



THE RABBI TEACHES Dear Future Self...

By Rabbi Jennifer Frenkel

I've actually been thinking about how to write this for a month now, ever since receiving the writing prompt for this edition of Connections: What do I foresee in the coming year? What would I like to tell my future self?

It is an ironic theme, as we spend so much time in this Hebrew month looking backwards, to the year that was, to the kind of people we were, to the experiences we had, to the moments we regret, to the times we wish could have lasted a bit longer.

It's a difficult theme too, because, if I'm being honest, what weighs on me most heavily at this season, as we prepare ourselves for the High Holy Days, is the realization that I really have no idea what will happen in this coming year. I don't know what unexpected blessings and moments of joy will come my way. I don't know what fears will keep me up at night. I don't know the people I will meet who will leave their inscription in the next chapter in the book of my life. I don't know whose presence will be missing when we arrive at this time next year.

So, I guess I would hope my future self would remember a few important lessons:

1. Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end. My son starts kindergarten this fall. That little boy, who was born in the middle of the Covid pandemic into a world that felt new for both of us, is now about to take the next step in his life—a new school, new friends, and a world of learning ahead of him. I am left to wonder where the time has gone.

As a parent, I have learned to savor each stage, and I've also had to learn the importance of letting go of each version of my child and of our life, as we move from one stage to the next. I've learned to treasure beginnings and to recognize endings as sacred connecting links to what comes next, as life continues to unfold. Just like on Simchat Torah, when we unroll the last column of the Torah scroll and there seems to be no more to read, we roll right back to the beginning. The story, our story, continues.

2. Do the work that makes your *(continued; see "Rabbi Teaches" on page 4)*

The Clergy, Leadership & Staff of Kol Ami wish you and your family a healthy, joyful & peaceful New Year. We look forward to sharing the beauty of the season with you.

SELICHOT Saturday, September 5

7:00 pm Study, Service & Dessert*

EREV ROSH HASHANAH Friday, September 11

7:30 pm Erev Rosh Hashanah Service

ROSH HASHANAH Day 1 Saturday, September 12

9:00 am Mishpacha (Family) Service

11:00 am Congregational Service

2:00 pm Tot Service*

3:15 pm Tashlich Service at Lions Lake Park

ROSH HASHANAH Day 2 Sunday, September 13

10:00 am Congregational Service*

EREV YOM KIPPUR/KOL NIDRE Sunday, September 20

7:30 pm Kol Nidre Service

YOM KIPPUR Monday, September 21

9:00 am Mishpacha (Family) Service

11:00 am Congregational Service

2:00 pm Adult Study Session

2:30 pm Tot Service*

4:00 pm Afternoon Service

4:30 pm Gathering for Recent Mourners

4:45 pm Yizkor*

5:30 pm N'eelah

EREV SUKKOT Friday, September 25

6:00 pm Erev Sukkot Spaghetti Dinner & Mishpacha Service*

EREV SIMCHAT TORAH /SH'MINI ATZERET

Friday, October 2

7:00 pm Erev Simchat Torah & Consecration Service*

Saturday, October 3

10:00 am Simchat Torah/Yizkor Service*

**Open to the community.*

All High Holy Day services in our sanctuary will be livestreamed for our members:
www.kolaminj.org/hhd2026





FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

**Steven Weichert,
President**

As I write this at age 59, working full-time and serving as the President of our congregation, I find myself reflecting on legacy, not in terms of recognition, but in a deeper sense.

What kind of congregation will we leave behind, and how will I continue to be part of its future.

Serving as President has been one of the greatest joys and privileges of my life. It has also given me something I never expected, a front row seat to the life of our congregational family. During this time, I have had the joy of watching my son marry and will be seeing my daughter take her vows later next year. I had the pleasure of seeing so many congregational simchas; namings, conversions, graduations, B'nai Mitzvah, and more. I have also stood with members in their most difficult moments of illness, loss, and grief.

Through the highs and the lows, one truth has remained constant: we show up for one another. We celebrate together, we mourn together, and we lift each other up. That is what makes our congregation a true family!

The relationships I have formed with congregants, clergy, office professionals, teachers, volunteers, and lay leaders have changed me. I came into this role hoping to make a difference. I did not fully appreciate how much this position would also change me.

Of course, there are things I wish I had done better. Balancing the Presidency with professional and family life has often felt impossible. There were never enough hours to give each the attention it deserved. If my future self reads this, I hope he remembers, not with regret, but as motivation to give more, when time permits.

As I look toward my 60's, with retirement on the horizon, I do not see my involvement decreasing, I see it growing. When I eventually step down as President, I hope to continue serving alongside current and future leaders. I hope to have more time to volunteer, mentor, participate, worship, and to be present. Leadership is not defined by a title, and service does not end with a term.

So, future me, I hope you are still involved. I hope you remain humble. I hope you support those who follow you. I hope you continue to attend services, find meaningful Jewish life and remain deeply connected to this community. Most of all, I hope Kol Ami continues to thrive. I hope it remains strong and financially stable, with full classrooms and members who call it "home."

This is the legacy I hope for, not specific achievements, but having helped, in some way, to move this congregation forward and leave it stronger for those who come after us.

To my future self, never forget what an extraordinary privilege it was to have this front-row seat.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jennifer Stofman



Future me, if you are reading this many High Holy Day seasons from now, I hope you have taken a moment to pause, smile, and appreciate the journey that brought you here. I also hope you have finally figured out where you put your keys, though, if you are like current me, they are in your handbag.

