

T'kiah

The Voice of Jewish Community Action

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JCA'S MISSION: To bring together Jewish people from diverse traditions and perspectives to promote understanding and take action on social and economic justice issues in Minnesota.

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(in alphabetical order)

Rabbi Morris Allen, Beth Jacob

Rabbi Amy Bernstein, Temple Israel
(Duluth)

Rabbi Aaron Brusso, Adath Jeshurun

Rabbi Norman Cohen, Bet Shalom

Rabbi Alexander Davis, Beth El

Rabbi Shosh Dworsky,
Carleton College

Rabbi Amy Eilberg

Rabbi David Freedman

Rabbi Sim Glaser, Temple Israel

Rabbi Hayim Herring, Synagogue
Transformation and Renewal

Rabbi Rob Kahn, Beth El

Rabbi Randall Konigsburg,
Temple of Aaron

Rabbi Harold Kravitz, Adath Jeshurun

Rabbi David Locketz, Bet Shalom

Rabbi Stacy Offner, Shir Tikvah

Rabbi Adam Spilker, Mount Zion

Rabbi Sharon Stiefel, Hillel (U of M)

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Visit www.jewishcommunityaction.org for a current calendar, and subscribe to JCA's weekly Action Alert (send an email request to carin@jewishcommunityaction.org) for ongoing opportunities.

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Chanukah Celebrated at Booth Manor

On December 10th, 2007, over 40 Russian speaking, Jewish people joined Rabbi Zimmerman, Senior Rabbi at Temple Israel, for a Chanukah celebration. The event took place in Booth Manor, one of the high-rise buildings in downtown Minneapolis.

This event is part of a collaborative project between the Sabes JCC and JCA. The project's goal is to engage Russian-speaking, Jewish seniors in civic engagement and leadership development. A key goal of this project is to reduce the isolation of Russian Jews by strengthening their connections to existing Jewish organizations, congregations, and agencies. Thus, part of this project is to develop ways to bring seniors to Temple Israel programs. The Chanukah celebration with Rabbi Zimmerman indicated a strong desire among Russian-speaking Jews for this relationship.

Participants sang Yiddish songs along with Cantor Abelson and kept requesting more songs. After the event, participants reminisced about their child-



hood, times when their grandparents used to secretly sing Yiddish songs to them. During the Communist regime, Jewish people were not allowed to practice their religion.

We have recently organized a lecture at the University of Minnesota about life experiences of Jewish people in the former Soviet Union. One of the Russian speaking, Jewish seniors, former journalist and professor of history Vladimir Posse spoke about his books, which included historical accounts of WWII; his and his family's life experiences as Jews in transitional Russia, as well as their immigration to the US.

We plan to bring more programs and activities to Russian-speaking Jewish seniors to help enhance their quality of life.



Northside Community Reinvestment Coalition

Memorandum of Understanding

We, the undersigned organizations... believe that genuine solutions to the foreclosure crisis must also address the long-term crisis of fair access to credit and financial discrimination...

We will negotiate fair lending and community reinvestment agreements with banks and other financial institutions so that they give us the same opportunities to build wealth through entrepreneurship, homeownership, investments, and higher education that all communities deserve.

We will share the hard data that proves both historical and current day financial discrimination against people of color, and challenge financial institutions to take immediate steps to end racism in lending and investing.

We will recognize that the real assets to invest in and preserve in our community are the people who live here, the skills and dreams we possess and develop, and the relationships that bind us together in order to act collectively for a better future.

We will cultivate the strong, wise, hopeful, long-term resident leaders in every community, on every block, in every church and mosque on the Northside.

We will build a coalition that allows us to build collective power, respect the integrity of our communities, cultures and faiths, and strengthen our own organizations.



At a recent meeting with some of the founding members of NCRC:

Back row: David Oguamanam, Minneapolis Urban League; David Snyder, Jewish Community Action; Lance Knuckles, Northway Community Trust; Jerry Moore, Jordan Area Community Council; Jeff Skrenes, Hawthorne Area Community Council. Front row: Cheryl Morgan-Spencer, Minneapolis Urban League; Nelima Sitati, Harrison Neighborhood Association.

