



2023 WRJ Pacific District Kavod Award Submissions
For more information on these programs, please email kavod.wrjpd@gmail.com

2023 Winners

2023 Kavod Award Winner for Programs for our Sisterhoods:

WRJ/Beth Israel Sisterhood, Portland Oregon Wine, Women and Words: A Special Membership Event

The Beth Israel Sisterhood membership committee planned a special membership event to reach out to women who were affiliated with Congregation Beth Israel but were not members of their sisterhood. Their goal was to engage these women and increase their numbers with new members. The challenges were many, but the rewards were even greater. They were still in pandemic mode, so they needed to be conscious of health and safety issues. One of the board members had attended a WRJ workshop on small group programming which proved to be inspiring. Previous membership programs were usually large events with many attendees. Food and speakers were always a part of the events. They could no longer follow the old script. And they were all tired of virtual meetings and events. The need to be with other women and to make personal connections was very strong. However, they needed to keep the gatherings small for safety.

It was decided to spread the gatherings out to several different sites; locations were selected for their geographical diversity. Sisterhood members made High Holiday phone calls to the women of Congregation Beth Israel. Those women who were not members of sisterhood were invited to the upcoming membership event. All women received an email invitation so each could RSVP with her preferred location in or around Portland. An afternoon of casual fun was held at four homes of individual board members. The small group settings of 4 to 6 women (masked and socially distanced), provided a chance to get to truly know each other, find areas of common interest, and make new friendships. After an ice breaker, groups could discuss an article from "Lilith Magazine" or just share ideas. The Board members answered questions about the sisterhood and talked with the guests. It helped the board members learn what their sisterhood might do that would meet the needs of this wonderful community of women. The Board created a calendar of activities for the following year with many of the ideas generated. Many of the attendees not only joined their sisterhood but have become very active. The intimacy of the program made it a success.

2023 Kavod Award Winner for Programs for our Synagogues:

Beth Am Women, Los Altos Hills, CA Shirat Ha-Yam of Odessa, Ukraine Mother's Day Photo Exhibit: Women of the Bible through a Creative Lens 2023 Silver Or Ami Award

In partnership with their sister congregation Shirat Ha-Yam of Odessa, Ukraine, this program was originally designed as a collaborative text study and online photography exhibit inspired by biblical

women. When the war in Ukraine caused their partners to flee or take up arms, Beth Am Women pivoted and made the project a tribute to their sisters in Odessa, incorporating photographs of their congregation. Although the initial goal was to develop relationships between the Beth Am Women and the Women of Shirat Ha-Yam through text study and art, their revised goal sought to raise awareness and support for their sister Congregation in Odessa.

Throughout the fall and winter of 2021-22, members of Beth Am Women and Shirat Ha-Yam met over Zoom to get to know one another and plan the project. They had a Zoom information night to explain the project and requirement to the congregation. They posted a video of the information night online, so those who were unable to attend could view it. Sadly, the war in Ukraine intervened, bringing an end to the collaboration. Members of Shirat Ha-Yam were scattered throughout Ukraine and neighboring countries. Beth Am Women decided to move forward with the project as a tribute to the bravery of their partners in Odessa. They created a separate video tribute and show of support for the members of Shirat Ha-Yam, which was posted on the Beth Am website, and was also distributed to the Odessa congregation via social media postings. Photographs captured of the Shirat Ha-Yam community were salvaged and incorporated in the exhibit, along with photographs from the members of the Beth Am community.

2023 Kavod Award: Programs for our Communities

Temple Beth Sholom, Orange County, CA Period Products Kits for Unhoused Girls

Temple Beth Sholom Sisterhood recognized the additional challenges faced by unhoused women and girls in our community as they struggle to obtain the period products necessary for a healthy and dignified life. Sisterhood Invited Temple Beth Sholom's Social Action Committee and the Temple-wide community to join their project by donating period products for the kits. March is Women's History Month, so it was a perfect time to show their support and solidarity with unhoused girls and women in their community. Sisterhood members sent emails, spoke at sisterhood meetings, and posted on social media encouraging members of the Temple to collect period products. Bins were set up at the Synagogue to collect the items and Friendship Cards were made to attach to the kits. Kits were assembled. A presentation was made discussing the challenges of unhoused women and teens in Santa Ana. Orange County Rescue Mission in Tustin were the recipients of the period products.