For over half a century, Judaism has been the thread woven through every chapter of my life. I have never known a time when I was not part of a Jewish community, and I have been blessed to spend my professional life working in one as well. Helping build sacred communities where people celebrate life's greatest joys, find comfort during its deepest sorrows, and discover the power of belonging has been more than a career—it has been a calling.

As I write today, I feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude. I am proud of the communities I have helped strengthen, the friendships that have become family, and the clergy, professionals, and lay leaders who have inspired me along the way. Synagogues are built by people who believe in something bigger than themselves and who choose, every day, to create a community filled with connection, compassion, and purpose. I hope you have never stopped believing that.

I hope you have continued learning, because curiosity keeps us young. I hope you have continued mentoring others, because leadership is not about the title you hold—it is about the lives you impact. I hope you have made time for adventures with family, travel, old friends, and yes, even a few evenings without committee meetings.

I also hope you have embraced one of life's greatest blessings: being a grandparent. I imagine you reading bedtime stories, baking brownies, celebrating Jewish holidays, and slipping your adorable grandchildren gum when their parents are not looking. Most importantly, I hope you have passed along the values, traditions, and love of Judaism that have shaped your own life.

There will always be communities to strengthen, young leaders to encourage, and opportunities to remind people that Jewish life is joyful, meaningful, and worth investing in. Whether you are still working or enjoying a new chapter, I hope you have found ways to continue making a difference. I hope that you are still caring, growing, listening, and connected to something greater. After all, that is what Jewish community has given me for almost 60 years, and I can only hope I have given a little of that back.

So, future me, keep showing up. Keep striving to be better than you were the year before. Keep leading with authenticity, generosity, and humor. Keep laughing, caring deeply, and finding joy in ordinary moments. If you have finally mastered the art of remembering where you left your keys, I would appreciate a few pointers.

— Your Younger Self

With gratitude for yesterday and excitement for tomorrow. Wishing you a *shanah tovah u'metukah*.



FROM THE EDITOR

Marlene Dworkin

I often wish that I had a crystal ball so I would know what the future is bringing, and when certain events were happening. They say to predict the future you must look at the past. Keep what you liked and change or modify aspects that didn't work for you. There's a sign in front of Cherry Hill East High School that reads "Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow." If you are lucky enough to drive down Kresson

Road when there is no construction, you might have seen this sign recently, or you might remember it since it has not changed in several years! The message, while simple, is true. The past is done, you can't change it, but you can learn from your mistakes and grow from them. The future isn't promised; it is not a sure thing. All we have is today. Let's make the most of it.

I have always been a list maker. I like to write things down so I can cross them off when they are completed. Even when I write this article, I jot down notes all over my house for a few weeks. I also use the note section of my phone when I am not home. Often in the pockets of my clothes I find little scraps of paper with notes (and shopping lists). Eventually, I put everything together to make a cohesive essay.

I always say that it is good to have a goal. With that in mind, here is a letter to myself, setting some intentions for this upcoming year:

Dear Future Me — Let's have a year that, upon looking back, is one to be proud of! First of all, I would like to manage every *Connections* deadline without the frazzled eleventh-hour scramble!

I plan on attending both Boomers Plus AND Empty Nesters events because I can relate to both groups. The Arts & Culture Committee is expanding this year to include the non-ritual aspects of Music for the congregation, so I am looking forward to being involved in the planning of several new events. As usual, I happily anticipate singing and enjoying (new) music with Koleinu (our choir).

I hope to speak to different people than I usually do on Friday nights at our Onegs!

I will continue to have balance in my life by reading and enjoying lots of books. I want to keep on finding the humor in all situations. I want to spend less time face-timing with my grandchildren and more time in person with them. I aim to lose those last 10 pounds.

I hope you and your loved ones have a happy and healthy new year!

MAIMONIDES CHAVURAH

Led by Rabbi Richard Address and Adam Skrzynski, MD, MPH

Wednesday, October 14, 7:00 pm

Kol Ami is launching Maimonides Chavurah, a new learning community for physicians, nurses, and chaplains interested in exploring the intersection of medicine, ethics, science, Jewish tradition, and the search for meaning. Through thoughtful discussion of real clinical and pastoral cases, participants will examine ethical questions, perspectives from Jewish texts and tradition, and the ways medicine and spirituality can enrich us in caring for ourselves and others.

Open to all Kol Ami physicians, nurses, and chaplains. For more information or to join the group, please contact Adam Skrzynski (adam.king.skrzynski@gmail.com) or Rabbi Richard Address (rfaddress@gmail.com).



CONGREGATION

KOL AMI
קול עמי

LIFE CYCLE

Mazal Tov...

Joanne Cohen

on the birth of her granddaughter,
Lyla Eagle Cohen

Matthew Grazioli

on his conversion

Kathy & Aaron Hauptman

on the naming of their daughter,
Sadie Hauptman

Michele & Hal Hirsch

on the birth of their granddaughter,
Olivia Riley Brotz

**Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar
& Jason Quint**

on the birth of their son,
Asher Samuel Quint

Randi & Alan Salkowitz

on the birth of their granddaughter,
Madelyn Teresa Rosado

We Mourn...

Mort Augenstein

uncle of Neal (Karen) Slutsky

Robert E. Fidoten

father of Eric (Sharyl) Fidoten

Arlene Hamburger

stepmother of Marjorie Hamburger
grandmother of Alexandra (Phil)
Langan

Nancy Paul

niece of Janet Arnold

Anthony Puelo

father of Laura (Jason) Hoffman and
Sheri (Rand) Greenblatt

Beverly Solomon

mother of Franklin Solomon

*Life Cycle lists are inclusive from the last issue of
Connections through August 12, 2026.*

THE RABBI TEACHES (continued from page 1)

future self proud, not your past self comfortable. Each day I hope my future self is stronger, braver, kinder, healthier and happier than the day before. I hope I can continue to stretch, dream, try new things, seek out new experiences, and continue to learn and grow. Rabbi Nachman of Breslov once said, “If you are not going to be any better tomorrow than you were today, then what need have you for tomorrow?” I want to remember the importance of investing in myself, in my relationships, in my community, in the world. I want to be proud of the work I put in to make the future better.

