

Fellow members,

I realize that my comments prior to Sunday's Adult Education session seemed overly abrupt to some and I regret that we did not have time planned for discussion.

I do not, however, want the congregation to lose sight of the larger point, that because Beth Chai is a volunteer-run organization, more is desired and expected of members beyond just showing up on Sundays and paying dues and tuition.

We have never been a typical synagogue with a national affiliation, old-guard Board of Directors and a paid administrative staff, where getting involved can seem daunting and also unnecessary because someone else will do the job.

Beth Chai is at its best when all of our members help to sustain us, even in seemingly small ways. Without all of us working together, there is no Beth Chai.

This is such an important point that we are going to devote our Adult Education session on Feb. 22 to a participatory discussion of what it means to be a Beth Chai member. Rabbi Blecher will moderate during the first hour. After the break, leaders of such areas as Social Action, Volunteers, Liturgy and the Parent Council will explain how easy and rewarding it is to get involved at Beth Chai.

I urge every member to come and participate on Feb. 22. Without your input, we won't be able to maintain the sense of community that makes Beth Chai such a unique congregation.

Finally, Program Chair Ken Jacobson has assured me that our guest speakers expect some people to be on the periphery of the discussion working quietly, and that this is not a problem. So, those of you who prefer to work -- including on your laptops -- should feel free to continue to do so.

My best and hope to see everyone on Feb. 22.

David Elfin