

My Eleventh Year with Temple Emanuel of Gastonia

By Donna deGroot

It has been my honor and privilege to play a part in the Jewish education of the Religious School students of Temple Emanuel since the fall of 2003. Many of you see me wearing my other hats at the Charlotte Jewish Day School, Hebrew High, and at Temple Israel Religious School, but the work that I have done 45 minutes west of here every Sunday is pretty invisible to the Jewish community of Charlotte. That is except for one weekend a year. One weekend a year I have invited all of the B'nei Mitzvah and Confirmation



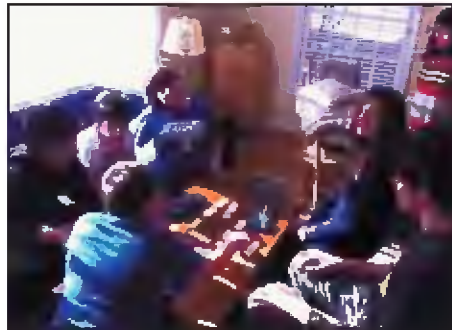
Tali deGroot, center, came home from college to help out. Here she is seen with Meredith Levy and Leah Sosnik.

nia are often the only Jewish student in their class, sometimes they also represent our community for their entire school. I see as extremely important my chance to give them a weekend where they can disconnect from all of their media devices, bond with the other students from Religious School, and have the chance to experience a larger Jewish community.

Each year we have interactive ice breaking fun games on Friday night after dinner (thanks usually to one of my daughters and their years of experience with Young Judaea). Each year on Saturday morning we go "shul hopping" and I take them to see about 45 minutes of the services at each of the Temples within walking distance of my house - Temple Israel, Temple Beth El, and Ohr haTorah. Besides these activities which are

pretty constant every year, I also have chosen a theme and our activities and any special guests who join us are asked to reflect on that theme.

This year the theme was *mi-dor la-dor* — from generation to generation. In the afternoon, we had the community Shaliach Dor Hol-lander come to teach them about the waves of Aliyah that helped to set the stage for Israel becoming a Jewish nation in 1948. (It was just a bonus



Bonding time Sunday morning.

that his name happened to be "Dor"). They learned about what was happening in the home countries and a little about who these people were who left their homes and chose to be pioneers in Palestine. In the evening, we were very lucky to have Baila Pransky come to celebrate Havdallah with us and to teach the students some conversational Yiddish.

Sunday morning, we met the younger students from Religious School at Sky High



Learning Yiddish with Baila Pransky.



Sports in Pineville and we bounced our way through the morning.

This year is a transitional year for me as I wind down as Director and Hannah Kaunitz is taking on more and more responsibility as she will be the new Director as of July 2014. I will still be connected to the Temple, training B'nei Mitzvah students and possibly hosting these weekend Shabbatons (I think it might be hard for me to let go of this one).

It has been a treat to share the responsibility of the school with Hannah this year. In fact it is thanks to her that Baila came to visit with the students on Saturday evening. I know she is going to do a wonderful job for the Temple going forward.

Here are a few pictures from our 10th winter Shabbaton. ☆



The younger students come to meet everyone at Sky High Sports.

students to spend a Shabbat with me in Charlotte. On these weekends you may have seen me walking in Shalom Park or Lansdowne with 7-12 students in tow. I take these Shabbaton weekends pretty seriously as I see them as one of the most important parts of the Religious School education.

Most of the students in Gasto-

April Events at Havurat Tikvah

As April arrives, so does spring, and Havurat Tikvah eagerly prepares for a new season of community holidays and fun.

On Saturday, April 5, we will have a community Shabbat service followed by a delicious pot luck luncheon. Our lay-led services will begin at 10 AM in the Avondale Presbyterian Church Aiken's Classroom (2821 Park Road). We invite everyone to join us.

This month's Mostly Monthly Minyan will take place on Wednesday, April 9 for anyone who is mourning, observing a *yahrzeit*, or just wants to attend services with friends. Our hosts provide gourmet desserts. We will begin at 7:30 at 1607 Dilworth Road West. For more information, please contact 704-332-4880.