3. The journey is more important than the destination. I hope I can make a concerted effort to slow down and not rush through this next year—appreciating each day for what it is. I hope my future self continues to get better at focusing attention on the little moments that, in the end, really matter most—appreciating the small blessings in life, noticing the daily miracles I encounter, pausing long enough to see the beauty in the world, making time to create joyful memories, living with purpose and intentionality.

Torah scholar Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsh wrote that when he stood before God at the end of his life, answering divine questions about how he chose to live, he believed God would ask him something along the lines of: “Samson, what did you think of My Alps?” Rabbi Hirsch understood that appreciating the majesty of creation and the delights of the world was not a distraction from spiritual life, but rather an essential part of it.

4. We always have the ability to choose our attitude in any given set of circumstances. It is a lesson that comes from psychologist, author, and Holocaust survivor, Viktor Frankl. Living in a world of uncertainty, a world in which we are often faced with situations we’d rather not have to face, times when we are often tempted to ask “Why me?” Frankl suggests another question, “What now?” Even if I cannot change what is occurring, my response to the situation is within my ability to control. When I am struggling to “make sense” of what happens sometimes, perhaps the better approach is to try to “find meaning” in it instead.

Like the Biblical Jacob, wrestling in the night with the unnamed adversary, wrenching his hip in the process and refusing to let the adversary go until he blessed Jacob, so too do I hope my future self will wrestle meaning out of moments that are painful and challenging and don’t always “make sense.”

May I remember that I am not alone, even when the path feels lonely at times. May I also recognize the power of faith—in God who, while perhaps not being able to make the path ahead smooth, painless, or easy, is an endless source of strength, compassion, grace, courage, calm, and peace, when my own supplies feel depleted.

May I meet the moments of this next year with the knowledge that each one of them holds a spark of holiness just waiting to be realized and actualized, the knowledge that, often, even just a small act or a simple word on my part can restore someone else’s belief in the goodness in our world and the sacred potential of each moment.

Shanah Tovah, future self. May this be a good year.

Flu Vaccine Clinic at Kol Ami


in partnership with **pharmacy**

Sunday, October 25
Thursday, October 29
10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Schedule your visit in advance
www.kolaminj.org

You **MUST** bring health insurance
card to your appointment.



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Upcoming Events

To register, or for more information
on these and other programs, visit:
www.kolaminj.org/events

AUGUST

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, August 21, 7:00 pm

Torah Study

Saturdays, August 22 & 29,
9:00 am (Hybrid)

Spice Up Your Judaism

Saturday, August 22, 10:15 am (Hybrid)

A Look at the Major Themes of the High Holy Days Through the Lens of the Book of Jonah

Led by Rabbi Jennifer Frenkel

Wednesday, August 26, 10:30 am (Hybrid)

Blankets of Hope

Wednesday, August 26, 1:00 pm

Morning Mingle

Friday, August 28, 8:30-10:30 am

Devotion by the Ocean

Friday, August 28, 5:30 pm (Off-site:
on the beach behind the Ventnor library)
Shabbat service 'down the shore' with
Shirat Hayam Conservative and Reform
congregation of Ventnor, NJ.

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, August 28, 7:00 pm

We celebrate August birthdays.

High Holy Day Food Drive

Collection: August 30 – September 23

Cooking Brunch at Gift of Life Howie's House

Sunday, August 30, 8:30 am

SEPTEMBER

Men's Club Lunches

Wednesdays, September 2 & 16, 12:30 pm
(Off-site; contact allanpep@yahoo.com)

Small Groups: Fun with Food

Wednesday, September 2, 5:00 pm

Small Groups: CKA Yoga

Wednesday, September 2, 7:00 pm

First Thursdays:

Shared Journeys, Shared Sounds: Musical Bridges Between Jewish and Black Traditions

Presented by Ira S. Miller, Ph.D.

Thursday, September 3, 7:30 pm

First Friday

Friday, September 4, 6:15 pm

Enjoy pre-service refreshments.

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, September 4, 7:00 pm

We celebrate September anniversaries.

Torah Study

Saturday, September 5 (Zoom), 19 & 26,
(Hybrid) 9:00 am No session Sept. 12

Selichot Study, Service & Dessert

Saturday, September 5, 7:00 pm

Kulanu: OUT in the Park

Sunday, September 6, 12:00 pm

Labor Day (*Offices/Schools closed*)

Monday, September 7

First Tuesday of Religious School

Tuesday, September 8

Hebrew School 4:15-6:15 pm

Hebrew High School 6:30-8:30 pm

Erev Rosh Hashanah

Friday, September 11 (*Offices close early.*)

7:30 pm Erev Rosh Hashanah Service

Rosh Hashanah

Day 1: Saturday, September 12

Day 2: Sunday, September 13

See full HHD schedule on page 1.

The Aleph-Bet of Life: How the Hebrew Alphabet can provide key values for creating a philosophy and foundation of living

Led by Rabbi Richard Address

Three Wednesdays,

September 16, 23 & 30, 10:30 am (Hybrid)

Board of Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, September 16, 7:30 pm

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, September 18, 7:00 pm

Spice Up Your Judaism

Saturday, September 19, 10:15 am (Hybrid)

Erev Yom Kippur

Sunday, September 20 (*Offices close early.*)

7:30 pm Kol Nidre Service

Yom Kippur

Monday, September 21

See full HHD schedule on page 1.

