

## ***HACHNASAT ORCHIM: WELCOMING THE STRANGER***

As our year turns and turns again, we find ourselves approaching Thanksgiving. While Thanksgiving is not a Jewish holiday in origin, it exemplifies some of our most meaningful Jewish values. Thanksgiving encourages us to welcome visitors into our homes, feed them well and then send them on their way again; this is exactly what we are instructed to do when we fulfill the *mitzvah* of *hachnasat orchim*, welcoming the stranger.

Thanksgiving has always been one of my favorite holidays, a time during the year when my family from far and wide comes together to eat, share and catch up on each others lives since the last time we were all together.

Here at Congregation B'nai Yisrael we have a unique and wonderful way to fulfill the mandate of this *mitzvah*. This year, during the week of Thanksgiving, November 24 through 30, we are partnering with a community program that serves as an Emergency Shelter for homeless men in Northern Westchester. Congregation B'nai Yisrael, along with other religious organizations in our area, will be hosting guests through this program for one-week during the cold winter months.

We will be providing our guests with a warm place to sleep, home-cooked meals and breakfasts and lunches to take with them as they go out to work during the day.

How lucky we are that this event coincides with Thanksgiving, when we are reminded to count our blessings and be grateful for all that we have. While we are acknowledging how lucky we are, we have this wonderful opportunity to share with those who certainly have less.

All of the children in our Jewish Identity Development programs will be participating in this week-long event by preparing the food and toiletries that we distribute to our guests and learning about the importance of helping those in our community. I encourage all of you

to become involved in this program. There are many ways that you can help out, from donating food to staying overnight at the temple. To find out more, please contact Ivy Levien at [ilevien@optonline.net](mailto:ilevien@optonline.net) or Carol Beck at [cbeckowitz@aol.com](mailto:cbeckowitz@aol.com).

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