



May 3, 2017/7 Iyyar 5777

Dear Agudas Achim Member:

We are proud to share with you an exciting development for our youth and educational programming. As you may recall, in August 2013 Agudas Achim ceased running our own religious school due to a dwindling demographic of young families and we entered into a collaboration with Temple Israel. However since that time we have been experiencing rejuvenation. Just come on a Shabbat morning and you'll feel the youthful energy. We currently have 104 children between the ages of birth – 5th grade and *nearly two-thirds are from new member families.*

In December, the Board of Trustees approved a new synagogue mission statement stating in part that "Shabbat is our 'beating heart,' when you will experience us at our best. We aspire to make our community even more close-knit, authentic and inspiring by offering different ways our members can connect to Shabbat."

Accordingly, we are enthusiastically announcing a new and innovative experiential education program for our burgeoning population of children - **JoLT: Jewish Learning Together**. JoLT will be a cutting-edge Jewish learning program, the kind that has children and families clamoring for more:

- Like learning a sport, our students will not merely study the rules of the game, but rather will *learn by doing*. They will not be just spectators but rather Shabbat participants, with a focus on what children are able to think, feel and do Jewishly.
- Participation in this Shabbat school program is encouraged for **all Agudas children in grades K-5** (public/private & secular/parochial school students), providing the opportunity for our youth to create close and cohesive relationships irrespective of their weekday educational environments. The **JoLT** curriculum will complement rather than repeat what is covered at the Day Schools, and will replace the old "Sunday School" model.*
- **JoLT** is a key ingredient as we increase and focus the shul's efforts to meet the needs of our growing population of young families. In that light, we are committed to ensuring that cost not be an obstacle to participation for our families through various creative funding strategies.

Stay tuned for more about the roll-out and details of this program in the weeks ahead. With your support, Agudas Achim will be putting a **JoLT** into Jewish education!

David Philips
President

Mitch Levine
Rabbi

* Children in 3rd grade and above who do not receive regular Hebrew language instruction elsewhere will still attend the existing collaborative Hebrew school program taking place at Agudas Achim on Tuesdays.

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