

Project Stock the Shelves!



**We are
Women's League**
Engaging Enriching and Empowering Jewish Women
Women's League for Conservative Judaism

For 2021-2024, WLCJ is urging Sisterhoods across the organization to gather food donations and work with local food pantries in their areas to help fulfill the needs of those less fortunate. Many of Seaboard Region's Sisterhoods sent us descriptions of the extensive work they and their synagogues engage in to assist with food insecurity in their local community.

Adas Israel (Washington, DC) collects non-perishable food all year long for distribution to SOME, INC (So Others Might Eat), a nonprofit, interfaith organization. We also sponsor and serve meals at SOME's dining room as well as collect new and gently used winter coats from November through February. For our Adas Cooks @ Home events, food is prepared by congregants in their own homes and delivered to the following community partner organizations: Anne Frank House, Adas-Behrend Senior Fellowship Participants, International Rescue Committee, Martinsburg Union rescue Mission, Sasha Bruce Youthwork, TraRon Center, and Ward 3 Mutual Aid. We will continue our efforts on a monthly basis since the need for food is great and thank our members for cooking with a cause. Adas Israel continues its longstanding commitment to a number of women's shelters and other organizations in the DC area.

Adat Chaim Sisterhood (Owings Mills, Maryland) provides support to our local food pantry in the Owings Mills-Reisterstown area. While drop-off at the synagogue has decreased due to limited opportunities to be in the synagogue building this past year, we continue our efforts in many ways. Families have been encouraged to make financial donations to the food pantry instead of canned and non-perishable items as was done in the past. Many of our Sisterhood members have also made donations to community food drives outside of our geographic area in communities that have had a greater need

during this past year. We will continue to do so moving forward as the *Project Stock the Shelves* is an on-going WLCJ initiative for the next two years. Adat Chaim supports other initiatives through donations to Chana, Jewish Community Services, Paul's Place, SFNR (Support for Families of Nursing Home Residents), and St. Vincent de Paul.

Agudas Achim (Alexandria, Virginia) continues to support our local food bank ALIVE! by collecting food at various times throughout the year, but especially at the High Holidays culminating as we arrive for Kol Nidre. Our congregation is also a staunch supporter of the local Carpenters Shelter. We have been actively participating in a three-year drive to raise funds to support their new building that opened a few months ago. Sisterhood in particular provides a holiday meal in December (either Christmas Eve or Christmas Day dinner) for the shelter residents, plus funds and gift cards to meet a variety of needs of the shelter residents, such as clothing for job interviews, jobs, and school, school supplies for the children, household items, food, etc. A group of women and men provide a dinner every other month for the Carpenter's Shelter residents.

Beth El (Baltimore, Maryland) has joined the Jewish Volunteer Organization. Since last year, we have collected more than 50,000 meals (bagged lunches) along with two other synagogues. Our synagogue, along with the Sisterhood members prepare bagged lunches, and it's called Bunches of Lunches. The lunches are delivered to several shelters in Baltimore City. We rotate synagogues, each synagogue has lunches prepared and brought to the synagogue for delivery monthly. Sisterhood as well as the congregation collected money for the Passover holiday for Chana (a Jewish organization that provides assistance to abused women). Sisterhood bought Passover meals to families who were in need.

Beth El (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania) has food drives throughout the year. Most recently, we hosted a Purim Food Drive that supports the food pantry of Jewish Family Services, Harrisburg.

Congregation **Beth El of Montgomery County** (Bethesda, Maryland) has undertaken a number of food assistance initiatives this year. In February, our annual Social Action Tea focused on combating food insecurity in our local community. More than 60 virtual attendees heard from representatives of local non-profit organizations about their efforts to address local food insecurity needs and how Sisterhood members could become involved. As a follow up to the Tea, Sisterhood partnered with Bethesda Help to collect healthy snack items and fill more than 200 spring-themed Kids Healthy Snack Bags for delivery to local families. In connection with Good Deeds Day, Sisterhood sponsored a KindSoup for the Soul virtual cooking event. Guided by a guest chef from KindWorks, more than 30 Sisterhood members prepared between 4 and 8 quarts of

healthy vegetable soup in their home kitchen to donate to local food assistance providers. Beth El Sisterhood also participates in an ongoing, synagogue-wide food drive for Manna, helping to fill several large food bins with non-perishable items each week.

