

**The Jewish Center
Annual Report 2008-2009**

General Accomplishments

- Ratified a Long Term Plan
- Established Listservs for more congregational communications
- Ratified establishment of a Vice President of Programming
- Revised the email bulletin; master on-line calendar; website; and established several listserves
- Revised way we give out high holiday honors to reach out to broader cross section of members
- Established a Financial Task Force
- Reinvigorated the baby boomer group leading to successful Shabbat dinner event
- Devised a new job description for an administrator
- Re-hanging of sanctuary wall sculpture at TJC entrance

**The Jewish Center
Annual Report 2008-2009**

Adult Education

- Initiation of Sundays at TJC consisting of regular programming on Sunday afternoons and/or evenings
- Creation of first Jewish Center film series, where we showed 5 films and for 4 of 5 films had speakers -- the filmmakers or experts in the subject of the film. Most were the premiere showing in NJ.
- TJC Reads book on Levittown with an a Shabbat discussion and author event.
- A series of classes on short stories with notable outside speakers. Classes by Rabbi Feldman, Rabbi Tucker, Rabbi Silverman, Rabbi Freedman, and Cantor Simon throughout the year
- Hebrew classes offered by Edna Noiman and Larry Epstein
- Two Shabbatons
- Israel Advocacy Event with the leaders of two organizations that advocate for Israel
- Meah Classes
- Several individual speakers both from and outside the congregation.

**The Jewish Center
Annual Report 2008-2009**

Arts and Cultural Affairs

- Judy Stein exhibit in acrylics and other media depict Israeli scenes
- Rabbi Joshua Plaut's photo exhibit of Jewish women from all over the world, especially central Asia
- Nature photo exhibit of a former Jewish Center student, Spencer Costanzo.
- Exploring new insurance policies for our art exhibits
- Shared the sponsorship of the Jewish Center's membership in the Jewish Book Network with several other committees.

**The Jewish Center
Annual Report 2008-2009**

Finance

- Proactive identification of risks in the budget, and helping to initiate action plans to deal with the shortfalls.
- Early in the year, worked with Finance Department to identify a number of billing errors and initiated action to correct not only the specific errors, but also to improve the overall billing system.
- Put in place a "purchase order system" to better track purchases and make sure that they are reviewed before a purchase is committed to.
- Worked with the Executive Committee to develop a balanced budget for 2009/2010.
- Created a more transparent and pro-active financial reporting culture this year, which will carry forward for the long term.

**The Jewish Center
Annual Report 2008-2009**

Fundraising

- Annual Fund - \$289,000 pledged
- Annual Fund – 343 Donors – 48% of Congregation including 100% participation by the Board of Directors
- Annual Fund – New Manhigim Level established at \$7,200

**The Jewish Center
Annual Report 2008-2009**

House

- Replaced main building carpet – lobby, hallway, social hall and stairs up/down off main hallway. This resulted in cosmetic improvements and elimination of tripping hazards due to worn/torn seams.
- Installed fire alarm horn/strobe light in Youth Lounge so alarms can now be clearly heard in that space Designed and contracted for integrated main lobby literature rack and LCD display for daily calendar/upcoming events listings
- Designed and contracted for combined main lobby rabbis/cantors/congregants of the year board to complement design of Annual Fund board.
- Installed a new Kiddush table, which was made from the Princeton Mother Elm, which survived Dutch Elm Disease & stood for 278 years on Witherspoon Street. The design speaks to the resistance of the Jewish people.
- Designed and contracted for renovations of Gift Shop including new display windows and increased/improved shelf space to create more attractive and more functional selling environment.
- Pending permit approvals, converted main sanctuary Ner Tamid to solar powered LED with battery backup to eliminate use of electricity.
- Consulted with congregant who wanted to donate portable ramps to make reading table on bimah wheelchair-accessible
- Replaced old, inefficient point-of-use hot water heaters in selected bathrooms with newer electric tank storage model in one location and with tankless point-of-use heaters in two others, resulting in significant reduction in electricity use.
- Mounted bronze “Etz Chaim” sculptures formerly in Sanctuary on brick wall by main entrance.
- Made extensive use of volunteers and custodial staff to do wide variety of routine maintenance and repairs instead of using outside contractors.
- Completed the finishing touches on Jessica’s Garden & had a dedication ceremony August 15th.
- Replacing conventional lights with energy efficient compact fluorescent lights on an “as needed” basis.
- Set up the spraying of trees surrounding Jessica’s Garden to keep the stone clean & bees away.
- Assisted Men’s Club in erecting & dismantling the Sukkah

**The Jewish Center
Annual Report 2008-2009**

Human Resources

- Review of the benefits package being offered, improvements, and significant reduction of renewal costs
- Successful hires of Kim Nikerson and Judy Gottfried