GenXtra Courtyard Sing-Along

Wednesday, September 23, 7:00 pm

Erev Sukkot Spaghetti Dinner & Sukkot Mishpacha-Style Service

Friday, September 25

6:00 pm Dinner in the Sukkah

7:00 pm Service

First Day of Sukkot

Saturday, September 26

Adult Education Sukkot Kiddush Brunch

Saturday, September 26, 10:15 am

First Sunday of Religious School

Sunday, September 27, 9:15-11:30 am

Men's Club Scotch & Steak in the Sukkah

Sunday, September 27, 5:00 pm

Boomers Plus Lunch in the Sukkah

Wednesday, September 30, 12:00 pm

Kulanu Sips & Snacks in the Sukkah

Wednesday, September 30, 6:00 pm

OCTOBER

First Thursdays:

Jewish Labor Ethics in Industrial Agriculture

Led by Rabbi Melissa Hoffman

Thursday, October 1, 7:30 pm (Zoom)

Upcoming Events

To register, or for more information
on these and other programs, visit:
www.kolaminj.org/events

Erev Simchat Torah Service & Kindergarten Consecration

Friday, October 2, 7:00 pm

Our Kindergarteners are called to the study of Torah. We dance with the Torahs to live music from our Klezmer band.

Simchat Torah

Saturday, October 3

10:00 am Service with Yizkor

Men's Club Brunch

Sunday, October 4, 9:30 am

Club Noar Event Grades 3-5

Sunday, October 4, 11:30 am

Men's Club Lunches

Wednesdays, October 7 & 21, 12:30 pm

(Off-site; contact allanpep@yahoo.com)

Second Friday

Friday, October 9, 6:15 pm

Enjoy pre-service refreshments.

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, October 9, 7:00 pm

We celebrate October anniversaries.

Torah Study

Saturdays, October 10, 17 & 24

9:00 am (Hybrid)

Spice Up Your Judaism

Saturdays, October 10, 17 & 24

10:15 am (Hybrid)

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, October 10, 10:30 am

Bar Mitzvah of Benjamin McElroy

Shabbat Havdalah Service

Saturday, October 10, 5:45 pm

Bar Mitzvah of Brandon Skolnick

Kol Ami Jamboree

Sunday, October 11, 11:30 am

Parking lot party with inflatable corn maze, candy apple decorating, and more fall fun!

The Rosh Chodesh

Experience: Cheshvan

Monday, October 12, 7:00 pm

New Rituals for New Life Stages

Led by Rabbi Richard Address

Three Wednesdays, October 14, 21 & 28,

10:30 am (Hybrid)

Maimonides Chavurah

Wednesday, October 14, 7:00 pm

Small Groups: CKA Yoga

Wednesday, October 14, 7:00 pm

Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, October 16, 7:00 pm

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, October 17, 10:30 am

B'nai Mitzvah of Olivia Rozencaiga and Corey Zimmerman

Boomers Plus and

Adult Education Movie Night at Kol Ami

Led by Rabbi Richard Address

Saturday, October 17, 7:00 pm

Watch *Keeping the Faith* at home before attending this evening discussion.

Sisterhood Membership Brunch

Sunday, October 18, 11:30 am

GenXtra Drum Circle

Sunday, October 18, 7:00 pm

Jewish LGBTQ+ Film Screening

Monday, October 19, 6:45 pm

Shabbat Evening Service: Shabbat Unplugged

Friday, October 23, 7:00 pm

We celebrate October birthdays. Babysitting will be available.

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, October 24, 10:30 am

Bar Mitzvah of Owen Milman

Shabbat Havdalah Service

Saturday, October 24, 5:45 pm

Bar Mitzvah of Jordan Weinstein

Club K'ton Event Grades K-2

Sunday, October 25, 11:30 am

Boomers Plus Book Club: Little Bird

Sunday, October 25, 7:00 pm (Zoom)

CVS Flu Vaccine Clinic

Sunday, October 25 &

Thursday, October 29

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Adult Shabbaton:

Flourishing in Difficult Times

Friday, October 30

6:15 pm Retreat attendee Pre-neg

7:00 pm Retreat attendee Shabbat Service

followed by congregational Oneg

Saturday, October 31

9:00 am – 4:30 pm Morning study, lunch, afternoon sessions, songs, and havdalah

Shabbat Mishpacha Service: Grade 1 Shabbat

Friday, October 30, 7:00 pm

We celebrate our first grade students.

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, October 31, 10:30 am

Bat Mitzvah of Eva Marinoff



EXCITING EVENTS TO LOOK FOR THIS YEAR

Murder Mystery Fundraiser – January 23

Artist-in-Residence Weekend – February 5-7

Congregational Purim Celebration – March 22

Watch Connections & your congregational emails for details on these and so many other fabulous Kol Ami happenings.

New Member Shabbat

5:30 pm Tot Shabbat

6:00 pm New Member Pre-neg

7:00 pm Shabbat Unplugged

Nov
13

SAVE THE
DATE!

CONGREGATION
KOL



Many Voices.
One Community.



FLOURISHING IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Congregation Kol Ami Adult Shabbaton

Friday-Saturday, October 30-31



Everyone faces challenges in life and we all have times of great joy and satisfaction. The world often seems a difficult place in which to sustain our familial and friend relationships, as well as surviving an increasingly fraught political and meteorological climate. How can we use the resources we have to improve our own lives, as well as the lives of those dear to us? This is the theme of our fourth Kol Ami Adult Shabbaton, "Flourishing in Difficult Times." This two-day event will begin on Friday night, October 30, in the synagogue and continue the next day at the Aloft Hotel on Route 73 and Fellowship Road.

