

Chesed Committee Meeting March 24, 2019

Present were Rabbi Yaffe, Elaine Acker, Brenda Canter, Gerry Canter, Lynn Dashevsky, Bob Kushner, Mike Olkin, Bonnye Pilar, Rick Granowitz and Sydney Torrey.

Rabbi Yaffe gave a dvar Torah derived from the week's parsha. The chasida (stork) was given its name because it is a kind and merciful bird which shares its food with others. However, it is not kosher because it is a carnivore and only shares its food with its own species. Rabbi Yaffe explained that the chasida only shares its food to make itself feel good rather than responding to the needs of others without discrimination. This teaches us that kindness can be performed primarily to make the provider feel good or to meet the needs of the recipient. Although it is a blessing to feel good when we help others, we must not forget that the primary purpose of the Chesed Committee's work is to meet the needs of those we serve.

We welcomed Lynn Dashevsky and are happy that she has joined our committee and attended our first meeting despite being under the weather.

The donors to the Chesed Committee were acknowledged and thanked, especially sisterhood and our committee's members. We thank Lisa Nascembeni for all her assistance to our committee.

Committee representatives gave the following updates:

Gerry Canter reported that despite feeling poorly, he delivered 24 shaloch manos packages to members who are homebound or are in a local facility. Ya'asher koach Gerry!

Gerry also reported that phone calls and limited visits to homebound congregants are going nicely. Marion Pava is visiting congregants at Glenmeadow as needed, as a representative of the Chesed Committee. We updated our Google Drive spread sheet that lists members of the congregation who could benefit from visits. Committee members and congregants should call the office with the name of the housebound congregant, Rabbi Yaffe and Lisa will then update the list with the name of the housebound congregant. Committee members can access the list to enter the date of the most recent contact and indicate whether the homebound person wants a rabbinical visit. Members are asked to not add or remove names from the list (in order to not violate the privacy of congregants who do not want visits). If members are aware of congregants who want calls and are not receiving them, or a congregant who is getting calls and does not want them, please call Lisa at 567-0036 so she can update the list. We plan to update the list at every Chesed Committee meeting.

Elaine Acker reported that Rabbi Yaffe, Rabbi Wolf and she have been visiting members of the congregation at the Jewish Nursing Home, Ruth's House and Genesis House faithfully. We updated our Good Drive spread sheet of congregants at all three facilities. They leave a note if congregants are unavailable at the time of a visit, so that the congregant and/or their families

know that we made the visit. Thank you Elaine.

Bonnye Pilar reported that Rabbi Yaffe, Rabbi Wolf and she go to Baystate Medical Center and Mercy Hospital (including Weldon Rehabilitation Center) to visit congregants a minimum of once each week.

Mary Nathanson has visited members in Noble Hospital. When Bonnye becomes aware of a hospitalized congregant she texts the Rabbis and identifies a lay person to make a visit. When our Rabbis become aware of a hospitalized congregant they either text Bonnye the name and location of the patient or ask Lisa to communicate this information to Bonnye. Committee members should contact Bonnye and the Bnai Torah office if they become aware of a hospitalized congregant. Bonnye continues to arrange follow up phone calls to recently hospitalized members. She communicates the names of discharged congregants to Marion, who sends them a lovely note. Great job Bonnye and Marion!

Gerry and Brenda Canter deliver yahrtzeit candles to deceased members' family whether they are members or not of Bnai Torah, prior to the first yahrtzeit. Gerry also makes deliveries to new members.

Rick reported on welcoming families with new babies.

Sydney Torrey reported on publicity for the Committee and with Lisa's assistance the report is put on the website.

Elana Olkin made a beautiful Channukah card and Hillel Kofsky has designed a Peseach card which Sydney will mail out to congregants on the list. Sydney checks the list and Lisa sends the list to Gerry Canter for his input and the final list is sent to Rick Granowitz.

The member of the month is responsible for orchestrating shiva related activities. In the past, Lisa Gariepy did an outstanding job preparing a Friday night meal for the family in mourning. Since Lisa has been ill and unable to continue this effort, the member of the month will make sure that someone is available to cook a meal, such as Karen Shore, or Rebbitzen Chani Yaffe. If either Karen or Channi are available to prepare the meal, the member of the month can offer the mourners a Friday night meal during shiva for up to ten persons. Together with the meal, a bottle of wine and challah is also delivered. If no one is available to prepare the meal, or the mourners decline the meal, then the mourners are offered a donation to a charity of their choice, or the planting of a tree in Israel. Similarly, the family of a new born is also offered the Friday night meal.

The next meeting of the Chesed Committee is scheduled for June 23, 2019.