**The Jewish Center
Annual Report 2008-2009**

Israeli Affairs

- Kevin Gilday "The Greatest Enemy of Israel, Misinformation in the Media" on November 30
- Kotel prayers
 - Mini-kotel made of Jerusalem stone for our Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration
 - Box in lobby for prayers to be written and taken to the real Kotel
- Emergency Update, The Gaza Conflict Special Update on the Situation in Israel Sunday, January 18 Featuring Joseph Puder Columnist and Middle East Analyst
- Dinner and the Bat Sheva dance program at McCarter Theater
- Cory Booker, Mayor of Newark New Jersey - The Importance of a strong US/Israel relationship
- Neta Bahcall lecture - "The Sun, the Stars and Israel "
- Yom HaShoah programming: The Kasztner Train discussion with movie clips; and an eyewitness account of a daring rescue by Emanuel (Manny) Mandel, a volunteer for the Speaker's Bureau of the U.S. Holocaust
- Yom Hazikaron - Israel Memorial Day ceremony for Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terror with the LaShir Choir
- Yom Ha'atzmaut - Israel Independence Day celebration with Israeli dancing, live entertainment, vendors, and Israeli food

**The Jewish Center
Annual Report 2008-2009**

Jewish Center Women

- Personally greeted and hand delivered Challah to all new Jewish Center congregants at Rosh Hashanah.
- Co-sponsored and co-hosted Friday night Dinner in the Sukkah with the Membership Committee.
- Sponsored a Kiddish on Rosh Hashanah and break fast on Yom Kippur.
- Delivered flowers to all staff and clergy for High Holidays.
- Sponsored Service of Light Ceremony to represent the Jewish Center as part of the Clergy Association of Princeton for Womanspace campaign.
- Led JCW Shabbat service honoring ninety women of JCW and sponsored congregational luncheon following the service.
- Organized and hosted five Sunday Morning Limud Studies led by Rabbi Feldman, Rabbi Tucker, Rabbi Julie Roth and Leora Batnitzky, Ph.D, Professor of Religion at Princeton University respectively with a new and stimulating topic at each session.
- Ran Mishloach Manot Fundraiser. Contributed \$5000 in previously raised funds toward the Gift Shop Renovation and \$5400 to TJC Annual Appeal.
- On Purim, JCW supplied Rabbi Silverman, Chaplain for the Princeton Medical Center, with 25 Mishloach Manot baskets for distribution to Jewish patients. The baskets were accompanied by a card that read "Happy Purim from the Jewish Center of Princeton."
- First ever TJC women's retreat at the Pearlstone Retreat Center in Reistertown, Maryland, attended by nearly 60 women
- Introduced Stitch & Kvetch, a monthly social gathering to share knitting, cross stitch and various needlework skills.
- Offered several social events:
 - Wine tasting party for couples at the Hopewell Valley Vineyards.
 - Teamed with the Sustainability Committee to present "An Evening of Classy Kosher Cooking" with Personal Chef Sandy Stollar.
 - Two Kosher Cooking demonstrations at the home of Gayle Schindler
 - Game Night - a free event at TJC where members could meet and have fun.
- Spring Trip: Traveled to NYC to have lunch and attend a performance of Irena's Vow.

The Jewish Center Annual Report 2008-2009

- Spring Membership Luncheon: Featuring Jean Chatzsky, an award-winning journalist, best-selling author and personal finance expert.

**The Jewish Center
Annual Report 2008-2009**

Membership

- Continued TJC presence in key area print media advertising the Open House last Fall
- Sponsored a very successful Open House resulting in signing up around 4-5 new families Enhanced TJC presentation to prospective members by providing jazzed up Membership kits in eco-friendly bags with chocolates at the Open House
- Welcomed over 25 new families
- Assisted JCW in High Holiday Challah deliveries to new members
- Assisted the Executive Committee on talking with interfaith families about the change in dues structure
- Co-sponsored a New Member Shabbat dinner in the Sukkah
- Sponsored a Havdallah and Dessert event at Rabbi Tucker's home for new members and EC members
- Provided Mishaloch Manot baskets for newest members at Purim

**The Jewish Center
Annual Report 2008-2009**

Men's Club

- Organized and Led the ushering during High Holidays
- Ran BBQ for Start of School Year Block Party
- Built the Jewish Center Sukkah and for first time ever helped many members put up their own Sukkah's at home!
- Held a fun Super Bowl Party, even if the Giants weren't in it.
- Ran BBQ at the Purim Festival
- Led the Men's Club Shabbat
- Organized a Texas Hold 'Em Tournament