Friday night's festivities will begin with a lavish Pre-neg in the library starting at 6:15 pm. At 7:00 pm, our emeritus clergy, Rabbi Jerry David and Cantor Anita Hochman, will lead us in a special service in the chapel. This will be reserved for Retreat participants. At the conclusion of our service, we will join those who attended the service in the main sanctuary at a combined Oneg for all.

On Saturday, we move to the Aloft Hotel in Mount Laurel. The morning will begin at 9:00 am with registration, schmoozing and beverages. The first program will be a text study and discussion of our theme with Rabbi Lewis Eron. Following a short break, there will be a panel discussion with four health and social work professionals about how we can help ourselves thrive in the face of physical and mental problems as we age. Our panelists (all from our congregation or the local community) include a social worker, a hospice chaplain, a sleep specialist, and a gerontologist. The panel will be moderated by Rabbi Richard Address and will allow ample time for attendees to ask questions of our panelists.

After a sumptuous lunch, we welcome Stefanie Friedman McCarthy for a half hour of mindful gentle movement. This session will put us in the right frame of mind for the keynote speaker of the day, Reb Simcha Raphael, director of the Da'at Institute and author of many important books on Jewish views of death, bereavement, and the afterlife. He will be leading our group on a journey to help us discover how to find strength and peace in times of decline and loss. After a short break, Cantor Justin Callis will bring the day to a rousing close by sharing his vocal gifts and varied repertoire in a program of Jewish favorites. A special closing activity led by Rabbi Address and Havdalah will conclude our weekend at 4:30 pm.

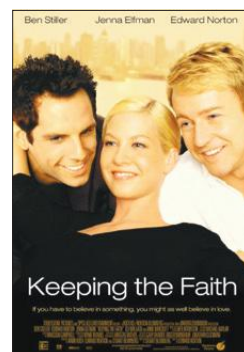
The cost for the weekend will be \$118 per person for congregants. Because there is a limit of 72 in the Aloft venue, please register soon to reserve your spot, and let your synagogue friends know as well. Early bird registration for congregants only ends October 20. After that date, participation is open to congregants and non-congregants, with a final deadline of October 27. The cost for non-congregants is \$154 per person.

As with prior Shabbatons, this promises to be a memorable time of learning and sharing.

Boomers Plus & Adult Education Bring You... MOVIE NIGHT AT KOL AMI

Discussion moderated by Rabbi Richard Address
Saturday, October 17, 7:00 pm

Join your Kol Ami friends for a social evening discussing the movie *Keeping the Faith*. In this romantic comedy, two friends, a priest and a rabbi, fall in love with the same woman they knew in their youth, but the religious position of both men denies them romance.



Watch the movie at home before you come if you've never seen it, or to refresh your memory. It's available for rent (\$3.99) on Prime Video and Apple TV.

Enjoy snacks and desserts along with our conversation led by Rabbi Richard Address.

Registration is required for this in-person only event. \$10/congregant; \$15/non-members.

BOOMERS PLUS SOCIAL GROUP

By Marjie Hamburger, Boomers Plus Chair

No one knows what the future will bring, but Dr. Frank Boehm, who wrote compassionate insights on medicine and life states, "The wisdom that comes with aging is truly a wonderful benefit of growing old... This trip is made sacred and meaningful by the fuel of wisdom."

Welcome to the Boomers Plus Social Group. We are a group mostly comprised of people born between 1946-1964 but all synagogue members are welcome! If you are interested in joining our monthly planning meetings, please email Steve Lubetkin at steve@lubetkincommunications.com, to be added to the Zoom call.

We have a robust calendar of events that include a quarterly book club, lunch events, and meaningful trips. If you have any programming suggestions, please reach out as we are looking for interesting ideas.

Our next activity will be Sukkot Lunch on Wednesday, September 30, at 12:00 pm. More details will follow. Please reach out to Marjie Hamburger at mah40@comcast.net, if you would like to help.

Finally, we will have a book discussion on Sunday, October 25, 7:00 pm on Zoom. We will be discussing *Little Bird* by Barbara Vinjar. In 1910, fearing escalating violence against the Jews in Russia, Feige's father arranges for her to marry a wealthy cousin in New York City. *Little Bird* is the story of a girl who finds the courage to forge her own path to womanhood. Please register online.





Sisterhood members enjoyed warm weather and great times at the annual Summer Social pool party.

SHALOM FROM SISTERHOOD

By Bobbie Israelsky, Sisterhood Co-President

Chag Sameach, Shanah Tovah! Last year was very successful for the vibrant and growing Kol Ami Sisterhood. Our varied and well-planned events were lots of fun and well attended. These events connected us in so many ways. This year, our committees have been working hard to bring the members of Sisterhood new, exciting, and stimulating programs each month. It “takes a village” to achieve success and we are perfect examples of this concept. Please check the synagogue website to register for any or all of our programs, which include our Paid-up Membership Brunch, Snacks in the Sukkah, and our Holiday Bazaar Extravaganza, just to name a few.

The theme for this *Connections* article is “Dear Future Self.” As Co-President of Sisterhood along with Debbie Thomson, we have learned so much about how to run an organization and how to do it together. Life is constantly evolving and so am I. I plan to provide my Future Self with a roadmap that aligns with my core values, my past experiences, and my knowledge. As a leader, I am encouraged to evaluate my strengths and weaknesses, acknowledging the areas where I excel and the aspects that require growth. I will let my Future Self know how grateful and appreciative I am to Debbie, all of our board members, and general members. This is also an opportunity to thank my wonderful and supportive family who stand by me in every way.

