



BETH CHAI NEWS

The Greater Washington Jewish Humanist Congregation

Observe 5771 With Us

Beth Chai Congregation welcomes all to join us in celebrating the high holidays with thoughtful, friendly, and fulfilling high holiday services.

On both Rosh Hashanah (Thursday, Sept. 9) and Yom Kippur (Saturday, Sept. 18), we will hold family services at 9:30 a.m. and adult services at 10:30 a.m. (Adult services are geared toward those ages 12 and up, but are open to all.) A kiddush follows Rosh Hashanah services, and all are welcome.

In addition, there will be a Kol Nidre service on Friday, Sept. 17, at 7 p.m. and a break-the-fast potluck gathering on Saturday, Sept. 18, at 6:30 p.m. Beth Chai provides the bagels and fish for the break-the-fast; you should bring a non-meat dish or beverage to serve six to eight people.

All services and events are held at Beth Chai Congregation at River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 6301 River Road, Bethesda (entrance on Whittier Blvd.).

Ticket Information: Tickets for high holiday services are available at no charge for Beth Chai members, but we do ask that you reserve your space. To do so, go to

www.bethchai.org, click on the link at the top of the page, and choose which services you'll attend.

Nonmembers wishing to purchase tickets to any or all services should use the same link. Nonmember tickets are \$75 per person per service for adult services (which includes free admission to that day's family service) or \$75 per family per service for those attending the family

services only. Non-members who decide to join Beth Chai later in the year can credit the cost of their high holiday tickets toward membership.



Advance tickets can also be reserved by telephone by leaving us a message at 301-229-7400. In addition, tickets may be purchased at the door (cash or check only), but we ask walkups to arrive early to allow extra processing time.

All high holiday tickets will be on available on a will call basis. You will not receive tickets in the mail. Instead, simply bring your receipt and check in at the will call desk at RRUUC before each service.

Additional Ticket Policies: Members may transfer their high holiday tickets to a guest if the guest is accompanied by a registered member or a paying non-member.

Au pairs may attend as part of a family registration.

Adult children of members who are not full-time students are not considered to be part of a family registration and, therefore, must purchase tickets to attend services.

Children of non-members who are high school-aged and under who are accompanied by a registered adult may attend at no extra charge.

Child Care: Free child care for kids age 2 and up is available for all ticket holders during the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur adult services. (There is no babysitting during family services or Kol Nidre.) Please contact chelleparsky@parsky.org or keith@parsky.org to reserve your child's space.

We hope you will join us and we wish you a peaceful, healthy, and happy new year.

High Holiday Schedule

Rosh Hashanah—Thursday, Sept. 9

family service, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

adult service, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Kol Nidre—Friday, Sept. 17

adult service, 7-8:30 p.m.

Yom Kippur—Saturday, Sept. 18

family service, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

adult service, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

break-the-fast potluck, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Rosh Hashanah Kiddush and Yom Kippur Break-the-Fast Volunteers Needed Help With the High Holidays

Your congregation needs help in celebrating the new year!

Rosh Hashanah is Thursday, Sept. 9, and you can help make this year's kiddush (which immediately follows the morning's adult service) a fitting feast to usher in the new year by bringing your favorite food or beverage (enough to serve at least six to eight people, please). If you can't cook or bake, or just prefer not to, you can volunteer to help set up or clean up. In either case, now is your opportunity to get involved and start the year right!

Also, if you're planning to join us for the now-famous Beth Chai break-the-fast potluck following Yom Kippur on Sat-

urday evening, Sept. 18, we need help getting the event organized. Without a little advance planning, a lot of hungry people might have to share one kugel, and if someone doesn't like kugel ... not a good way to start the new year! Beth Chai provides the bagels and fish, but it is a potluck, so we ask each family to bring a non-meat dish or beverage to serve six to eight people. We also need volunteers to assist with setup and cleanup. Remember, it's a sin to stay hungry after sundown!

To volunteer to help for either—or both—of these events, please contact Keith Parsky at keith@parsky.org.

