

## **Social Action 5767**

"It is not upon you to finish the task, but neither are you free to desist from it." *Pirke Avot 2:21*

One of the many reasons members are drawn to become an integral part of our community is because of the various social action events and programs that we take part in throughout the year. While this year is no different, we are looking to expand the ranks of fellow congregants who can get involved and help impact our community and make a difference. Following is a list and description of events that will take place this year. If there is an area where we have identified the need for leadership and support that interests you, please contact us to discuss this further. Or, if there is anything that interests you in general, we would love to hear from you! Thank you so much!

Jill Rosenthal and David Levin

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### **September/October: High Holy Day Food Drive**

Please support the Alameda County Community Food Bank by donating non-perishable food items during the High Holy Days, from Rosh Hashanah to Sukkot, and help make a difference. Bags will be distributed during Rosh Hashanah. Just return your bags on the days of the High Holy Days as early as Rosh Hashanah or as late as Sukkot. Donations will be accepted at 327 MacArthur Boulevard or 330 Euclid Avenue.

### **October 29th: Wetlands Restoration Day with Save the Bay**

Temple Beth Abraham works with Save the Bay, a local environmental organization, in Save the Bay's community-based restoration project. For the past several years, Temple Beth Abraham members have been assisting in the restoration of Arrowhead Marsh, located in the Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline Park here in Oakland. TBA members have helped remove non-native species, transplant seedlings in the native plant nursery, plant native species, and learned about the Bay with Save the Bay naturalists. For more information, contact Jody London.

### **November: Turkey Drive**

2006 marks the seventh year of Temple Beth Abraham's participation in the Food Bank holiday turkey drive. Last year, we were able to feed turkey to over 4,000 homeless and needy people at Thanksgiving because of the generosity of our members. The Alameda County Community Food Bank distributed the turkeys through its 300 affiliated agencies. These agencies currently feed over 700,000 meals to 120,000 people every month at soup kitchens, food pantries, and shelters throughout our community. This year we are being asked to increase our participation by an extra 20% for those in need. Your donation will enable us to purchase turkeys which will be delivered to the Food Bank in time for the holiday season. Please look for the envelope marked with a turkey sticker this fall. For more info, please contact Helene Moore.

### **December: Clothing/Blanket Drive**

Clean out your closets and help out East Bay residents. We will be soliciting warm blankets and coats as well as towels and to be donated to a local agency. Please contact Shosh Blachman if you want to help collect and/or transport these donations. Collection barrels (or boxes) will be in the synagogue.

### **Jan 28th: Annual Blood Drive**

Give the gift of life! Temple Beth Abraham and the American Red will co-sponsor our sixth annual Community Blood Drive. You can donate blood in the warmth and comfort of our own social hall. This is a particularly important time of year to donate. For those of you, who are regular donors, please note this date on your calendar so that you are eligible. You must allow two months between donations. Appointments are required and a volunteer will be calling members to schedule in January. To donate blood you must be at least 17 years old, be in general good health,

weigh at least 110 lbs. If you are unable to donate blood, please consider working as a volunteer that day. **We need someone to co-chair this event.**

### **Feb 4th: Tu B'Shevat Tree Planting**

"Man is a tree of the field," and the Jewish calendar reserves one day each year--the "New Year for Trees" on the 15th of Shevat--for us to contemplate our affinity with our botanical analogue and what it can teach us about our own lives. TBA members of all ages are invited to join together for a Tu B'Shevat tree planting celebration. **We need someone to co-chair this event.**

### **April: Sukkot in April**

Our congregation will be joining more than a dozen other synagogues and Jewish organizations for the Sixth Annual East Bay Rebuilding Together/Sukkot in April. We will work together to rehabilitate the homes of low-income, elderly and disabled people, as well as the office space of local non-profit agencies, so that we all can live and work in warmth and safety. You can sign on as a volunteer and help with repairs and renovations of homes and offices and/or help to raise funds to sponsor this project. Skilled volunteers and contractors who are willing to serve as House Captains, coordinators or team leads are especially needed, and have helped make these past years especially successful. The event is being co-sponsored and coordinated by the Volunteer Action Center of the Jewish Federation of the Greater East Bay, the East Bay Social Action Networking Forum (comprised of the social action chair people of East Bay synagogues), and local Rebuilding Together chapters. **We need someone to coordinate and chair this program.**

## **ON-GOING PROGRAMS**

### **St. Vincent De Paul Soup Kitchen**

This is a wonderful way to make a real difference in the lives of the less fortunate. Twice a month, members of Beth Abraham go down to the St. Vincent DePaul Society and serve meals to several hundred homeless men and women in Oakland. This is a hands-on tzedaka project which serves as its own reward. You must be at least 16 years old to attend, even if accompanied by an adult. To volunteer to help, contact Misia Nudler.

1st and 2nd Sunday of every month, plus Christmas and Easter

### **Oakland Coalition of Congregations**

The Oakland Coalition of Congregation (OCC) is an interfaith organization which, according to their mission statement, empowers congregations to act together in faith and love to advance and advocate for the common good of all who live in Oakland and surrounding communities. Programs have included interaction with public officials, intercultural tasting lunches, leadership training and interfaith dialogue. OCC board meetings are on the 4th Monday of the month (Sept. 25), at 7 pm, tentatively planned to be held at the Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church. Currently planned for the fall are an Interfaith Youth Musical Event and the annual OCC Friends Dinner. Each member Congregation, including TBA, may send up to 4 representatives to the OCC Board. The next OCC election will be held on Nov. 27 at 7 pm. For more information or to get involved, please contact Joel Freid.

### **Jewish Coalition for Literacy**

The East Bay Jewish Coalition for Literacy (JCL) recruits, trains, places and supports volunteer tutors in under-performing K-3 public school classrooms throughout the East Bay. The primary goal of JCL is to mobilize volunteers in a meaningful, on-going effort to help public school children improve their literacy skills through one-on-one and small group tutoring. Please refer to article about JCL in this Omer. **We would really like to have several members become active in this program.**