The Dilworth Soup Kitchen also continues to work hard as winter draws to a close and spring appears. This community soup kitchen serves people on Mondays from 11:30 AM-12:30 PM, but they need help setting up other times during the week and they can always use food donations. If you are interested in volunteering, please visit the website: dilworth-soupkitchen.wikispaces.com.

In February, our congregation

got together to watch Jerusalem in IMAX at Discovery Place. This is an incredible film about the cultures that are most prominent in the holy city, and we encourage everyone to see it if you have not already.

Havurat Tikvah is an affiliate of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, providing a comfortable, family atmosphere where all Jews can feel welcome. If you are interested, we invite you to visit, get to know us, and to become part of our congregation of nearly 60 households.

For more information about any of our other activities, check out our website (havurat-tikvah.org) or contact our member chair, Brian Feinglass, either by email (membership@havurattikvah.org) or by phone (980-225-5330). You can also find Havurat Tikvah and Havurat Tikvah Teens on Facebook. ☆



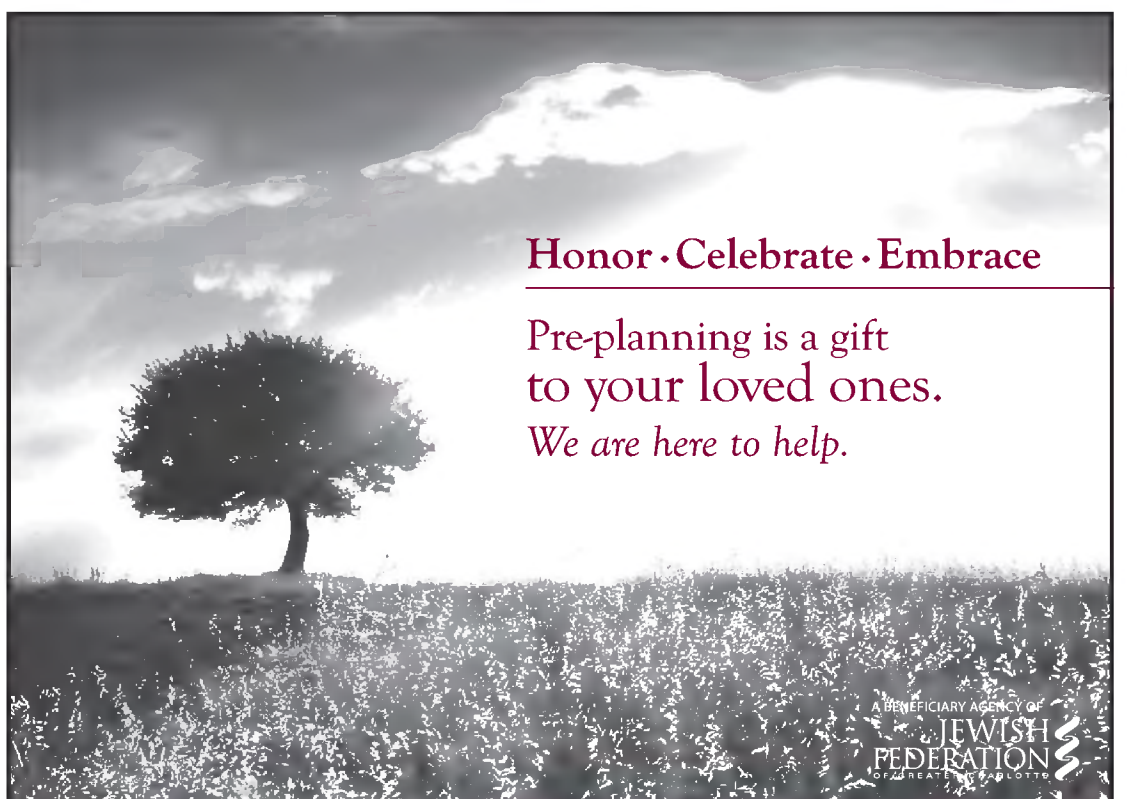
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