

HONOREES



Harriet Zimmer, who recently celebrated her 100th birthday, joined The Village Temple in 1951. She and her husband Max wanted their sons Robert and Richard, to receive a Jewish education. While serving as the office manager of her husband's neighborhood medical practice, Harriet took on leadership roles in the Sisterhood. She has many fond memories of the women who worked together on the annual Temple Bazaar, a significant fundraiser. Harriet and her son Richard were the driving forces for the creation of the Youth Group, so teens would have a place to socialize with other Jewish students. She played a leading role in the weekly operations of the Village Temple Soup Kitchen for 18 years. Her grandson Alex once called her the *General Manager*, for the way she directed the volunteers on tasks to prepare lunches for the soup kitchen guests. Harriet is known for her kindness and caring for others.



Alex Tansky is the Director of Education at the Village Temple, since 2005. He received his M.A. in Religious Education from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 2004. Among the innovations he has brought to the Religious School is implementation of a program that is educational, engaging and fun for learners of all ages, from preschoolers to teens. Alex looks forward to continue creating meaningful connections, to keep designing innovative entry points for new learners and to continue paving the road for them to make a life-long commitment to a relevant, inspiring and spiritual Judaism. Alex was one of the pioneers of the Hebrew and Jewish educational programming at the Israeli Culture Center in Dnepro, Ukraine, before immigrating to the United States in 1999 as a refugee. Alex lives in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn with his wife, Alla, and their two daughters, Victoria and Daniela.

THE VILLAGE TEMPLE (Congregation B'nai Israel of Greenwich Village)

Rabbi Deborah Hirsch

Cantor Nancy Bach

Alex Tansky, Director of Education

Sandy Albert, Executive Director

Anita Hollander, Children's Choir Director and Soloist

Liotte Greenbaum, Director of Engagement

Hila Kulik, Accompanist

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THE VILLAGE TEMPLE 70TH ANNIVERSARY GALA



COME AS YOU ARE. DISCOVER WHO YOU ARE.

PROGRAM

Wednesday, March 6, 2019
Manhattan Penthouse

Welcome

Wendy Kaplan Goldberg and Stephanie Kanarek
Co-Chairs, Gala Committee

Invocation

Rabbi Deborah Hirsch

Presentation of the Honorees

Opening Remarks by Fred Basch
Co-President, The Village Temple

Sarah King
Co-President, The Village Temple

will present awards to

Harriet Zimmer
Long-time Member

Alex Tansky
Director of Education, Village Temple

Closing Remarks



WE ARE THE VILLAGE TEMPLE

On June 3, 1948, a group of like-minded Jews joined together to establish a new Reform Jewish presence in Greenwich Village. Although they had no building or money; they had a dream of a spiritual home and a place where their children could be educated and learn the joy of being Jewish and the serious lessons of our history.

From this small gathering, grew the vibrant congregation we know today. On November 5, 1948, they incorporated as Congregation B'nai Israel of New York, known as The Village Temple. The new congregation met at the Brevoort Hotel, receiving support from Rabbi Dan L. Davis, director of the the New York Federation of Reform Synagogues.

To accommodate its rapid growth, The Village Temple moved to a larger space at the Village Presbyterian Church. In a unique sharing arrangement, we used their sanctuary for our services, and shared many interfaith celebrations.

A metal shop at East 12th Street was purchased in 1955, and was renovated to serve our needs with a sanctuary, classrooms and kitchen. This new temple was formally dedicated on September 16, 1957. In the Religious School children were taught Jewish history, Hebrew, Shabbat and holiday customs, as well as preparation for b'nai mitzvah. Many temple teenagers joined the active Youth Group. The women formed a Sisterhood, which became the principal fundraising arm of the Temple. A Worship Committee and many other staples of synagogue life were created and flourished.

In 1984 we expanded into the building next door and renovated to our current configuration. In 1987, we opened our renowned Shabbat Soup Kitchen to serve the hungry in our neighborhood. Temple members, neighbors and local high school students continue work together to prepare soups and sandwiches each Saturday.

Our religious school, under the current leadership, Alex Tansky, has developed into a model of Reform Jewish education, valuing the formation of Jewish identity and blending formal and informal learning to make religious school fun and educational. Our Children's Choir, led by Anita Hollander is an open and creative outlet and a safe and supportive group for our children to create and perform and develop leadership and collaborative skills.

In recent years, our teens and our adult members have had opportunities to travel to Israel with temple clergy and educator. Our social justice initiatives have been wide and meaningful; from our teens participating in the Religious Action Center's L'taken Seminar in Washington, DC, to the recent Women's Marches, to guest speakers on disability awareness and other social justice topics, to Mitzvah Day clean up of neighborhood parks.

Our clergy, professional staff and lay leadership have evolved and changed to reflect who we are today and to meet the needs of our congregation. Under their dedicated, learned and thoughtful direction The Village Temple continues to be a warm and welcoming spiritual home to Jews by birth and Jews by choice, interfaith families and members of the LGBTQ community. Reform Judaism, social justice and lifelong learning are pillars to our members as together we sing and dance at our weekly Kabbalat shabbat services. At the Great Hall at The Cooper Union our High Holy Day services continue to be an inspiration. As a sacred community we mark our life cycle events together both the joyous and the sad.

We certainly are not the same congregation our founders created 70 years ago, but we believe they would be proud of the caring congregation and vibrant Jewish community we are today.

May the spirit and the enthusiasm of The Village Temple live on for the next 70 years!

