

My name is Helene Levine and I am proud to be both a member of Temple Beth Israel and Temple Beth Israel Sisterhood for over 30 years.

Over the years I have had the opportunity to serve in various leadership positions including Congregational President and Co-President of Sisterhood, Marilyn Sklare and I were the first Co-Presidents of Sisterhood.

When thinking about a single thread that connects the many aspects of congregational life that I have experienced over the years that thread would be Relationship Building. Temple Beth Israel has taught me that the key to building Community is Social Interaction, and not just having a social network.

The foundational principles of Judaism are based on Relationships, or the Hebrew notion of brit or covenant. We should not live our lives in isolation, we should share our lives with one another, with family, friends, the Jewish world, the larger world and ultimately with God.

The importance of this is great and I believe that it is an obligation that extends to All of Us.

Temple Beth Israel has taught me that friendships and relationships with people we pray with, those we do social justice with, the people we celebrate life cycle events with, beyond our immediate circle of family and friends, can truly be a connection to a greater sense of Community.

My experiences at Temple Beth Israel have shown me that those who build great relationships do not just think of other people. They act on those thoughts. By taking the time every day to do something nice for someone, not because you are expected to, but simply

because you can. When you do, "Relationships improve" dramatically.

I would like to share a poem on Relationships entitled "It Doesn't Take Much" written by Andi Weiner, Temple Emanu-El, Westfield, New Jersey, taken from Covenant of the Soul, New Prayers, Poems and Meditations from the Women of Reform Judaism.

It doesn't take much

To show someone you care

Just a look or a touch

And they'll know you are there.

Listen to your heart,

For your heart is your voice

That gives you direction,

When given the choice.

And sometimes that choice

May be difficult to make,

But your heart will always guide you-

You can't make a mistake.

We ask Adonai

To gave us the strength

To look for that kindness

In others as well.

For the kindness you find

Will reflect that your heart

Has guided you soundly

Right from the start.

What deepens my commitment to both Temple Beth Israel and Sisterhood is their continued focus on Building a Strong Community.

For the Levine family Temple Beth Israel is truly our Extended Family, the Community that we are so thankful to be a part of.

As we begin our 2nd 100 years there may be challenges ahead but I am confident that as a strong community working together, building relationships, we will face those challenges and together working side by side we will continue to find strength in one another in order to be successful in all that we wish to accomplish.

Shabbat Shalom