Lastly, my Future Self should know that my self-awareness and personal growth have been enhanced on multiple levels. Being an integral part of this amazing community has been one of the happiest times of my life, and I hope that my Future Self will continue to focus on working hard to make our Sisterhood the best group in town. I am excited to see what my Future Self has in store for me next. My Future (and my Present) Self is ever so grateful and blessed.

May the New Year bring you all peace, justice, health, love, and happiness. This is my wish for my Future Self and for yours.

A MESSAGE FROM MEN'S CLUB

By Doug Cohen, Men's Club President

Dear One Year From Now Me — In *The Empire Strikes Back* (yes, nerd alert), Yoda famously said, “Try not. Do. Or do not. There is no try.” Now, Yoda is not a Jewish sage, although I have always associated Yoda with Jewish philosophy, as his teachings all seem to use parables, as well as questions in response to questions. Even the name Yoda is thought to have been derived from the Hebrew word *yodea*, or “one who knows.” (Of course, he does speak “Yodish.”)

Well, Yoda, all I want to tell myself, despite your admonition, is that I tried. I tried to keep the Men's Club active and enjoyable. I tried to continue the traditions of Sunday brunches, Scotch & Steak in the Sukkah, Men's Club Seder, and Men's Club Shabbat, and I tried to resurrect the Men's Club Retreat. Whether I succeeded in any of these endeavors is not for me to say; rather, it is for the many members of our organization who attended the events to decide. From my perspective, whenever we have shared a meal (brunch or dinner or just some pizza), the conversations have been interesting and fun (and often funny), and people generally seem to be having a good time.

Did I do anything, Future Me, to sully the reputation of our group? I hope not. Did I do enough to keep up the interest of our members? I hope so. Was I successful in identifying my successor? I really, really hope so.

Well, Future Me, my expectation is that we are positioned for a continued vibrant and active Men's Club. Will I continue to be involved in the future success of this club? For me, that needs to be so.

EMPTY NESTERS

By Elissa Geron & Donna Snyder, Co-Chairs



The year 5787 will arrive on the evening of September 12. Blink an eye, and we will be greeting each other again at Kol Ami. We will be looking for our place within the Kol Ami family. If you have reached the empty nest stage of life, we welcome you to join our growing community. An empty nest family usually means that the last child has moved out of the house. There's a savings on utilities, the laundry suddenly takes half the time, and you know when you're out of something in the fridge.

In August, we gathered to enjoy a meal at a Korean BBQ. At this moment, plans are under way for an October night of country line dancing, lessons included. In November, we look forward to celebrating Shabbat at the shore. The committee is already planning events to cure any winter blahs, and we look forward to celebrating the vibrancy of spring. We invite you to join the fun, learn together, and maybe even step out of your comfort zone once in a while.

Please contact Donna (donna@snyder@gmail.com) or Elissa (egeron@verizon.net) if you are interested in helping on our organizational committee and/or you want to be added to our list to be contacted for future events.



Keeping Cool... Clergy and congregants enjoyed treats and time together at area coffee and ice cream shops throughout the summer months.



Visiting Day... Kol Ami notables provided a taste of (synagogue) home to our campers at JCC Camps in Medford and at Camp Harlam in the Poconos.



Packing for School... Tikkun Olam volunteers sorted, filled, and prepared backpacks that were collected during our school supply drive for IHOC.



Beach Vibes... Even though extreme heat forced us to set up indoors, our annual summer barbecue "shore" was picture perfect!

Splish Splash... Shabbat songs and water play in the courtyard made for a memorable summer Tot Shabbat with a Splash.



October B'NAI MITZVAH



Benjamin McElroy **October 10**

Son of Stacey & Michael McElroy
Sister: Hayden

My name is Ben McElroy and I'm going into 8th grade at Beck Middle School. I like spending time with my family and friends, playing video games and training for my cross country team. For my Bar Mitzvah

project, I am collecting items for local animal shelters in our area, such as food, treats, toys, cleaning supplies, blankets, etc. Becoming a Bar Mitzvah means that I have become a Jewish adult and I am responsible to help those in need to the best of my abilities.



Brandon Skolnick **October 10**

Son of Jessica & Justin Skolnick
Brothers: Zach & Noah

My name is Brandon Skolnick. My favorite sport is basketball, both playing and watching. I also enjoy riding my scooter and hanging outside with my friends. I go to Voorhees Middle School and I am in

7th grade. For my Bar Mitzvah project, I have worked to help feed people in need. I am excited to become a Bar Mitzvah because it means I am accepting more responsibility as a Jewish adult.



Olivia Rozencwaig **October 17**

Daughter of Heather & Jacob Rozencwaig
Brother: Noah

My name is Olivia Rozencwaig. I love playing sports, watching sports, and collecting sports cards. I'm currently a 7th grader at Voorhees Middle School. My Bat Mitzvah project is collecting sports equipment and

money for Leveling the Playing Field, a non-profit that provides sports equipment to children who may not have the resources otherwise. Playing sports is great for physical health, mental health, and learning to contribute as part of a team. Every child should have the opportunity to play sports. Becoming a Bat Mitzvah is so meaningful to me. It means that I am ready for a lifetime of learning the traditions and customs of my family.