2023 Submissions

Sisterhood of Temple Beth El, University Place, WA AID Northwest Lunch Bag Program

The Sisterhood wanted to support this Lunch Bag Program for those people released from the NW Detention Center in Tacoma, WA. Sisterhood members and congregants donated money or food each month to buy food, fill the lunch bags and deliver the bags to the NW Detention Center where participants enjoyed the lunches while waiting for their hearings.

Peninsula Temple Shalom, Burlingame, CA Multigenerational Chai Tea 2022

After shutting down for two years, Shalom Women wanted to open this year with an in-person, COVID safe gathering of multigenerational families and friends. We decided to plan the event in our parking lot in order to accommodate 100 people outside in order to make everyone feel comfortable and safe. Preschool had their canopies still standing from COVID, so it was an excellent location. We had more than 110 attendees with many 3 generations but this year we even had husbands, sons, and grandsons. The afternoon was relaxing, and everyone enjoyed traditional tea sandwiches, tea, small desserts, and salads. Each table had two different teas and we used our assorted creamers and sugars and tea pots that we have accumulated over the years that made the table more festive. Cantor Yonah Kliger, who just joined our congregation as of July, entertained us with a variety of traditional Jewish and some Broadway tunes. It was an opportunity for many of our families to meet the cantor and learn about his cantorial journey. We placed trinket boxes on each place setting as favors donated by one of members. This event continues to be one of our favorite programs to plan each year which is inclusive and enjoyed by all.

This year I especially invited women who have not been involved in our sisterhood and who had younger families hoping that they will get involved in the future. Everyone on the committee felt it was a positive experience and appreciated the ability to plan via zoom.

Temple Emanuel, Tempe AZ Show your Love for Sisterhood

Our Sisterhood has usually held one fundraiser per year to raise money that we gift back to the Temple to be used for camp scholarships and budgetary needs. We have consistently held one fundraiser each year, usually a "Family BINGO Night" and small auction. The pandemic curtailed that option for us. We have found this fundraiser much more valuable! It doesn't take as much preparation, set up, and woman-power to run it, and we have made two or three times as much as the average BINGO Night! The congregation was excited for the new fundraising idea, and it has been successful for us for two years now. We ask our Sisterhood members to donate new or unused gift cards valued at \$20-\$25 each. We have combined smaller gift cards. We get the collection started at our Sisterhood Hanukkah Party in December before our fundraiser kicks off and we offer an incentive. Those that donated a gift card at the party received a bag of homemade treats AND one free ticket in the raffle. We have collected more than 20 gift cards just at the Hanukkah Party! We continue to ask for donations in January, too. The number of gift cards collected drives the number of prize winners. The first year, we had 2 or 3 winners each night. We were able to give away 4 or 5 gift cards each night of the raffle last year. This fundraiser works well for us! ▪ It takes some preparation and collection time for gift cards, but it is easier to carry out than our past fundraiser's. ▪ Our members are very generous! We had hoped for enough gift cards to raffle two per night, and we were able to award double of that! Make sure to write the value on each gift card. ▪ When the orders come in, we kept track in two ways, to cross-check everything. First, we hand-wrote on paper the name, date, and number of tickets purchased. Then we typed all of the information in a spreadsheet with their address, too. It made it easy to mail the gift cards when all the information was in a spreadsheet. ▪ We bought tickets at Dollar Tree. In preparation, we ripped them into two sizes ... single tickets and strips of 5. That made it easy to write names on 1 + 1 for 2, 5 + 1 for 6, and 5 + 5 for 10. Stay on top of writing names on tickets! We did it every night when tickets were purchased. ▪ The community enjoys this fundraiser! People were eager and excited to see their names on the Facebook page. We got many comments during the fundraiser.