BETH CHAI LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

Position	Name (* = board member)	Email
Rabbi	Dr. Arthur Blecher	ablecher@starpower.net
Education Director	Roni Rosenthal-Gazit	roni_rosenthal@yahoo.com
President	Marji Ross*	mross@eaglepub.com
Vice President	Robert Rosenberg*	rosyjapan@yahoo.com
Secretary	Sara Duke*	saraduke1@verizon.net
Treasurer	Joe Gitchell*	igitchel@pinneyassociates.com
Bookkeeper/Accounts Payable	Diane Page	dianepage@verizon.net
Advisory Chair	Mary Ellen Petrisko	mpetrisko@live.com
Communications Chair/Newsletter Editor	Elise Browne Hughes*	browne.hughes@gmail.com
Correspondent	Elizabeth Mumford	eam222@verizon.net
Finance Committee	Ela Koniuszkow	ela.mike@verizon.net
Immediate Past President	Andrew Stongin	astrongin@starpower.net
Liturgy Chair	Deborah Signer Balaschak	balasig@verizon.net
Membership Co-Chair	Michele McNally*	mcsturm5@verizon.net
Membership Co-Chair	Julie Zalkind	julie@hzmgt.com
Music Chair	Howie Feinstein*	khfeinstein@verizon.net
Program Co-Chair	Ken Jacobson*	kenjacobson@hotmail.com
Program Co-Chair	Mark Bauman	mbaumana@ngs.org
Publicity Chair	Lisa Sanfuentes	lisa.rizzolo@verizon.net
School Parents Council Chair	Tracey Goldman	tgoldman@starpower.net
Social Action Chair	Julie Vigdor*	julievigdor@yahoo.com
Sunday School Volunteer Coordinator	Phyllis Kristal	kristal@fr.com
Volunteers/Special Events Chair	Keith Parsky*	keith@parsky.org
Tot Shabbat Coordinator	Joe Gitchell	igitchel@pinneyassociates.com
Website/IT Manager	Daniel Korn*	dkorn@comcast.net

Financial Need Policy: Beth Chai welcomes anyone to attend services, become a member, or have their children attend our Beth Chai Sunday school, regardless of ability to pay. Considerations available include extended payment plans, service exchange, and fee reduction. Financial aid determination will be made on a case-by-case basis. Please contact Joe Gitchell, treasurer, for assistance.

Getting to Know Roni Rosenthal-Gazit, Beth Chai's New Education Director

BY OONA STEIGLITZ

“The best way to teach is by not sitting down.” This sums up the educational philosophy of Roni Rosenthal-Gazit, Beth Chai's new education director.

Born and raised in Haifa, Israel, Roni has been teaching for quite some time. In fact, her first position was at the age of 16, working with Hatzofim, the Israeli scouts. A variety of teaching positions followed, and eventually, she went on to direct two schools in Israel.

Roni—along with her husband Gilad, daughter Shachar (now 10 years old), and son Lior (now 6 years old)—moved to the United States five years ago when Gilad took a position with the Israeli embassy in Washington.

When they first moved to the United States, Roni's plan was to devote her time to earning a PhD. in educational counseling. But she was quickly drawn to the other side of the classroom. While enrolling Shachar at the Beth Shalom preschool in Potomac in 2005, she was offered a teaching position there. For two years she taught both kindergarten and adults. Following that, she taught for three years at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in Rockville. At the same time, she taught at Kol Shalom in Bethesda for the last five years.

Somehow, during this busy time, she has managed to set aside time for another pursuit: writing. Roni is currently working on her fifth book.

Her first was a Hebrew novel based on facts about the 2004 terrorist attacks in Israel (the translated title is *Love at High Risk*). Next came a book in English for kindergarteners called *On Shapes and More*. Her third book, for teachers, is *101 Let's Have Fun: 101 Fun Activities That Reinforce Learning in the Hebrew Language*. It really demonstrates Roni's educational philosophy, that is, “They need to move



to understand. Feel it, play with it.” Her fourth book, *On Shapes and More—the Jewish Version* is similar in format and audience to the second, except the content is through Jewish symbols.