Korey Zimmerman **October 17**

Son of Heather & Judd Zimmerman
Brother: Eli

I am in 7th grade at Voorhees Middle School, where I have played trumpet, clarinet, bass clarinet and baritone. I have also taught myself keyboard, ukulele, and flute to name a few. When I am not practicing, I enjoy

listening to music, photography, playing badminton, and hanging out with friends. For my Bar Mitzvah project, I have raised money for "Sing for Hope." This organization resonates with me because it

provides access to music education for underserved communities. Additionally, I volunteer at Lions Gate assisted living facility in Voorhees. While there, I spend time with the residents playing games, making crafts, baking and delivering packages. Becoming a Bar Mitzvah means connecting with my faith and becoming the next link in the chain of traditions in my family. I am excited and very proud of myself because this is a huge accomplishment.



Owen Milman **October 24**

Son of Lauren Weissmann and Jeff Milman
Stepson of Salwa Sulieman
Siblings: Jackson & Molly

My name is Owen Milman. I am in the 7th grade at William Allen Middle School in Moorestown. I enjoy playing flag football, trombone, and video games. I also have

loved the ocean and sea life, especially sea turtles, for as long as I can remember and love studying marine biology. For my Bar Mitzvah project, I am raising money for the World Wildlife Fund to help save our planet and wild animals. Becoming a Bar Mitzvah is important to me because it more deeply connects me with Jewish traditions and the Jewish community.



Jordan Weinstein **October 24**

Son of Stephanie & Seth Weinstein
Brothers: Noah & Eli

I am a 7th grader at Haddonfield Middle School. I play baseball, swim year round, play the piano, and participate in Scouts. I also enjoy hanging out with my friends. For my Bar Mitzvah project, I am learning to

raise a Seeing Eye puppy. I will spend just over a year caring for and training this puppy. After that, I will send the puppy back to The Seeing Eye for more advanced training so the puppy can eventually become a guide for someone who is blind or visually impaired. Becoming a Bar Mitzvah has taught me to be kind and respectful and to work hard. As a Bar Mitzvah, I will be a Jewish adult who is responsible for my own mitzvot, for helping my community, and for trying to make the world a better place.



Eva Marinoff **October 31**

Daughter of Susan & Justin Marinoff
Brothers: Ethan & Leon

My name is Eva Grace Marinoff. I have two fun dogs that like to cuddle and a whole tank of fish (guppies). I am in 7th grade at Voorhees Middle School where I play viola in the orchestra and stay involved

in art class and yearbook/photography. My Bat Mitzvah project is Project SARAH, an organization through Jewish Family and Children's Service. I have worked very hard to raise money for the organization by selling note cards with my artwork. I have also collected books for the children involved, and participated in educating our community on issues of domestic violence. I am looking forward to becoming a Bat Mitzvah because it gives me a chance to get more confident, responsible, and I'm excited to celebrate this meaningful milestone with my family and friends.



RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Sheri Greenblatt
Director of Education

There is something magical about this time of year. Summer winds down with one last trip to the beach. I dip my toes in the warm ocean beside my husband, surrounded by family and the promise of the High Holy Days. I find myself filled with gratitude and anticipation.

This summer, our Religious School community experienced the full spectrum of life. We celebrated weddings, graduations, and new babies, while also supporting one another through times of loss. Together, our staff gathered for a retreat to reflect on the past year, dream about the future, and imagine new ways to make our school even more meaningful.

Looking back, my heart is full. I watched our students learn, sing, question, and grow in ways that exceeded every expectation. We celebrated B'nai Mitzvah, Confirmation, and the graduation of eight remarkable seniors who are now beginning exciting new chapters as they head off to college.

As I prepare for another year, I have the joy of refreshing our curriculum, rediscovering timeless stories, and working alongside our incredible teachers to create engaging new experiences. Welcoming five outstanding new faculty members has only added to the excitement. They bring fresh energy, creativity, and enthusiasm that our students are sure to love.

What a year awaits! From our opening day celebration to another unforgettable high school trip to New York City, the adventure is just beginning. Our "Classroom Without Walls" program continues to connect students with the wider community through meaningful service and learning experiences. We will gather the teens with their peers in the community, celebrate beloved traditions like Hebrew Olympics, Tu B'Shevat, and Passover Seders, enjoy theater programs, youth activities, and so much more.

This year, we are excited to bring together dedicated volunteers, parents, clergy, and educators who share a passion for Jewish learning in our Education Committee. It truly takes a village to create an exceptional Religious School experience, and this committee will help strengthen our programs, generate new ideas, and ensure our students and families continue to thrive.

Every new school year reminds me why this work matters. A Religious School education is about far more than lessons; it is about building community, nurturing Jewish identity, inspiring curiosity, and empowering young people to make a difference in the world.

I can't wait to see where this year takes us.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Laura Hoffman

Director of Early Childhood Education



Before I can look into the future, you should know a little about who I was way back when.

I was raised by a single mom for some of my earlier years, along with my brother and sister. I believe that it made me into a strong woman able to make important decisions in life. I met the love of my life in high school and never looked back.

After college, I began my life's work as a preschool teacher right here, at what was then Temple Emanuel. I realized that this was the place I needed to be, where I could see my future.

My husband and I welcomed three beautiful daughters into this world, each with her own personality, amazing intelligence, and strength. We cannot express how proud we were when they were little and even more so now.

Future Self, one thing you should always remember is not to "sweat the small stuff" and to enjoy every moment in your life. Things that you don't see as important, or see only as challenging, turn out to be amazing moments and create memories. Those moments can help you decide your path in life.

My preschool path led me to be a strong preschool director, a career of which I am immensely proud. Don't be afraid to take risks in life. I took a risk taking on this role and I'm so glad I did. I worked hard to create a successful program, impacting hundreds of families over the years.

