

Religious School Opening Day

Good morning and welcome to the opening day of Religious School for 2019. Every year on the opening day of Religious School, TBI Sisterhood provides the opening day Nosh. Welcome to all of you. Thank you, Jeanna, for giving Sisterhood the opportunity to present a bit about the benefits of having TBI Sisterhood as part of the Fresno community.

In 1913 the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (NFTS/WRJ) was established as an affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, later named Union for Reform Judaism (URJ). From that moment Reform Jewish women marched together for suffrage, to advocate for peace, adopted bold social justice positions on behalf of the vulnerable, and played significant role in the landmark social justice movements of their generation; all within the guidance of progressive Jewish values.

In 1949, Dr. Jane Evans was the executive director of National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (NFTS) which is now Women for Reform Judaism (WRJ). The two main principles of focus for Dr. Evans was the centrality of Judaism as a faith and the devotion to social justice. She stated if we have a strong belief in the Jewish values, it will inevitably lead to passion for justice, so that we can act collectively to make the world a better place.

Your TBI Sisterhood is run by a leadership council. This group of women willingly meet 5-6 times a year to set programs, agendas, activities, raise funds, etc. This leadership style has been in effect since 2006 at TBI, 2019 is our Bat Mitzvah year! This once innovative leadership model was presented at WRJ Biennial in San Diego a few years ago. Many more congregations are going in this direction; it has worked well for us. We all play our individual parts and work together to create a better Jewish world for women in Fresno.

We do many things through the Jewish year:

Locally-

- Support the opening day of Religious School Nosh
- Decorate and provide food for Rosh Hashanah Oneg,
- Chanukah Bazaar,
- Chanukah Latke Dinner,
- Spaghetti Dinner/other activities in support of Shabbaton,
- Purim Hamantaschen and Deli Lunch,
- Support Camp Shalom activities,

Provide grants for students going to Israel,
TBI Religious school with assorted financial gifts for teachers and supplies
(2018 we raised \$1200.00 that we just gave to Jeanna for this year)
Raise money for Camperships to Camp Newman
Judaica shop for ordering of life cycle events invitations (40% off today)
Participate in multiple social action events:
Ronald McDonald house Share a Night
Provide hats/scarves for homeless teens via Sanctuary (old TBI site)
Provide toiletries for Sanctuary
Knitted Knockers to national group for breast cancer survivors

Regionally-attend and participate in WRJ conferences.

Nationally- contribute to YES (Youth Education Scholarship)
providing scholarships for Rabbinical and educational students;
Jewish Braille Institute.
Presented at URJ Biennial on the leadership council format
Participated in “Knitted Knockers”-national initiative for knitted bra implants
post breast cancer surgery

We can't continue to do this alone. Our membership 2-3 years ago was 120 members. Nationally, membership in Sisterhood is about 1/3 total number of congregational families. If our congregation is about 280 families, we should have about 95 members. This year we had only 68 members. Our goal is to have at least 75 members for 2019-2020. Decreasing membership can hurt your kids and our community/your community.

Please step up and join us, let your Jewish values motivate you towards tikkun olam; repairing the world. You don't have to join the leadership council or come to meetings, just volunteer to come help with something, one thing; take baby steps; bring your older kids so they see you as a role model. Volunteer to do one thing this year, pay it forward. Each person doing a small part, many hands working together makes the world a better place. Please enjoy a nosh. Please join Sisterhood-your financial support may be soon helping your child attend camp Newman or Camp Shalom, this is your opportunity. Thank you for listening.