Equal Access Audit of St. Paul Complete

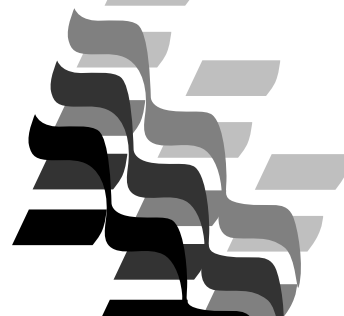
After four years of persistent pressure, the independent audit of the city's contracting programs and vendor outreach program was completed. The audit seeks to correct past discrimination and give opportunities to designated disadvantaged businesses run by people of color, women, and persons with disabilities.

Jewish Community Action, in collaboration with multiple partners, including the Community Stabilization Project, NAACP, and National Association of Minority Contractors, worked with members of the community, city council, and two mayors during the past four years. Vic Rosenthal, JCA's executive director, was a member of the city-appointed equal access working group and is also a member of the implementation team charged with moving the recommendations of the audit forward.

Thanks to strong leadership from Mayor Chris Coleman and City Council President Kathy Lantry, city officials are going to ensure greater accountability between government departments and disadvantaged businesses pursuing city contracts. The audit's recommendations include clarifying who is responsible in the city, adding staff and resources for the Vendor Outreach Program, and ensuring ongoing monitoring in order to make the city more inclusive for all communities.

The city plans to implement some of these recommendations during the first two months of 2008. The city's Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) passed a key recommendation during its December 2007 meeting. FFI: vic@jewishcommunity-action.org, (651) 632-2184.

Want to know how
your congregation
can work with JCA?
Call our office at
(651) 632-2184.



Third Annual Jewbilee



Congregations

Adath Jeshurun Congregation

Volunteers needed! Become part of Hekhsher Tzedek—Conservative Judaism’s cutting-edge initiative to bring the production of kosher food in line with Jewish ethics, particularly as they relate to the treatment of workers, the environment, and animals. FFI: melissa@jewishcommunityaction.org, 651-632-2184.

Beth El Congregation

On November 15th, Beth El’s new social justice committee hosted the first of three educational programs at the synagogue. This first program, entitled Eating with a Conscience, featured Rabbi Alexander Davis and the three committee co-chairs, Leslie Adler, Riva Kupritz, and Michael Zis. Approximately 40 people attended. Riva developed and implemented an online survey on the ethics of eating, which nearly 60 congregants completed. The next program, on the Jewish response to the foreclosure crisis in north Minneapolis, will be held in early February. FFI: Ben Schein, bschein@gmail.com, or david@jewishcommunityaction.org, 651-632-2184.

Beth Jacob Congregation

Congregational leaders, JCA, and Rabbi Allen continue to move Hekhsher Tzedek forward. The Conservative movement and Rabbi Allen lead this exciting project to

improve the conditions in which kosher food is produced, particularly as they relate to treatment of workers, the environment, and animals. The Beth Jacob social justice committee continues its focus on community education, grassroots organizing, and exploratory visits with stakeholders. Most recently, Beth Jacob leaders worked with JCA and members of the Beth El social justice committee to create a Hekhsher Tzedek program—the event was a great success and demonstrated Beth El’s excitement for this initiative. Beth Jacob members hosted a Beth Jacob Chanukah Hekhsher Tzedek program to provide the congregation with “hot off the presses” updates and concrete opportunities for involvement.

In addition to this local, on-the-ground work, Pete Magee and Peter Glick, co-chairs of Beth Jacob’s social justice committee, presented to the National Hekhsher Tzedek Commission about the importance of grassroots involvement. Pete Magee joined Vic Rosenthal and Rabbi Allen as part of the session on Hekhsher Tzedek at the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism Biennial in Orlando (November 2007). FFI: melissa@jewishcommunityaction.org, 651-632-2184.

Bet Shalom

Bet Shalom’s social action/social justice committee is exploring an initiative focused on immigration, inspired by Rabbi Cohen’s

sermon, “Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor,” during the High Holidays. FFI: melissa@jewishcommunityaction.org, 651-632-2184.

Mount Zion Justice Initiative: A Focus on Children

During late 2007, Mount Zion and Jewish Community Action presented three L’Chaim Mount Zion discussions: The first featured Jim Koppel, Executive Director of the Children’s Defense Fund Minnesota. After an overview of the current health care system, he encouraged Mount Zion to organize around a comprehensive health care bill that would provide free physical, mental, and oral health care to every child in Minnesota.