**The Jewish Center
Annual Report 2008-2009**

Religious Affairs

- Planned for and administered High Holidays honors for both Main and Riverside services;
- We are seeing increased observance of many holidays as a result of fine programming during, for example, Purim, Yom Ha'atzmaut, Shavuot;
- Promoted the provision of congregational luncheons on Shabbat;
- Young family Shabbat a particular success;
- Started up a new interfaith / keruv work group;
- Launched a service to assist those looking for a seat at a seder;
- Provided series of newsletter articles on religious affairs-related topics;
- Sought and found congregants to act as shamshim and gabbaim;
- Recruited congregants to prepare/deliver *D'verei Torah* during summer months;
- Developed the first four in a series of guides to TJC practices on Jewish holidays. Published in Newsletter and on website;
- Worked with clergy and others to assist with planning of Egger Shabbaton and Adult Education offerings;
- Maintained the web versions of B'nai Mitzvah, Nursery School, and Religious School handbooks.
- Better guidance for shamashim, gabbaim, and ushers to improve the smooth running of services.

**The Jewish Center
Annual Report 2008-2009**

School

- The Nursery School has decided upon and will implement several changes in the registration process for next year. Nursery school registration will start in January rather than in November and the process will be streamlined so that the nursery school has a firmer idea of enrollment figures and can plan accordingly. The tuition structure also will be greatly simplified – there will be a single price for each nursery school class and congregants will receive a 10% discount.
- The Nursery School held its first open house this spring to encourage new families to come and learn about our outstanding school.
- The Nursery School applied for a grant for a permanent shade structure for the playground. We should receive a response by the summer.
- In addition to the Nursery School Gift Boutique, the Nursery School Parent Association brought a comedy show titled Mom's the Word to the Jewish Center and raised over \$1,500. This money will be used to enhance the Nursery School's programming.
- Both Rabbi Feldman and Rabbi Tucker spent time in each nursery school classroom reading to the classes, talking about holidays and fielding questions from our youngest students.
- The Religious School, in coordination with the Sustainability Committee, implemented a Go Green initiative which involves programming during school hours on topics such as our carbon footprints as well as monthly activities. Families also received Dream Green magnets which contain Torah quotes and suggested family activities. The Religious School is also trying to Go Green by reducing the amount of paper printed and mailed.
- The Religious School won the Community Service Award from Jewish Family and Children's Service. This is the first time that a synagogue has been given this award.
- The Religious School organized a Moms for Sderot campaign, in conjunction with Jewish National Fund, which raised over \$8,000 to build a safe indoor play space for children in Sderot.
- The Religious School spearheaded the 613 Mitzvot food drive for Jewish Family and Children's Service and collected over 800 food items.
- The Religious School was part of the JNF Ambassadors program and worked closely with JNF on programming and curriculum. There were only 12 schools nationwide chosen for the program.

The Jewish Center Annual Report 2008-2009

- In the coming year, each zayin student in the Religious School will prepare a photographic family history and will have the option to display it at their bar/bat mitzvah.
- Students from the Siyuum Tichon class visited Biloxi to help rebuild for the third year.
- The Religious School renamed all of its Shabbat morning children's services using Hebrew names -- Shabbat la'taf (formerly tot Shabbat), Shabbat la'tzeerim (formerly mini-minyan), shabbat la'yeladim (formerly junior congregation), Shabbat la'mishpacha (formerly family services). In addition, the starting times of the services have been adjusted so that all children's services end at noon and families are invited to stay for the end of services in the main sanctuary and for the kiddush luncheon.
- The Religious School and Nursery School partnered with Youth and Family Programs to present a Gala Chanukah concert featuring Rick Recht.

**The Jewish Center
Annual Report 2008-2009**

Social Concerns

- Formulation of the Sustainability Sub-Committee with co-chairs Matt and Suki Wasserman.
- Several lectures on sustainability and global warming.
- Synagogue wide changes that are both economical and eco-friendly including recycling, reusable materials, soy candles, school programs, and more
- Food Drives
- Blood Drive
- Contributions to local housing and food initiatives
- Preparation and delivery of soup to the senior meals on wheels through JFCS

**The Jewish Center
Annual Report 2008-2009**

Youth

- Hired two new, fantastic advisors:
 - Chaverim (3-4 graders) - Ronit Johnson
 - Kadima (5-7 graders) - Elizabeth Skale
- The opening BBQ was a huge success. Hundreds of people came out for music, bbq, Rita's Water Ice, a moon bounce, and more.
- The weekly Kids' Kafe was a much-loved staple on Sunday mornings at TJC.
- This year's Purim festivities were out of this world. The Philadelphia Zoo and the Mummies helped showed us a great time at Megillah reading, and the Purim carnival and after-Megillah party were both well-attended and tons of fun. Many adults and student volunteers helped out as did many sponsors, both corporate and individual.
- 30 students had a great time and put on a great show for this year's youth theater production.
- More USYers than ever attended regional events, and our chapter hosted its first ever convention in the fall.