As I look toward retirement—way down the road—I can look back and be proud of the work I've done, the amazing staff I've gathered, and the wonderful family I've built.

So, Future Self, as you look back through my eyes, be proud of all you've accomplished and don't forget to have fun along the way!

CAMP SMILES



Mark your calendars for a fun year!

YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULE

CLUB K'TON-GRADES K-2

- October 25
- December 13
- February 28
- April 4

CLUB NOAR- GRADES 3-5

- October 4
- December 20
- February 28
- April 4

KAFTY JR. GRADES 6-8

- October 3
- November 7
- February 13
- April 3

BRANFMAN CHILDREN’S LIBRARY

By Karen Marinoff

As some readers may know, both Lynn Branfman and I are not only co-chairs of the Branfman Children’s Library, but also members of the Boomers Plus group. The topic for this issue about “your future self” reads like a question on a job interview, so I was a little thrown at first. Upon reflection, I realized that if you have no thoughts about “your future self,” you have most likely just given up on having new life experiences. Furthermore, we all have a responsibility to share our experiences with others, passing our “life lessons” down to the upcoming generations.

Our library volunteers include other senior citizens in addition to Lynn and myself, parents of young children, and some in between, and we have a new mission this year. The Religious School teachers have requested that our Sunday library time include more than reading stories and allowing children to borrow books. We are planning to offer extended follow-up to the books we choose with an activity or sharing items related to the holidays or customs featured in the books. By sharing past experiences that we have had with our own families, we hope to make reading more relevant to the children.

By the end of the year, I expect that my future self will be proud of the activities and stories as well as family “artifacts” we may share. We are off to a flying start, as every slot allotted to reading for pre-K through second grade is already filled with a volunteer eager to pass on the joy of literature and the thoughts that can be awakened in our young Religious School students.

Many thanks to Lynn Branfman and the cadre of volunteers she has assembled already to make our future selves proud of this program that bears her name. Remember, if your children do not have readers in their classes or are not yet in Religious School, the library is always open during Friday night services for you to browse, read or give your children a little break. Take advantage of our collection on many Jewish topics.

A sweet New Year to all from our library committee!



EXPERIMENTS WITH COMPOSTING

In the past year, Kol Ami has diverted over 33 pounds of organic waste from being deposited in our community landfills! The Sustainability Committee has orchestrated this initiative at select synagogue events in the past year. We hope to continue this effort so that Kol Ami can participate in the reduction of methane gas generation that occurs when organic waste is buried in landfills.

At selected Kol Ami events where the Sustainability Committee has been invited, you will see an added compost bin alongside the trash and recycling receptacles in the social hall. A sign will be placed adjacent to the bins so that congregants can separate their organic waste (compostable plates, bowls, hot cups, cutlery and vegetative food scraps) into the designated bins. After the event, a Sustainability Committee volunteer will take the bags of compostables to their home. After 5 months of natural decomposition in their backyard compost pile, the air, water and sunlight break down these compostable materials into a dark, crumbly soil that can be used as fertilizer and mulch to nourish flowers and vegetables.

The Torah teaches us that humankind was created on Earth, in part, to care for and protect the Divine’s creation (Genesis 2:15). The Talmudic concept of *bal tashchit* (do not destroy) was developed by the rabbis as an assertion of this holy covenant with the land. We all can show our commitment to creation and to each other by minimizing our carbon footprint and promoting global well-being for our community and the planet.

If this idea of composting resonates with you or members of your family, you may want to consider a backyard compost pile, or placing vegetable peelings and food scraps into a lidded container to be collected by a local composting service (small monthly charge). You should also know that there are local outlets where you can empty your bin of food scraps into an outside compost dumpster free of charge.

We have the power to take actions, large and small, to create a healthy and just future for ourselves and generations to come. If you have any questions about composting or want to help to expand such efforts, feel free to reach out to the Kol Ami Sustainability Committee, who are always looking for more volunteers to assist their greening efforts at Kol Ami.



WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

In times of happiness or sadness, Congregation Kol Ami offers a variety of ways to share your wishes and thoughts with others. Contributions may be sent to the synagogue office as well as completed online. For a complete list of funds and tzedakah opportunities, visit www.kolaminj.org.

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Kol Ami Jamboree
Fabulous Fall Festival

OCTOBER 11 | 11:30AM – 1:30PM

Inflatable corn maze, train rides, face painting, petting zoo, crafts

Food available for purchase.
\$36/family
RSVP by 10/8/26

**Fun for the whole family!
OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY**



CELEBRATE SUKKOT

Leaves are Falling, Events are Calling

Sept.

25 6:00 pm Spaghetti in the Sukkah Dinner
7:00 pm Erev Sukkot Mishpacha Service

27 5:00 pm Men's Club Scotch & Steak in the Sukkah

28 5:00 pm Sisterhood's Snacks in the Sukkah

30 12:00 pm Boomers Plus Potluck Lunch in the Sukkah
6:00 pm Kulanu Sips & Snacks in the Sukkah

Simchat Torah
Oct.

2 7:00 pm Erev Simchat Torah Service
Kindergarten Consecration

3 10:00 am Simchat Torah Service with Yizkor



**EREV SUKKOT
SPAGHETTI DINNER &
MISHPACHA SERVICE**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25
6:00 PM DINNER 7:00 PM SERVICE

LULAVS! ETROGS! SPAGHETTI?!
ALL AGES ARE WELCOME! \$10/PERSON, \$25/FAMILY
REGISTER BY SEPT. 20: WWW.KOLAMINJ.ORG