The second featured Karen Kingsley, Director of Policy and Civic Engagement for Ready 4 K. She led a discussion about the current state of early childhood education in Minnesota. She highlighted several different initiatives that Mount Zion could put its congregational power behind.

In December, Vic Rosenthal, Executive Director of JCA, and State Representative Frank Hornstein led a discussion about strategies for effective social change initiatives. During early 2008, Mount Zion members will determine an issue campaign and develop a timeline. FFI: Adele@jewishcommunityaction.org, 651-632-2184.

Shir Tikvah

Vic Rosenthal spoke to Shir Tikvah’s social action committee recently about opportunities to support the new sanctuary movement, which is being launched locally by the Worker Interfaith Network.

Shir Tikvah’s annual legislative forum will focus on global climate change. The panel will feature Minnesota State Sen. Ellen Anderson and State Rep. Bill Hilty. Martha Brand, Shir Tikvah member and executive



Hekhsher Tzedek Commission meets.

Welcome; Farewell

Welcome Paul Bradpiece



Paul Bradpiece is Jewish Community Action's new Membership and Communications Associate. Paul grew up in Los Angeles and graduated from Clark University in 1991 with a B.A. in English

Literature. Since graduation, he has worked as a magician and for a financial newspaper in Los Angeles. He also volunteered for numerous non-profit organizations, including the YMCA, where he conducted seminars and helped plan fundraising events. He is married to Carolina Bradpiece, who works for The Saint Paul Foundation.

Remembering a Friend

A remarkable man, Dejunias Hughes, died on November 16th from pancreatic cancer. I first met Dejunias when I was co-director of Jewish Community Action and he was director of the Twin Cities Black Film Festival. Together we created *Intersecting Rhythms*, a Black-Jewish film festival that included dance, music, theatre, exhibitions, intercultural dialogue, and of course, film.

Working with Dejunias on this project reflected the values JCA continues to embrace. Through the work of building something together for our communities, Dejunias and I built a relationship. When people create relationships that enlarge the web of community that knits us all together, lasting social change happens.



While the response to *Intersecting Rhythms* was largely positive, some JCA members thought using arts to build community and explore issues of social justice wasn't going to change anything, and that JCA needed to get on to the business of real organizing. When Dejunias and I talked about this, we laughed. The experience of seeing first hand

how the arts can facilitate change propelled me into the arts more fully. I feel indebted to Dejunias for the way the arts have enriched and influenced my own life's work.

Jewish Community Action extends its sympathy to Dejunias Hughes' wife, Karen Starr, and their entire family. May his memory be a blessing.

—Rachel Breen, Former JCA Co-Director

Central Corridor Planning Update

I am honored to have been appointed as Jewish Community Action's (JCA) representative to the Central Corridor Station Area Planning Committee, which will give citizen input into the master plan for the St. Paul stations in the light rail line to connect Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Stops between Snelling and Rice for this \$1 billion light rail line are slated at one mile intervals—one mile intervals along a corridor that has the densest population, greatest concentration of people in poverty, a large number of people of color, and largest number of transit-dependent residents. To adequately serve the people in this area, stations should be added at Hamline, Victoria, and Western Avenues.

The light rail line, as currently planned, asks area residents and small businesses to pay a big price: Business traffic will decrease during the construction period. Then, property taxes will rise, as land along the corridor becomes more valuable. Some residents and businesses will have to close or move. Once light rail is running, bus service along University Avenue will decrease, so people living between scheduled stops will have to wait longer or walk a greater distance to their transportation.



JCA and its allies propose three additional stops between Snelling and Rice.

JCA and its allies want to increase the number of stations. Officials have indicated an interest in adding stops at a later date, but we fear that they will later "forget." Our work must also consider the valid arguments against additional stations, which would increase travel time. Additional stations would almost certainly mean cutting back somewhere else. The Federal Transportation Commission (FTC) has also mandated the maximum cost for the line, and additional stations would add to that cost. FFI: vic@jewishcommunityaction.org; 651-632-2184.

—Andrea Lubov, JCA member

Racial Justice Leadership Team Offers Workshops at Temple Israel

In December, JCA's Racial Justice Leadership Team taught a three-part class at Temple Israel as part of the synagogue's Adult Learning Series. The class, "Housing, Homeownership and Homelessness: What's race got to do with it," focused on policies and institutional practices such as the GI Bill, FHA loans, red-lining, block-busting, wealth creation, predatory lending, and divestment. The class looked at institutional and individual racism, and examined the roles we—as Jews—play. We explored the complexities of Jewish identity and racial identity, and discussed Jewish people's current and historical experiences with privilege and oppression. Participants left with concrete opportunities to work towards racial justice. The class was attended by many Temple Israel members who are part of the congregation's new housing and homelessness initiative.