WRJ Beth Israel Sisterhood, Portland, OR Well-Being Challah Workshop

On November 3, 2022, Beth Israel Sisterhood presented an interactive event, "Well-Being Challah Workshop." This workshop was open to the community. The purpose was to present challah baking as an opportunity to be mindful and achieve a degree of wellness. Our guest speaker was Beth Ricanati, MD. Her book, "Braided: A Journey of a Thousand Challahs", asks us to learn from our history and try to find, despite all that noise and all our daily demands, that special moment once a week, to bake a challah and just be and accept what is, rather than worry about what might or should be.

The program was held in our social hall at Congregation Beth Israel. Tables were set up around the room with all of the ingredients needed to make challah. Participants were asked to bring their own bowls. At the end of the workshop, each left with her own bowl full of dough to let rise and bake, a copy of the book "Braided", and a wooden spoon.

We began with an ice breaker. Then workshop organizer Michelle-Shari Kruss presented a d'var that tied the week's parashah with the theme of our guest speaker's book. A large video screen was set up in the front of the room. Beth Ricanati, MD joined the group live via internet.

Dr. Ricanati's professional work is focused on wellness. She asks: What if you could bake bread once a week, every week? What if the smell of fresh baking bread could turn your house into a home? And what if the act of making the bread—mixing and kneading, watching and waiting—could heal your heartache and your emptiness, your sense of being overwhelmed? She maintains that it can. This is the surprise that physician-mother Beth Ricanati learned when she started baking challah almost a decade ago: that simply stopping and baking bread was the best medicine she could prescribe for women in a fast-paced world. "Braided" chronicles a journey of a thousand challahs and one woman's quest for wellness and peace.

Dr. Ricanati said to start by saying: "I am making this dough in the merit of (maybe a friend who is sick that week, or someone you are happy for, sad for, mad at, etc.). Participants then prepared challah dough, using the ingredients provided and under Dr. Ricanati's direction. She spoke of her mindful journey towards wellness through the act of making challah. After baking the challahs at home, participants were instructed to place baked challah on platter and cover it; to enjoy the moment of accomplishment and ritual, and of having taken the time to do something good both for themselves and for others.

Our mindful challah-baking event was well attended and included many new faces. For those unable to attend who would like to find out more about the connection between mindfulness and making challah, our sisterhood gift shop had signed copies of Beth Ricanati's book, "Braided: A Journey of a Thousand Challahs" for purchase.

Following the workshop, participants received an email thanking them for attending, inviting them to become involved with our sisterhood, and recipes for challah, gluten free challah, and links to videos demonstrating braiding techniques. Let's heed Beth's words, and intentionally go slow to move forward.

**Temple Emanu-El of San Jose, CA
Japan Town Tour**

Walking tour of Japantown, San Jose, which has significance to the South Bay. We learned about the history of the Japanese coming here for employment, how they were rounded up for the internment camps, and how today they are a thriving community. The Japanese came here to escape economic conditions in Japan, and the agriculture industry drew them here in the late 1880's. It was a safe place for the Japanese people because they were being hired over other ethnic groups and they could be together. They were being targeted by other ethnic groups. Also, Norman Mineta had a home in Japantown and he was a former mayor of San Jose, U.S. Secretary of Transportation under Bill Clinton and the San Jose airport is named for him. Temple Emanu-El Sisterhood contacted Japantown for a tour and the Japanese Community provided a docent. The participants had lunch together in a nearby restaurant.

**Sisterhood of Temple B'nai Torah, Bellevue, WA
"Relating" to Our Planet: Environmental Justice, Shmita, and Making Positive Change
2023 Gold Or Ami Award**

The original goal of our program was to bring cutting edge environmental professionals to our Sisterhood and Temple community for the Tu Bishvat holiday. Over time it changed to bring the information to a national audience through the Big Bold Jewish Climate Festival and by partnering with WRJ.

