



Rabbis Bess Wohlner and Jeremy Simons | Rabbi Emeritus Greg Wolfe

Elisabeth Dubin, President | Pia Spector, Executive Director

Ardyth Sokoler, Director of Education and Youth | Caren Wilkerson, Director of Gan Haverim Preschool

June 30, 2022 — 1 Tamuz 5782

Dear Haverim,

I hope you're all staying cool out there this summer! Please give this letter a few moments of your undivided attention. Before kvelling a bit about our shared accomplishments, I'm cutting to the chase to ask you to think carefully about the amount of your pledge this year.

For most of our history, we asked our Partners to pledge 2% of their household annual income to CBH. This construct had pros and cons, but it had become increasingly inequitable (since 2% of a \$50k salary is harder to part with than 2% of a \$500k one). Following the lead of many URJ congregations, we transitioned to a voluntary pledge model and began asking Partners to *themselves* determine the amount of a meaningful and just pledge. Each year, to help you make this choice, we calculate the average amount needed per Partner to support the budget.

Based on this year's calculations, pledges will need to average **\$2,400** per household in addition to a **\$275** contribution to the *L'Dor v'Dor* fund towards the maintenance of our campus facilities. For the first time, we will assess a **\$54** security fee to pay for service on our panic buttons and cameras and to moderately increase security guard presence at events.

Last year, I asked you to consider why your family might choose to give more than the sustaining "average," reminding us all that when those of greater means provide for the needs of those less financially secure, it is an expression of our most basic shared value.

This year, I want to make my appeal by offering you some hard truths... The fact is, on average, CBH doesn't get what we ask for in pledges. In other words—this year, to balance the budget, we need to bring in \$2,400 multiplied by the number of Partner households. This number isn't padded or inflated. Last year, after providing you the average pledge needed to sustain the congregation, **we received commitments for only 82% of that amount.**

I admit that when my children (now 9, 12 and 15) were even younger, I regarded the pledge form as a suggestion and pledged at the low end of my family's ability to do so. Why? Because I hadn't any exposure to the annual budget. I had no idea how much it cost just to keep the lights on and to support the payroll, and frankly I assumed that older, more established

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congregants would pick up the tab at a higher rate than I was “supposed to” at my age. While I don’t blame my former self for these assumptions, I do know much more now than I did then about CBH finances.

When we fall short, we make up the difference using gala fundraising and by pinching pennies by cutting spending where needed. I would love to be able to use fundraising efforts for capital improvements and special programming, rather than on operational expenses! But we can’t do that if we continue to use fundraising to pay for our day-to-day operations.

So, how do I ask for more without overstepping? I want to uphold our long tradition of egalitarianism that keeps us from unduly exalting the largest donors, yet I’m deeply grateful for those who regularly lift more than their share because we depend on you. I also respect that some of us already give the amount their family’s budget allows, and that is as it should be.

This year, I aim my words at those of you who fall into a category I once occupied myself —those who could extend a bit farther after understanding the need.

Despite our current sound financial balance sheet, the future is volatile. Global supply chain interruptions have increased the cost of all maintenance and repairs on campus. The cost of labor is high and rising, as is the regional cost of living; to keep up, we must offer a competitive living wage for our clergy, staff, and teachers. The contractors we rely on (janitorial, landscaping, etc.) have raised rates due to the same pressures. We are warned utility costs will continue to rise; in the current economic climate, the only certainty about the cost of doing business is its uncertainty.

So please, think about your own role in keeping CBH both solvent and vibrant. My own family makes its choices knowing that, while the greater world convulses around us, an investment in CBH provides our greatest return-on-investment. Your choice to give at one of these suggested levels* allows us to continue to be the regional center of Jewish communal life.

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| Sustainer | \$2,400 |
| Builder | \$3,000 |
| Guardian | \$3,600 |
| Pillar | \$5,000+ |

Thank you so very much for your ongoing support of Congregation Bet Haverim,



Elisabeth Dubin, CBH President

The Year in Review: (Partial) List of Our Accomplishments!

- Our rabbinic search paid off: we hired the amazing team of Rabbi Jeremy Simons and Rabbi Bess Wohlner! *Kol hakavod* to all of us—this was truly a community effort we can now celebrate with gratitude and pride!
- The fundraising team led a major effort catalyzed by Rabbi Wolfe's retirement, raising a quarter million dollars and enhancing our sanctuary for years to come—this success highlights both the community's love for Greg and their belief in the future of CBH.
- This year, the Board of Directors established several new committees:
 - a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEI) to shift our culture from one of "welcoming" to one of "belonging"
 - a Countering Antisemitism Committee (CAS) to educate ourselves and our larger community about current realities
 - a Sustainability Task Force to green our operations and infrastructure
- Our Security Committee, in collaboration with our Executive Director, Pia Spector:
 - Commissioned a comprehensive vulnerability assessment to augment our understanding of best practices for our physical safety and security
 - Implemented new protocols and changes to our doors, locks, and exterior lighting
 - Surveyed you on your own thoughts and sensibilities about security on campus and are currently putting together a report on those findings for the Partnership
 - Applied for another large security grant from the Department of Homeland Security
- CBH maintained its stellar Religious School programming under Director Ardyth Sokoler, with a record number of B'Nai Mitzvot so far this year!
- Gan Haverim Preschool has been infused with new leadership under Director Caren Wilkerson
- We continue to fulfill our core mission to be a home to all Jews in our area through varied ritual offerings, communal events, and educational programs (both in person and through a hybrid online format whenever it's feasible)

Thank You to Volunteers and New Partners Welcome!

We thank our dedicated volunteers even more effusively than usual this year! Your energy and work have been the greatest assets of our congregation since its inception. For those looking for a way to plug in, please contact Partnership Committee Chair Raychel Kubby Adler (raykub@gmail.com) to discover a role that both interests you and helps us all.

* For those who take required minimum distributions from retirement accounts, consider making a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) directly to CBH to cover your pledge while reducing your tax liability (as always, check with your financial advisor for advice). Also, all should be assured that the amount of your contribution is confidential and will not be shared with anyone but designated office staff—even Board Members don't review these numbers.