JCA's Racial Justice Leadership Team continues to hone its interactive training, which has now been delivered to two groups of JCA staff and core leaders. This training allows participants to examine what racism is, where it comes from, how it works, how we are part of it, why it's still around, and

how we can challenge it. Finally, the team is available to come to you...we can host film viewings, discussion groups, field trips, and

other programs. FFI: melissa@jewishcommunityaction.org, 651-632-2184.

JYOLT Campaign: "Stop Racial Profiling, End Segregation in Schools"

JYOLT held its first annual Tzedek Youth Summit on November 11th, at the University of Minnesota Hillel. Representatives from the U., Hopkins High School, Minneapolis South High, Minneapolis Southwest High, and Macalester discussed racial injustice and individual identity, and selected JYOLT's social justice campaign for the current academic year.

Unanimously, participants chose education—particularly racial profiling and segregation in the schools. This campaign will help administration, teachers, and students understand racial justice, and it will hold people accountable to creating a more racially just environment:

Assisted by JCA staff, JYOLT participants will lead racial justice workshops at Twin Cities schools.

We will form racial justice student groups in local schools to address racism.

We will work with other youth organizations and community organizations.

—Sarah Brammer-Shlay, *South High School*;
JYOLT representative to *B'nai Emet Synagogue Youth*



Alumni of JCA's Jewish Youth Organizing Leadership Team

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director of Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, will moderate. Join us 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Sunday, February 10th, at Shir Tikvah. FFI: Martha Brand, 612-377-7239.

Temple Israel

Temple Israel continues its congregation-wide focus on housing and homelessness. The social action committee will focus on direct service (the on-site homeless shelter) and on collective action to address the root causes of homelessness. You can volunteer with Temple's social change projects to make concrete improvements in people's lives. We will work toward lasting change in public

policy, the allocation of resources, and the behavior of private and public institutions. Areas of focus could include limiting predatory lending and home foreclosures, promoting community reinvestment, increasing the supply of affordable housing, creating access to fair loans for homeownership and economic development. FFI: melissa@jewishcommunityaction.org, 651-632-2184.

Temple of Aaron

In February, the social justice committee will host an exhibit on homelessness and affordable housing, sponsored by the Family Housing Fund. The synagogue focus on homelessness and affordable housing will be launched at a Friday night Shabbat service, which will likely include St. Paul

elected officials. The social justice committee expects to work closely with local housing and homelessness organizations to find local sites for transitional and supportive housing. Temple of Aaron and JCA members Howard Goldman and Susan Flynn co-chair this initiative. FFI: vic@jewishcommunityaction.org, 651-632-2184.

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I want to address
Minnesota's social and
economic justice
challenges.

**Your membership
is important to us.
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Marilyn and Roger Israel
Alicia S. Kunn-Batson and J. Hayes Batson
Leonard and Rollie Langer
Mary McDiarmid
Jean Nudell
Susan and William Robiner
Lisa Rogers and Richard Ziegler
Robin R. Solboe and William L. Solboe
Virginia Stringer
Jerrie and William Sudderth
Maxine and John Syrjamaki
Buddy and Judi Tennebaum
Gail Thoen

—All in memory of Minna Shapiro, the mother of Marcy Shapiro and Elsa Shapiro and the mother-in-law of Vic Bloomfield. Condolences to Marcy, Elsa, Vic and their entire family on their loss.

Rich Kronfeld and Robin Doroshow

—With appreciation for Catherine Morgan.

—Mazel tov to Jody and Howard Sigal on the occasion of Ben becoming a bar mitzvah.

Joan Cleary and Jerry Helfand
Jules and Janice Goldstein

—In memory of Judy Brown, the mother of Curt Brown and mother-in-law of Adele Brown. Condolences to Curt, Adele, and their entire family on their loss.

Stephanie Sargent and Ralph Bernstein

—Mazel tov to Jacob Bernstein on becoming a bar mitzvah.



JCA has a blog!

Read and join the conversation at:
jewishcommunityaction.blogspot.com