

When we started the Mitzvah of a Lifetime program over a year ago this was the grand finale we envisioned and hoped for. I want to spend a few moments and tell you what we have accomplished.

Over the last 6 months we have restored four of our Torahs and today since the program has been so successful the congregation has committed to restoring a fifth Torah which you will make your mark in after we conclude in here. The kickoff of this program would not have been possible without the generous support of several pillars of our community. I would first like to thank Isabel Adler whose generosity to the congregation financially and spiritually over many years helped make this day possible. Isabel sponsored the restoration of two of the Sifrei Torah we are re-dedicating today. In addition Isabel is working on making Velcro belts to bind the restored Torahs to keep them in good condition. Two other great pillars of this community who have supported us financially and heartfully for many years are Jack and Sheila Usdin who sponsored the third Torah we are re-dedicating. When I completed my speech on the High Holidays asking you what you would do with your quill, I hurried off the bima to go the parallel service to make the speech again and the first person to pull me over and volunteer to use his quill was Jack Usdin. Jack I want to thank you personally for that , when you shook my hand that day I knew we would have the support and energy of the congregation to reach this day. The fourth Torah we restored was sponsored by our member Leah Linn of blessed memory, Leah passed away on July 4th 2009 and in her will left the synagogue \$25,000, and we are rededicating the fourth Torah in her name for her generosity. This was the Torah carried in by Mark Ross. Mark was the second person behind Jack to volunteer to his use his quill; we want to thank the Ross and Kerstein families for their support, as well as the Scherzer, Klinghoffer and Bier families. I

also want to thank each and every one of you who lent their financial support to this effort because of all of you we have raised more than \$200,000. And we have restored five of our sacred texts.

We began this project with many of our members in great financial distress because of the recession we have been experiencing these last two years. Many of our members were unable to pay dues, or register their children for religious school because of financial hardship and unemployment. We made a pledge to each and every one of those families that we would not let them resign because they could not pay due to hardship and money woes. We have assisted more than 40% of the congregation some substantially and others with just a little help but I can tell you for a fact no one was left behind because of financial hardship who had a desire to be a member of our sacred community. Although the financial woes of our nation are beginning to recede there are still many in our community in need, and our pledge to them still stands. We are still raising money to help these people and if any of you want to pledge again to the Mitzvah of a Lifetime program for a recent simcha or life cycle event Barry Segal will be standing by to take additional pledges to give us the ability to help more people and keep our community whole.

My job as President gives me the honor to speak for our community and thank people on behalf of the community. On behalf of the community and myself I have many people to thank today. First the most important person to thank today is the Mitzvah of a Lifetime Chairperson Lesley Brooks. When I asked Lesley to chair this more than 18 months ago without hesitation she said yes. Lesley please come up. Lesley, on behalf of the congregation and myself I want to thank you and

present you with this gift, just a small token of our appreciation for what you have done. Many of you know that Lesley is one of our steady Torah readers on Shabbat throughout the year. I am presenting her with a silver yad to assist her in reading torah in our restored Sifrei Torah. Thank you Lesley.

I want to thank the rest of the committee as well. A big thanks to Jeff Scherzer the right hand man of Lesley and me in making this project successful. Others who have been a great help, Barry Segal, Scott Cohen, Al Eglow, Beth Hersh, Peter Shewitz, Esther Avnet, Alyssa Russo, David Brooks, Julie Scherzer and Lisa Glass. Let's not forget the moms from the Early Childhood program who stuffed envelopes for our mailings, the members of the Executive Committee and the board who were called on for many small tasks including mailings over the last several months, they never once balked and happily did whatever we needed to make this a success no matter how big or small. I also want to thank them for lending their financial support to this effort; we have 100% board participation on this project. We also owe thanks to Donny Bernstein and Exquisite Affairs Caterers, they support the shul in all our endeavors and I will ask you to please consider using them for your next simcha. Lastly I would also like to thank my predecessor Richard Falkin, the idea for this project started with him about 3 or 4 years ago he gave us a great idea and we ran with it.

None of this gets completed without the aid of our professional staff. Our thanks go out to Rabbi Mallach and Cantor Nadel our spiritual leaders for guiding us in this process. Thank you to Shiri Haines our Executive Director and her staff for tying all the loose ends during the project and keeping us moving towards this day.

Thank you to Gail Beckman Buchbinder and Julie Bernstein for engaging the children of our congregation during the educational portion of the restoration project. And of course thank you to Tony Ravelo and his staff for the set ups and breakdowns and the willingness to always lend a hand.

There is one more task to complete before we can continue the celebration. Although we are restoring five Sifrei Torah we are only keeping four. I would like to call up Eric Freedman the President of Ahavas Shalom in Newark, NJ. Several years ago Eric and Ahavas Shalom's spiritual leaders Simon Rosenbach came to us with a request. They needed a Kosher Torah, the ones they have are old, very heavy, and too expensive for a small congregation to restore. We are donating a restored Torah to Ahavas Shalom. The members of Ahavas Shalom have been involved in the restoration process as well and many of them are here today to make their mark in the Torah too. Eric please accept the gift of one restored Torah from Temple Beth Ahm Yisrael. May you and your congregation use it and learn from it for many years to come.

Once again thank you all for your generosity and hard work in making the Mitzvah of a Lifetime an absolute success. Thank you for using your quill.