

**Jewish Federation of Rockland County
Board of Directors
February 8, 2016**

1. Attendance

Andrea Weinberger, President: Presiding

Roberta Aaronson

Carol Blau

Steve Cohn

Scott Coopersmith

Paula Mack Drill

Lisa Green

Steve Gold

Robert Grosser

Bob Israel

Max Kaufman

Jeremy Ruberg

Michael Satran

Carol Schiller

Steve Schulman

Bob Silverman

Nat Wasserstein

Charna Weissman

Bonnie Werk

Gary Siepser, CEO

Beth Weiss-Dunn, Campaign Associate

Liraz Levi, Shaliach

2. D'var Torah

Max Kaufman gave the D'var Torah which explained the role of the *shulhan* (table) in the tabernacle as a metaphor for love through consistent small acts of kindness.

3. Annual Campaign

Beth Weiss-Dunn gave the campaign report noting these highlights for Jan 31, 2016:

- The Annual Unrestricted Campaign has reached \$376,473
- The 2016 the campaign is \$28,000 (8.1%) or 117 pledges (14.4%) ahead of where it was on Jan 31, 2015
- This is a big change from November, when the campaign was \$137,000 behind
- This is broken down as follows:
 - one more pledge than last year in the \$5,000 and up category, and 16 pledges outstanding for the campaign year.
 - 4 less pledges than last year in the \$4,999 to \$1,000 category, and 35 pledges outstanding
 - 120 more pledges than last year in the \$999 and under category, and 604 pledges outstanding

- Super Sunday was a challenge because of the blizzard the day before. The snow fall that lasted into the early morning hours, which caused only half of the volunteers to be able to participate
- Despite that, the campaign had almost \$2k more in pledges (3.9% increase) with 103 less pledges (33% decrease). This means that the people that pledged raised their pledges.

4. Shaliach's Activity

Liraz Levi reviewed the schedule of upcoming programs and events, including:

- Yom Hazikaron May 10th, 7:00PM at the Jewish Community Campus
- Yom Ha'atzmaot May 12th, 5:00PM to 8:00PM at the Jewish Community Campus
- Celebrate Israel Parade June 5th with buses departing about 8:00AM

5. Finance Report

Michael Satran reported that Federation is slightly behind in postings and expects to have the situation rectified by the next meeting.

6. Community Relations Update

Andrea Weinberger thanked Steve Gold for his leadership in arranging meetings with two school superintendents; along with collaborative partners, in recent weeks. Steve gave the board a brief summary of the use of anti-Semitic and historically inaccurate materials produced by study.com in a number of class rooms during December and January. In the two school districts involved (Clarkstown and West Nyack), the superintendents recognized the inappropriate and offensive nature of the materials and rapidly took remedial steps. They also will look to Jewish Federation and the Holocaust Museum as resources for curriculum. Steve recognized the important role in the meetings played by a number of community rabbis including Jeremy Ruberg, Brian Leiken and Ariel Russo as well as many others who communicated directly with the schools and advised parents from their congregations on appropriate interventions. Steve noted that every congregation forwarded Federation's communications to their members.

Gary Siepser shared the extraordinarily high level of social media interest and support for Federation's handling of events.

In discussion these points were raised:

- Federation's measured and thoughtful handling of the incident earned the appreciation and respect of school board members and community members.
- This demonstrated Federation's unique role at its best as a convener and leader.
- Federation should use these events to better connect the community and build bridges between organizations and individual leaders.
- It was noted that while some politicians and organizations, particularly from outside of Rockland, used the events to grand stand and cast aspersions, Federation went about the work of getting something accomplished.
- Steve Cohn thanked Andrea, Steve and Gary for the role they played.

7. CEO's Report

Gary Siepser reported on his observations and thoughts after a month on the job. He invited board members to help him in correcting and sharpening his understanding of the community. Gary reported that he had spent time with every agency director, the Board of Rabbis, a few congregations and attended a large community event as well as met with many board members and donors. Gary noted that there are some very strong Jewish organizations/congregations

and others that have a ways to go. His 2 key observations are that organizations are not working together in a way that adds strength to the community but rather builds silos and second that there is a lack of clarity about Federation's role in the community. Gary suggested that the interpretation of Federation's role focus on 3 points:

- Helps all Jews in need through grants to the extent resources allow; which are both innovative and compelling
- Advocates and educates on behalf of Israel ; including fighting anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism and BDS activity
- Convenes the local Jewish community and provides leadership to take collective action

Gary noted that the "purpose" of Federation is not fund raising but rather securing financial resources is the means by which it is possible to accomplish the 3 points.

Gary suggested that the challenge for Federation at this time is to "weave" the community together which will involve engaging leadership from both agencies and congregations to build a shared vision and action plan for the next 3 to 10 years. He suggested that weaving begins with leadership getting to know each other. He reported that he is gathering the agency CEO's every Friday afternoon for a l'chiam and believes that similar regular meetings of lay leaders must follow. Gary also suggested that a mission of lay and professional leaders from both agencies and congregations would energize and focus this effort. In discussion, these points were raised:

- Many thought Gary's observations were on target
- An "elevator speech" card should be created of the 3 Federation roles and distributed.
- The weaving conversation needs to be expanded and other brought in
- Taking leadership to Israel is a compelling idea
- Israel relations and advocacy is something that can help unify the community and overcome local challenges
- The community needs a clear voice that will advance the agenda of those things which bring us together and reflect shared values. In further discussion about the role of Federation, Rabbi Ruberg suggested this language *Federation is a strong voice to unify our shared social, cultural and religious values.*

8. Good & Welfare

These items were reported:

- Mazel Tov to Rabbi Drill on the engagement of her daughter, and son's entry into the Golani Brigade of the IDF.
- Mazel Tov to Rob Grosser on the marriage of his daughter.
- Mazel Tov to Rabbi Ruberg on the birth of a nephew.
- JCC's Founders Dinner is Sunday March 13th.
- Women's Philanthropy event May 4th with Orly Wahba and the *Key to Kindness*

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.