosting a Parlour Room Fundraiser. You invite the guests and Heart to Heart brings a 30 minute documentary and a discussion facilitator.

At our Passover Seder we drink the Fourth Cup of Wine to the future and say “we dream of a world not threatened by destruction. We hope for a time when Jerusalem will be a beacon of brotherhood and sisterhood. We dream of a world in which Jews and all other people are free to be themselves. We dream of a world at peace.” The Heart to Heart program is, perhaps, one way in which we can help create that world.

While we know that the Heart to Heart program is not the total solution to the creation of an equitable, shared society, we do believe it is an important part of the process. The graduates of the program will be a generation of leaders with a vision of a shared society and the tools to make their vision a reality. I would like encourage members of Shir Libeynu to consider becoming involved with this important initiative. If you would like more information about Heart to Heart, you can find it on the website, www.heart-to-heart.ca. Or you can contact me, Karen Lior, at Karen.charlie.lior@gmail.com.