



## The Many Faces of Hesed: Be Involved!

The mission of the Hesed Committee at Adath Jeshurun is to coordinate and provide opportunities for acts of justice and loving kindness within the synagogue and in our communities.

The Hesed Committee is an umbrella organization that supports numerous programs involving issues of social concern. These activities include social action projects which provide direct service to people in need as well as social justice initiatives, working towards systemic changes in society. In these attempts to rebuild community and repair the world, we are fulfilling a Jewish obligation for tzedakah and carrying out a basic Jewish value. The Hesed Committee has chosen to focus on three major areas: housing, hunger, and children. Following is a list of some of the major projects supported by the Hesed Committee and a contact person from the Hesed Committee who is handling that area:

### **Hunger**

**MAZON**, a Jewish Response to Hunger, collects and awards grants to non-profit organizations in Minnesota, nationwide, and internationally that alleviate hunger. Hesed encourages congregants to contribute 3% of the total cost of their simcha to MAZON and makes a special appeal each Pesach for donations to MAZON. Contact person: Jaye Snyder, 952-544-566, [jayesnyder@earthlink.net](mailto:jayesnyder@earthlink.net)

**Concerned Jewish Congregations** provides a nightly meal to those in need. Adath volunteers join with other congregations to prepare and serve meals to as many as 600 people at Loaves and Fishes at the St. Stephen's Church site. Hesed also supports a Christmas dinner at St. Stephens. Contact person: Betty Jonas, 763-519-0224.

**Our Savior's Shelter** is a non-sectarian homeless shelter in Minneapolis supported by many faith-based organizations. Volunteers from Adath, including study groups, havurot, extended families, and groups of friends, share the mitzvah of feeding the hungry on a monthly basis. Contact person: Deb Smith, 763-374-3862, [debsmith16@yahoo.com](mailto:debsmith16@yahoo.com)

**STEP** (St. Louis Part Emergency Program) maintains a food shelf, including the only kosher food section in Minneapolis, and other support services for seniors and families in need. Receptacles for non-perishable food are at the entrance of the Gan and in the main foyer at Adath. Project Isaiah Food Drive at the High Holidays and Minnesota Food Share Drive in March also benefit STEP. Contact person: Joy Sandler, 763-513-9679, [sandlerjoy@hotmail.com](mailto:sandlerjoy@hotmail.com)

**ICA** (Intercongregation Communities Association) offers a food shelf and emergency services to Minnetonka residents. The Hesed Committee represents Adath Jeshurun on the ICA Board and donates some of the food collected at the synagogue to ICA. Contact persons: Larry Sholler, 763-588-4319, [sholl002@umn.edu](mailto:sholl002@umn.edu) or Joan Weinstein, 952-920-9089, [shellyw16@juno.com](mailto:shellyw16@juno.com)

## **Affordable Housing**

**MICAH** (Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing) is a coalition of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim congregations and housing organizations that promotes awareness and motivates people of faith to take direct action and advocate for public policies that maintain and increase the supply of decent, safe, and affordable housing. Contact person: Aaron Parker, 612-308-6154, [bap@METROPELIGO.com](mailto:bap@METROPELIGO.com)

**Foreclosure Prevention** is an initiative of Jewish Community Action aimed at connecting residents at risk of foreclosure and eviction with free, HUD-certified counselors and attorneys. Contact person: Melissa Rudnick, 651-632-2184, [Melissa@jewishcommunityaction.org](mailto:Melissa@jewishcommunityaction.org)

**Community Reinvestment Fund** of Jewish Community Action invests in local community banks which provide loans for home ownership, home improvements, and small business loans in the inner city. The Hesed Committee and the Adath Foundation have funds deposited in these accounts. Contact person: Melissa Rudnick, 651-632-2184, [Melissa@jewishcommunityaction.org](mailto:Melissa@jewishcommunityaction.org)

## **Children**

**ICAN** (Interfaith Children's Advocacy Network) is a diverse faith-based voice which advocates for children living in poverty and violence or neglect. Contact person: Paula Fox, 763-593-4031, [paulafox@yahoo.com](mailto:paulafox@yahoo.com)

**Avenues for Homeless Youth** provides emergency shelter, short-term housing, and supportive services for homeless youth in a safe and nurturing environment. It is housed in an old Jewish orphanage in North Minneapolis. Hesed members have donated blankets, household items, or money. Contact person: Michelle Basman, 763-546-1474, [mbasman@visi.com](mailto:mbasman@visi.com)

## **Other Initiatives supported by Hesed:**

**JCA** (Jewish Community Action) is a local organization that involves the Jewish community in pursuing social justice in partnership with communities of color, low income and immigrant communities. JCA fights poverty and discrimination by addressing root causes and provides educational programming, training, and volunteer opportunities. Contact person: Melissa Rudnick, 651-632-2184, [Melissa@jewishcommunityaction.org](mailto:Melissa@jewishcommunityaction.org)