Finally, Roni's current literary project is called *So, What Do You Know About Being Jewish? 150 Questions and Answers About Judaism*.

So, assuming that this busy educator, author, lecturer, and mother has some down time, how does she spend it? Roni loves to ride her motorcycle, a hobby she first started in Israel. She and her family also like to hike, go camping, and travel. Some of her favorite destinations include the Adirondacks, Virginia Beach, South Carolina, Golan Heights in Israel, and Deep Creek Lake. The lake areas of that last vacation spot reminds her of Haifa, she says.

Finally, as if Roni weren't busy enough, the family recently adopted a 10-week-old puppy, Shoko, whose name means chocolate milk—and matches his color. As it happens, Roni and Shoko share the same birthday.

When you see Roni or her daughter Shachar at Sunday school, give them a warm, welcoming hello (and perhaps a dog biscuit!).

Editor's note: This article is part of a new series of profiles of Beth Chai members. If you are interested in being profiled, or have a suggestion of a member you'd like to know more about, please drop us a line at browne.hughes@gmail.com.



MESSAGE FROM THE RABBI

The Hebrew New Year of 5771 arrives early this year in relation to the secular calendar. In America, summer vacations are over, everyone is back home, new school terms are underway. For Jewish congregations around the world, this season represents the reconvening of the community. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are a Mikrah Kodesh—a sacred convocation. The Latin origin of the English word “convocation” means “calling together,” exactly the same as the Hebrew.

We at Beth Chai take great care to be a close-knit community. Every community is created by the connectedness of its members, but no community survives without the regular maintaining of those same relationships. I believe that the primary function of every community observance within Judaism is the reestablishment of relationships.

People come into our congregation at this time of the year to renew three connections. The first, of course, is the relationship to the civilization of the Judaism—it’s history and its culture. By being reminded of our ancient literature and age-old traditions, we reestablish our personal link to our heritage as a people.

Second, like other small, independent congregations, we at Beth Chai use the High Holidays as a time to renew our own community. This renewal takes place whenever we share food and fellowship, observe Jewish ceremonies together, learn together and explore ideas with each other. This essential renewal of community continues throughout the year as we work together at the projects that are part of our life, such as planning for services, organizing an auction or—this year—composing and producing a new Rosh Hashanah service book.

And like all congregations, the beginning of the liturgical year and the beginning of the Sunday school season are a time when new members come into our community.

Finally, the High Holidays are time for each of us to reestablish the basic relationship with self. It is a period of introspection and renewal of individual spirit, an opportunity to consider one’s personal values and experience of life. The Yamim Noraim call upon each of us to examine how we move through the universe and how we interact with creation.

With my best wishes to all for a joyous new year 5771,

Arthur Blecher

Got Registration?

Beach bag unpacked? Check. School supplies purchased? Check. Registered with Beth Chai? Check.

We’d love for you to be checked in with membership, Sunday school and the high holidays in plenty of time before the new year and the new school year as it helps so much in our planning. If you haven’t done so already, please plan to register before Sept. 2, which is just one week before Rosh Hashanah.

Start by going to our registration website, www.bethchai-registration.org.

Log-in in the upper right-hand corner with your email address. If you’ve forgotten your password, click the link marked **Forgot Your Password?**, and the system will send it to you.

Next, click on the link in the top right labeled **View Profile**. **DO NOT** click on the **Membership Registration** button on the left unless you want to re-enter all of your information! You’ll be prompted to register at the same level or adjust if desired, and be given the option to update any personal information if you need to.

2010-2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday, Sept. 9

Rosh Hashanah

- 9:30-10:30 a.m.: family service
- 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.: adult service

Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Saturday, Sept. 11

10:30 a.m.: bar mitzvah of Andy Greenberg, son of Cindy and Scott Greenberg. The congregation is invited to join the family for the service and kiddush afterward.

Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Sunday, Sept. 12

First day of Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K-7th grade & post-mitzvah classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Friday, Sept. 17

7-8:30 p.m.: Kol Nidre service

Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Saturday, Sept. 18

Yom Kippur

- 9:30-10:30 a.m.: family service
- 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.: adult service
- 6:30-7:30 p.m.: break-the-fast potluck

Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Sunday, Sept. 19

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K-7th grade classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Saturday, Sept. 25

10:30 a.m.: bar mitzvah of Matt Balaschak, son of Deborah Signer and Mark Balaschak. The congregation is invited to join the family for the service and kiddush afterward.

Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Sunday, Sept. 26

Sunday school/Sukkot celebration

Location, time, and details to be announced via email announcements

Sunday, Sept. 26

7 p.m.: board meeting (all members welcome)

Home of Marji Ross, 6213 Nethercombe Court, McLean

Sunday, Oct. 3

Sunday school/Simchat Torah celebration

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K-7th grade & post-mitzvah classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, Oct. 10

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K-7th grade classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Saturday, Oct. 16

10 a.m.: bat mitzvah of Sophia Simon, daughter of Phil Simon. The congregation is invited to join the family for the service and kiddush afterward.

Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Sunday, Oct. 17

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K-7th grade classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, Oct. 24

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K-7th grade classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Saturday, Oct. 30

10 a.m.: bat mitzvah of Jamie Davis, daughter of Robin Pollock and Adam Davis. The congregation is invited to join the family for the service and kiddush afterward.

Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Sunday, Oct. 31

No school (teachers' professional day)

Saturday, Nov. 6

10 a.m.: bar mitzvah of Lewis Schwartz, son of Kate Taylor and Mark Schwartz. The congregation is invited to join the family for the service and kiddush afterward.

Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Sunday, Nov. 7

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K-7th grade & post-mitzvah classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, Nov. 14

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K-7th grade classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, Nov. 21

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K-7th grade classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, Nov. 28

No school (Thanksgiving weekend)

Sunday, Dec. 5

Sunday school/Chanukah celebration

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-11 a.m.: pre-K-7th grade & post-mitzvah classes
- 10 a.m.-11 a.m.: adult ed
- 11 a.m.-noon: Chanukah party

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, Dec. 12

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K-7th grade classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

calendar continues 

2010-2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, Dec. 19

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K–7th grade classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, Dec. 26

No Sunday school (winter break)

Sunday, Jan. 2

No Sunday school (winter break)

Sunday, Jan. 9

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K–7th grade & post-mitzvah classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, Jan. 16

Sunday school/Martin Luther King Day celebration

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K–7th grade classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed (post-mitzvah students encouraged to attend)

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, Jan. 23

Sunday school/Tu B'Shvat celebration

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K–7th grade classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, Jan. 30

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K–7th grade classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, Feb. 6

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K–7th grade & post-mitzvah classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, Feb. 13

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K–7th grade classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, Feb. 20

No school (President's Day weekend)

Sunday, Feb. 27

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K–7th grade classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, March 6

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K–7th grade & post-mitzvah classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, March 13

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K–7th grade classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, March 20

Sunday school/Purim celebration

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed & Purim party

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, March 27

Sunday school/Beth Chai auction

- 10 a.m.-11 a.m.: Beth Chai auction
- 10 a.m.-1 p.m.: Beth Chai auction (No adult ed or music assembly)

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, April 3

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K–7th grade & post-mitzvah classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, April 10

Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K–7th grade classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, April 17

No Sunday school (spring break)

Sunday, April 24

No Sunday school (spring break)

Sunday, May 1

Sunday school/Yom HaShoah observance

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K–7th grade & post-mitzvah classes
- 10 a.m.-noon: adult ed

Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, May 8

Snow makeup day if need, otherwise, no Sunday school (Mother's Day)

Sunday, May 15

Last day of Sunday school

- 9:30 a.m.: music assembly
- 10 a.m.-noon: pre-K–7th grade classes and end-of-year sharing (No adult ed)

Burning Tree Elementary School

Beth Chai Event Locations:

Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC is located at 6301 River Road, Bethesda (parking lot entrance on Whittier)

Burning Tree Elementary School is located at 7900 Beech Tree Road, Bethesda

EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE—

CHECK YOUR WEEKLY EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR UPDATES

We collect nonperishable food for charity at all congregational events.

