



# Congregation Etz Chaim

*Community, Spirituality, and You*

Andrea J. Cosnowsky, Senior Rabbi  
Frederick Kamil, Associate Rabbi  
Carol Meyer, Executive Director  
Marla Friedman, Religious School Principal  
Steven M. Bob, Rabbi Emeritus  
Anne Stein, Educator Emerita  
Rachel Wood, Inclusion Specialist

## YOUTH GROUP PROGRAMS

Congregation Etz Chaim recognizes that our youth is our future. They will be the ones leading us into the next few decades. We work hard to ensure all children, infants through high school, are able to build relationships, make connections, and then stay connected.

All of our youth programs and events are planned with this in mind. The result is that our young people continue their involvement past their bar/bat mitzvah, past confirmation, into their college years and beyond.

Etz Chaim has four peer youth groups:

- Senior Youth Group - for children in grades 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Junior Youth Group - for children in grades 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>
- Kadimah Youth Group - for children in grades 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup>
- B'Yachad Youth Group - for infants through 1<sup>st</sup> grade

Some of the other activities we offer and encourage for our youth, besides involvement in the youth groups, includes singing in the Junior Choir, attending summer camp at Olin-Sang-Ruby-Union Institute (OSRUI in Wisconsin), for older children there is also Israel trips, a Social Action RAC (Religious Action Center) trip to Washington D.C.

Our young people also take part in congregational family programs, mitzvah projects, and social action programs.

Some of the programs/events that our youth have taken part in are:

Our **B'Yachad group** is set up to be a whole family experience. The events take place both in Etz Chaim (celebrating holidays/Shabbat) as well as out in the community (children's museum, the zoo, special parks, Barnes & Noble). There are always lots of crafts and songs as they learn and grow together.

Our **Kadimah group** does not only come together for social activities such as their annual Havdalah dance and pizza party, roller skating fun, or scavenger hunts at the mall; but also for Tikkun Olam: helping to Repair the World (social action) projects such as gathering in the kitchen on a Sunday afternoon, making special desserts for our PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter) guests that spend the night with us.

Our **Junior Youth group** comes together to participate in a variety of recreational, educational, and social action events, both in and out of the congregation. We create an environment for them to be able to strengthen their ties with their synagogue peers and the Jewish community. Some of the congregational events they participate in are: a kick-off pizza party to elect officers and play a variety of games including Gaga; helping to lead a Shabbat service each year, running all the games that are part of our yearly Purim carnival. In addition, they are part of the Chicago area NFTY-CAR 678 (National Federation of Temple Youth – Chicago Area Region / 6,7 8 graders), which encourages youth in these grades to come together from all across the Chicago area and



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participate in social events such as: Games & Gelt: a Hanukkah Party; the Junior Youth Group Kallah held up at OSRUI in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin and ending their year with a spring bash.

## **Officers 2019-2020**

6th Grade President- Evan Fine

7th Grade President- Jack Birnbaum

8th Grade President- Kai Werlinsky

Vice Presidents – Micah Lewitan and Joey Uditsky

JYG Secretary- Scott Niederman

NFTY/JYG Liaison- Kara Notarus

Photographers – Charlotte Kersch and John Thomas Thompson

Secretaries of Kef:

Mimi Simon

Hailey McQueary

Hunter Ray

Chloe Rashid

Our **Senior Youth group** is set up to meet the challenging pressures that conflict with leading a student-run organization like SYG and the demands that being in high school puts on them. At Etz Chaim, we have created opportunities for socializing as well as a few social action projects throughout the year. Similarly, to our junior group, SYG is connecting to NFTY-CAR 9-12, which brings together Reform Jewish teens from the suburbs and surrounding cities of Chicago, as well as northwestern Indiana.

Some of the activities that SYG has taken part of organizing our annual High Holiday Food Drive, delivering food to the needy as part of Maot Chitim, participating in trips to Israel, going to Second City, going to Great America, and so much more.

## **Officers 2019-2020**

Presidents: Nathan Frewen and Sam Birnbaum

VP Social Action & Ritual and Religious: Naomi Friedman

Treasurers: Zach Teagan and Adam Freeman

Membership/Communications: Makayla Ray and Kate Rosenblum