

LIVING LEARNING LEADING JUDAISM

NEWSLETTER

Programming and Volunteering

"WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED SO MUCH TOGETHER."

When my family and I joined Temple Emanuel of South Hills early last year, I was so impressed by the inclusivity, warmth, and care for the community that this congregation exudes. That's why I was so excited and thankful to be able to join the staff here last August as your Program and Volunteer Coordinator.

I'm so proud of all we have been able to accomplish in the last 5 months to both strengthen our community and aid the community around us!

Our programming after the High Holidays included so many opportunities for social action, beginning with an event writing postcards to newly registered voters reminding them to vote in the election. Thanks to our connections to The Mt. Lebanon Nature Conservancy, we hosted an event to clean Bird Park of invasive plants and included the community in our efforts. We cleaned litter from half of our portion of Gilkeson Rd and we are already planning to take care of the other half this April. Knitters and crocheters in our Women+ of Temple Emanuel group provided Jerebears to the children in Jeremiah's Place, an emergency daycare for families in need. This past fall, we even gathered a group together to visit the Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh and cook a meal for all of their residents.

Before Thanksgiving, we hosted a huge Thanksgiving food drive event, not only collecting hundreds of canned and boxed foods for Thanksgiving, but also welcoming the community in with VolunTOTs and Uptown Speech Therapy to sort all of the donations. Assembled boxes of donations were then delivered to community outreach agencies and distributed to people in need. Thanks to that food drive and sorting event, we were able to put together 120 boxes of complete Thanksgiving meal kits. In other words, 120 families in need were able to enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner thanks to this community and our community partners, VolunTOTs and Uptown Speech Therapy.

In addition to the aforementioned social action programs, we as a congregation contributed to ongoing efforts to help those in need that have been in place here at Temple Emanuel for many years. These efforts include our annual High Holiday food drive for SHIM, which our fourth grade class in Torah Center and their families delivered. The amount of donations we gathered was so large that SHIM couldn't even fit it on their scale to weigh. Another ongoing program to help those in need is Team Sandwich, a congregant-led initiative that just celebrated its second anniversary with a delivery of over 500 sandwiches and 8 pizzas to local shelters and food distribution sites, an amount that is consistent each month due to our amazing volunteers.

In December, we continued our social action efforts with Torah Center's Mitzvah Mall, a pre-holidays Toy Drive to benefit Play It Forward organized by one of our B'Nei Mitzvah students, and a coat drive to benefit SHIM.



Team Sandwich celebrates 2 years of donations

In addition to all of our social action programming, we hosted many social programs for community building, adult education opportunities, religious services, and family Shabbats that have helped us connect with each other as a community, which includes so many new members since 2021!

In three months, we accomplished so much together, and I couldn't be prouder of how this congregation shows up for each other and for the community that surrounds us.

We aren't slowing down this January, February, or March either! These months are full of opportunities for social action. Children will plant native flowers to be planted on our property to support pollinators. Congregants will continue to make sandwiches for Team Sandwich and bring in donations for SHIM to the boxes in our stairwell. Torah Center students and Madrichim will continue to give back to their community through volunteer efforts, tzedakah, and Mishloach Manot. We will return to the Women's Center and Shelter of Pittsburgh to make a week's worth of meals for their residents. We will raise money for the shelter through a Mahj for a Cause event. Many more opportunities are filling the calendar for April, May, and June, too.

I'm so excited to be able to share everything this community is up to with you through this newsletter. Look for it each week, with much less text and more dates and times so you can join us in our work of *Tikkun Olam* and *Kehillah*.

Thank you for being part of this community with us. If you'd like to learn more about getting involved before next week's newsletter, please check out our recent Winter Bulletin!

Sarah Mangan