**HEKSHER TZEDEK** initiative aims to improve the working conditions, treatment of employees, environmental standards, and business practices in kosher food-producing businesses to be consistent with Jewish social justice values. This is part of a national campaign initiated by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and the Rabbinic Assembly. Contact person: Leslie Goldblatt, 952-593-1624, [lsg929@comcast.net](mailto:lsg929@comcast.net)

**NACOEJ** (North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry) helps Ethiopian Jews survive in Ethiopia, assists them in reaching Israel, aids in their absorption into Israeli society, and preserves their unique and ancient culture. Contact person: Harlan Jacobs, 612-377-5837, [HarlanGenesis@Mac.com](mailto:HarlanGenesis@Mac.com)

**YOTZER OR** is a project of the Masorti (Conservative) Movement serving Jerusalem's Talpiot neighborhood residents, especially those of low income, from its base at the Beit Lazaros

Center. It provides for the material and spiritual needs of the community and runs a valuable after-school program for children. Hesed has sent contributions, and members visiting Israel are encouraged to visit. Contact person: Rabbi Harold Kravitz, 952-215-3912, [rabbikravitz@adath.net](mailto:rabbikravitz@adath.net)

**MINNESOTA INTERFAITH DARFUR COALITION** is a grassroots advocacy organization comprised of faith based groups (including Adath), human rights and social action organizations, and students committed to ending the humanitarian crisis created by the genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan. Contact person: Brad Lehrman, 612-336-9317, [bradinmn@aol.com](mailto:bradinmn@aol.com)

**HEALTH CARE** task force aims to educate congregants about health care issues and relevant legislation. Howard Stolz, 320-543-3696, [howardstolz@ix.netcom.com](mailto:howardstolz@ix.netcom.com). Jewish Community Action works towards affordable healthcare for all in partnership with other communities. Contact Melissa Rudnick, 651-632-2184, [melissa@jewishcommunityaction.org](mailto:melissa@jewishcommunityaction.org)

**Monetary Contributions** have been made by Hesed to the following organizations:

- JCA (Jewish Community Action)
- iCAN (Interfaith Children's Advocacy Network)
- MICAH (Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing)
- STEP (St. Louis Park Emergency Program)
- ICA (Intercongregation Communities Association)
- MAZON, A Jewish Response to Hunger
- JFCS (Jewish Family and Children's Service)
- STEP Toy Fund (purchases holiday gifts for families in need)
- Passage Community (transitional support for women and moving into employment)
- Nechama
- Loaves and Fishes
- St. Stephen's Christmas Dinner
- Our Savior's Shelter
- Avenues for Homeless Youth
- Yotzer Or in Israel
- NACOEJ (North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry)
- JCRC (Jewish Community Relations Council) – Justice Squared
- Gethsemane Episcopal Church
- JRLC (Joint Religious Legislative Coalition)

### **Source of Funding**

The Hesed Committee does not receive any money from the synagogue budget. Our only income is donations from congregants, as well as a few fundraising projects such as the Pushke Project and sale of Hesed cards. We hope that you will consider making donations to the Hesed Committee in support of our work. Giving tzedakah is a basic Jewish obligation, and most congregants already support both the synagogue and other charitable organizations. Why make an additional charitable contribution through the Hesed Committee? We feel that it is important for the synagogue as an organization to demonstrate our values to the community by our donations and our involvement in these worthy initiatives. Whereas synagogue dues and the L'Chaim pledge support the synagogue and its programs, contributions to the Hesed Committee are a way of making an impact on the broader community. Contributions can be made in honor of a particular person or event, as a memorial, for a Yahrzeit, or just to support the committee. It is the perfect gift for someone who already has everything they could possibly

need, and it makes a great social justice project for our youth. Checks can be made out to “Aath Jeshurun Hesed Committee” and sent to the synagogue office. The money received is used for donations to the organizations we support.

Special Funds through the Aath Jeshurun Foundation:

**The Linda Weber Mitzvah Fund** supports education and advocacy for families and children at risk, with a focus on domestic abuse.

**Ferne and Edward Grosmann Social Action Fund** supports social action activities.

**Paula and Norman Fox Hesed Fund** supports the Hesed Committee in its efforts in the areas of housing, hunger, and the well-being of children.

The Hesed Committee meets four times a year, with the strong support of Rabbi Kravitz. Members are also involved in specific projects they are interested in and may volunteer at these organizations. If you would like more information about the Hesed Committee or would like to become more involved, contact Paula Fox, 763-593-4031, [paulafox@yahoo.com](mailto:paulafox@yahoo.com).