NOTES FROM THE EDUCATION DIRECTOR

Dear Beth Chai Families,

Bruchim HaBaim and Bruchim HaShavim are two Hebrew phrases whose meanings are very similar ... almost. Bruchim HaBaim means welcome, while Bruchim HaShavim means welcome back.

I would like to welcome our new students coming to Beth Chai Sunday school for the first time, and the new teachers who will be joining our staff. I'd also like to welcome back our returning families and students, and all our excellent returning teachers.

Over the summer we have been working hard on updating and spicing up our school's curriculum. Our 6th grade students, for example, will be examining articles from the *Washington Post* as they learn how Jewish values are reflected today. As another example, our pre-K students will learn about Jewish values through very interesting modern stories.

Our Hebrew curriculum will be much more interactive this year, and words like tapuach v'dvash (apples and honey) will be flying in the classes in no time.

Our first day of Sunday school will be on Sept. 12. We will begin our day at 9:30 a.m. with a school-wide assembly for students and parents. At 10 a.m. the students will head to their classes accompanied by the teachers.

Letters with room assignments and teachers' names will be sent by email. If you haven't received the letter yet, please contact me to update your email address.

We will be celebrating fall holidays in the classes with music, dancing, arts, and stories. The teachers are planning many fun learning activities. We are also planning for enriching family learning programs inside the classes, so stay tuned.

Please note that there is no school on Oct. 30th due to our teachers' professional day. Please see pages 5-6 for a calendar of school events planned so far for this year.

As the new education director I am very excited to be joining the Beth Chai Sunday school. I'm always happy to hear ideas, suggestions, and feedback. Please don't hesitate to contact me at roni_rosenthal@yahoo.com.

Wishing you all a happy and sweet new year,

Roni Rosenthal-Gazit



(REGISTRATION—continued from page 4)

You'll have to complete payment via PayPal, or indicate you want to mail a check, before you can move on to the next step.

Next, if you have a child or children to register in school, click on the School Registration button on the left side. You'll have to register and pay for each child in a separate transaction. This helps us keep accurate class rosters.



Finally, click on the High Holiday Tickets button on the left, and follow the directions to reserve your space(s). While high holiday services are free with your membership, you'll need to RSVP. You'll receive a receipt that you can print and bring to the will call desk when you arrive for services. Note that you must register separately for each service, unless you plan on attending all three. We have a shortcut "all services" option if this is your plan!

Help Those Less Fortunate! High Holidays Food Collection Begins

Beth Chai is beginning its social action effort this year with our annual high holidays food drive for the Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA). Every year we collect nonperish-



able food items as well as supermarket and pharmacy gift cards that are then distributed by JSSA to needy families.

Because Rosh Hashanah falls before our first day of Sunday school, there's

no opportunity to distribute grocery bags with lists before the holidays start, but feel free to fill a bag (or more than one!) with some of the items listed below and bring it along to the Rosh Hashanah service. We will be collecting donations at all of the high holiday services, so bring your donation whenever it's convenient.

Here's a list of items that JSSA is always in need of:

- Giant gift cards
- CVS gift cards
- canned soups (kosher if possible—not mandatory)
- canned tuna
- canned fruits
- canned vegetables
- packaged macaroni & cheese
- pasta (all types)
- pasta sauces

JSSA is always thrilled to see the amount we collect, and will undoubtedly be particularly happy to receive our donations this year given the continuing need in our area.

If you have any questions or interest in helping deliver the collections to JSSA, please contact Julie Vigdor (julievigdor@yahoo.com), social action chair.

Thanks for your generosity!



BETH CHAI CONGREGATION

River Road U.U.C.
6301 River Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

Answering service: 301-229-7400
Email: info@bethchai.org
Website: www.bethchai.org

Address Correction Requested