We had three main panelists: Associate Rabbi Molly Weisel, national legal expert Marianne Engelman-Lado, and award-winning writer and author Julia L.F. Goldstein. In addition, Julia Weinstein from the WRJ Spoke. Marsha Shyer acted as organizer and moderator.

Target audience: Originally, it was planned as a Zoom webinar for our Sisterhood members which we opened to our congregation and WRJ Pacific District members. When we joined the Climate Festival and partnered with WRJ, it was publicized more widely through Yammer to all of WRJ in the Online Programming group.

Goal and how it was achieved: The goal was to bring cutting edge environmental professionals to our community for the Tu Bishvat holiday. It was achieved through engaging 3 dynamic speakers. The panel was very successful. The panelists discussed issues such as environmental and climate justice, sustainability and what we can do as individuals to help. A resource list was shared with participants. In addition to the live program, a recording was shared on Festival Website, FB, WRJ, Yammer and to congregation.

Rabbi Molly Weisel, associate rabbi at Temple B'nai Torah, was one of the panelists and also the staff partner for the temple Green Team which co-sponsored this program. The Big Bold Jewish Climate Festival admitted us to the festival as a workshop presenter and promoted our program. WRJ also partnered with us, and Julia Weinstein opened with a welcome and short intro about WRJs activism. This was not a district project but was publicized on the District Yammer page and open to all.

Sisterhood of Temple B'nai Torah, Bellevue, WA
Hannukah Essentials

2023 Or Ami Honorable Mention

During times of COVID our Judaica Shop was on hiatus, so this was a way to get items to our congregants and sell some of our Shop inventory. We offered Essential Hanukkah items in a packaged kit for pre-order and pickup along with a few other items and a Mystery gift. This program was held in December 2020 before any vaccines were available, so most everyone was still in lockdown. It also gave members a chance to briefly connect through their car windows.

We had dual goals of offering items to our members for celebrating Hanukkah and to have a brief opportunity to connect.

We used some items that were already in the Shop and purchased others that we needed to fill out what was needed (such as wrapping paper). Remember that many people in these days were reluctant to go to a store at all. We decided the prices and items to offer and created an order form for those who chose to purchase. The Mystery Gift was coordinated by the Lifelong Learning committee and was purchased outside of the TBT Shop and sold for \$15. In addition, several menorahs were photographed and could be added on to the order.

Kits included essential items, such as candles, gift wrap, gift tags, gelt, dreidels, etc., along with a sheet of the blessings, 2 sufganiyot recipes and a card with the dreidel game instructions. We chose to set the price at \$20 which was basically break-even. This was not meant to raise money, but any proceeds were donated to the Campership fund as part of our larger Sisterhood donation to Camperships.

The people who came to TBT to pick up kits seemed to really appreciate their brief connection with our member's, and we should look to do more events that provide safe, in-person connections.

Peninsula Temple Sholom, Burlingame, CA
Ted Talk on Friendship

ZOOM program about female friendships in sisterhood. We watched the Ted Talk with Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin about female friendship. Bring your own wine, of course. We created this program during COVID because we felt women were craving connection and wanted to discuss feelings and meaningful issues. We then had a discussion over with questions like what do you look for in a friendship and how do you maintain a friendship over the years. The conversation was lively with some takeaways like women's friendships were spiritual and face to face versus men's were side to side, women friendships were a source of power, and how our friendships evolved and change over the years. The program was attended by over 40 women, and we had a wonderful discussion.

Peninsula Temple Sholom-Sholom Women, Burlingame, CA
Rosh Hodesh Group

Our Rosh Hodesh group provided a wonderful and rare opportunity for women to connect Jewishly in an historical yet contemporary manner. Throughout the year we joined together, led by our clergy, Rabbi Alban, and Cantor Zhar. What made our Rosh Hodesh unique is that each month there was a presentation by one of our members, related to the theme of the Hebrew month. Some of the programs we had were, original poetry reading, mindful meditations, craft projects, fashion workshop, Tu B'shvat and Tu B'av celebrations. These monthly celebrations were well attended and were enjoyed by all!