Beth Israel Sisterhood (Owings Mills, Maryland) was happy to send a donation of \$100.00 to the Maryland Food Bank in support of the Women's League initiative, Project Stock the Shelves. In addition, we have urged each of our delegates to the conference to make donations to MAZON or SOME or Torah Fund in honor of Tami Fine, the incoming Seaboard Region Treasurer who is a member of our Sisterhood.

Beth Meyer Sisterhood (Raleigh, North Carolina) made significant monetary donations to the Jewish Federation Food Pantry as well as a donation to a local restaurant downtown called "A Place at the Table" that offers free meals to those who can't afford it. We also donated to a local group that, early in the pandemic, was making face shields for front line workers.

Beth Shalom Congregation (Columbia, Maryland) has helped support the needy in the following ways during the pandemic:

- Sisterhood members provided 7 days of home-baked desserts for our county's Cold Weather Shelter. Our synagogue teams with a church to sponsor the Cold Weather Shelter for a week each year. Sisterhood was in charge of the desserts this year.
- We held a women's sanitary products drive.
- For most of the pandemic, we have been holding, and continue to hold, a food and toiletries drive. We have collection bins outside of several members' homes for deposit of donations. Items are brought to Columbia Community Care for distribution to needy families in our county. We have received many carloads of donations.
- We held a separate diaper drive. In addition to collecting diapers and diaper wipes, we received over \$600.00 in cash donations for the purchase of diapers. We are using the funds to buy jumbo boxes of diapers for Columbia Community Care.

B'nai Israel Congregation (Rockville, Maryland) Our synagogue's Social Action Committee spearheads our support of Manna Food Center to benefit the 63,000+ Montgomery County residents who experience hunger and food insecurity. Each year, we collect non-perishables during our High Holiday Food Drive and Mitzvah Day and maintain on-going collection baskets in the building. This year, before Purim and Pesah,

we added two drive-by collections. The Social Action Committee, with the support of Sisterhood and Men's Club, organizes monthly meal preparation for the Interfaith Works Women's Shelter in Rockville, MD.

B'nai Tzedek (Potomac, Maryland) is proud and honored to have served our community in several ways over the past year. We made donations to the Manna Food Center and the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Violence. We are also currently collecting feminine hygiene products for I Support The Girls and had an outstanding presentation about how poverty affects access to these products. All of these organizations are based in Maryland.

Chizuk Amuno Sisterhood (Baltimore, Maryland) co-sponsored a food drive at Yom Kippur to help those less fortunate. Also, although not related to food, Sisterhood had our 3rd annual Gemilut Hasadim Evening of Mitzvot in February. We made cards to spread happiness at local nursing homes and made twiddle blankets to keep patients with Alzheimer's Disease busy.

Congregation **Har Shalom** (Potomac, Maryland)



Kehilat Shalom Sisterhood (Gaithersburg, Maryland) maintains a couple of baskets in our Shul lobby for drop-offs of food to take to area food banks in the Gaithersburg area, including Manna Food Bank. We distribute the items from the baskets at least once a month to one or more food banks. We have had the baskets in the lobby since before Yom Kippur in 2020. This spring, our Good Deeds Week project (led by Sisterhood) provided a shelter meal for Stepping Stones Shelter in Rockville. In addition to the shelter meal, congregants donated items that the shelter requested. The folks at Stepping Stones were amazed and overwhelmed with the generosity from our donated items.

