

To the UVJC Membership:

This past May, the Board of Trustees undertook a communitywide survey that has provided us with important information to guide our efforts as we move forward into a New Year. One of the most important themes with regard to what and why people value the UVJC came down to one word: **COMMUNITY**. Throughout the survey, members emphasized their desire to be affiliated with and connected to a Jewish community and to have an opportunity to share life events, social events, education, and religious celebrations together as a Community.

As it happens, the mission of the UVJC reflects what we learned from the survey: *The Upper Valley Jewish Community (UVJC) is a welcoming, egalitarian congregation providing Jewish spiritual, educational, social and cultural opportunities to the Upper Connecticut River Valley.*

The board has found the survey to be helpful in confirming some of our thoughts about the Community and helped us prioritize where we should put our efforts. We are also working on ways to get information from non-members about the barriers to membership. As we look at ways to better serve the Community, we will focus on the following feedback from our members:

- ***Increase opportunities for Adult Ed, including Torah, Talmud study, Lunch and Learn, and Conversational Hebrew***  
This fall we will be working to re-establish the UVJC Education committee. This Committee will oversee the Educational needs of the Community.
- ***Offer more social events, including informal social opportunities***  
Recently, a group of UVJC members came together to brain-storm, and are now planning a series of social events to occur over the year. We also discussed adding opportunities to socialize at established events like the Jewish Film Festival. Watch for a Social Event Calendar to be available around Rosh Hashanah.
- ***Strengthen our communication so that members and other interested individuals have a better sense of the many offerings of the UVJC***  
The Board will be looking at all of the ways in which we communicate with our members. We are also interested in expanding our communication to reach beyond our membership to help draw in new members, especially young families with children. This outreach must involve social media and have a vibrant contemporary feel.
- ***Take steps to be a more welcoming community, reaching out to new members and long-term members alike and doing more to welcome and help people feel comfortable at services***

The Board recently adopted a new process for following up with potential members and welcoming and checking-in with new members. An update regarding new members will be a standing item on our agenda at our bi-monthly meetings. The Board will be working with the Social Action Committee to determine ways to reach out to our elder members. Our new calendar of services provides a variety of spiritual opportunities to meet our diverse community. We also will be working with the Ruach Committee to expand on how we welcome members and guests at our services.

It is clear that this special sense of Community can't happen with the Board alone, but with all of us pitching-in, we can become a truly inclusive community. The Upper Valley Jewish Community needs your continued support and participation in all of these activities to have the kind of Community that we want.

Thank you for your participation in the survey and for your continued commitment to Jewish life here in the Upper Valley. Please reach out to me with comments and/or concerns.

Deb Kaplan  
President UVJC  
deb.kaplan@comcast.net