Kol Shalom (Annapolis Maryland) is still collecting donations to our Oneg/Kiddush Fund in return for mentioning the donor's special reason for donating (birthday of loved one, anniversary, IMO someone, etc.) As we are not providing refreshments for Onegs or Kiddushes, we decided to donate half the proceeds for two months to different food banks, alternating every couple of months to different food banks. So far, we've made five donations to the food banks.

Congregation **Olam Tikvah** (Fairfax, Virginia) is supporting Project Stock the Shelves in many ways. Sisterhood teamed up with a teen's mitzvah project, *Cat Cares*, to provide food for a local food pantry, Food for Others; the collection will be active until the end of June. OT has provided food to our local community for years through our many food drives; weekly "gleaning" at a local farmers market to supply fresh fruits and vegetables to the Katherine Hanley Family Shelter; and making meals for the homeless. This year we did more due to the increased need. For Passover, we delivered food to elderly Holocaust survivors in need so that they could enjoy the holiday. In April, we had a "Power Pack" collection to supply food for the weekend for food insecure children in our local community; we collected 450 pounds of food to give them over Spring break. On Good Deeds Day, aware of the need for fresh fruits and vegetables, we collected more than 1,200 pounds to be delivered to Food for Others and the Katherine Hanley Family Shelter.

Shaare Tefila (Olney, Maryland) has continued with pre-pandemic activities. The synagogue along with one of our Sisterhood board members (Ethel Levine) has been donating to Olney Help. We ask members to bring food to the synagogue when members will be picking up books or when they come to get a gift basket around the Jewish holidays. Olney Help then distributes food to those in need.

Temple Israel (Norfolk, Virginia) has been busy this past year to assist local organizations.

- In November 2020, we completed an incredible food drive for the local Jewish Family Services Food Pantry, contributing \$10,000 worth of food items and an additional \$1,100 in checks and gift cards for the pantry to purchase additional food items. All auxiliary organizations, including the Sisterhood, worked hard on this project.
- In February 2021, our congregants contributed large quantities of toiletries, scarves, hats, gloves, hand sanitizer, face masks, sleeping bags and other items for the homeless. The Sisterhood then assembled 42 "stuffed to the gills" backpacks that were delivered (along with boxes of extra supplies) to the city's emergency shelter location in a church.

- Temple Israel has just begun a second drive for the Jewish Family Service more focused on youth and the "bare necessities" that most of us never think twice about purchasing. Again, Sisterhood members will be large contributors in this drive which will wrap up in late June.

Rodef Sholom Temple Sisterhood (Newport News, Virginia) donated \$1,345.60 to the Foodbank of the Virginia Peninsula on behalf of Rodef Sholom Temple, which was 10% of the proceeds from their annual Mishloach Manot fundraiser (additional donations were received from congregants). This was in addition to their Yom Kippur Operation Isaiah food donation that our congregation does every year.

Tikvat Israel (Rockville, Maryland) has worked in numerous ways to alleviate local food insecurity.

- Between Purim and Passover, the Tikvat Israel Tzedakah Havurah chose to emphasize the need to feed the hungry as well as food distribution recipients to reflect the extreme social service climate that exists because of the pandemic. All minyan donations were used for that effort.
- Tikvat Israel congregants volunteer regularly at the Manna Food Distribution Warehouse. They unpack donated cans and boxes from grocery bags and place the food on the appropriate pantry shelf.
- Tikvat Israel members provide meals for Stepping Stones Shelter in Rockville. Stepping Stones is the first homeless shelter in Montgomery County to provide food, shelter and supportive services to families with children. Approximately 20-25 women and children live there at any given time.
- Tikvat Israel members provide food to families in need in the Twinbrook, Maryland area (neighborhood near our synagogue) in response to the global public health crisis. The Interfaith Work Hub at Twinbrook set up a collection site for food drop-off. Our members are very generous in helping this cause.

Seaboard's collective efforts are truly extraordinary! Thank you ALL!

Let's keep this work going until we've eliminated hunger from our local communities.



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