



STEPHEN
WISE TEMPLE
2014-2015 ANNUAL REPORT

HOW AWESOME IS THIS PLACE

These Hebrew words
מה נורא המקום הזה
which remind us that we are
part of a sacred, amazing
community, appear above the
Ark in our Temple Sanctuary.

TEMPLE LEADERSHIP *(as of July 2015)*

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Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback
Senior Rabbi
Cantor Nathan Lam
Rabbi David Woznica
Rabbi Ron Stern
Rabbi Josh Knobel
Rabbi Isaiah Zeldin
Founding Rabbi
Rabbi Eli Herscher
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**Of blessed memory*

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MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR RABBI

If you were there that night (and so many of you were), you know just how extraordinary it was. More than twelve hundred of us gathered in our Sanctuary to honor our Rabbi and teacher. It was an amazing tribute to Rabbi Eli Herscher with—no surprise—extraordinary music and inspirational messages from our Cantor, our Rabbis, our leadership and honored guests. It was impossible not to feel the warmth of this place and the deep friendships it has made possible for so many, many of us.

But that evening back in May wasn't just a tribute to Rabbi Herscher and his extraordinary service to this community. It was also very much a tribute to our community itself, this amazing place where we find meaning and purpose.

On a more personal level, I found myself humbled and honored to be there that evening as our Temple's Senior Rabbi Elect. It is a זכות (z'chut - "merit") of the highest order to be able to succeed Rabbis Zeldin and Herscher. It has been and continues to be a תענוג (ta'anug - "pleasure") to work, every day, with my devoted, creative, and learned Clergy colleagues, Cantor Lam, Rabbi Woznica, Rabbi Stern, and Rabbi Knobel. I am blessed to work with an incredible staff across all of the departments of our Temple led by our Executive Director, Joe Zwicker. I am inspired by the dedication and the creativity of our gifted educational leaders, Andrea Gardenhour, the Director of Our Center for Youth Engagement, Tami Weiser, our new Head of School, and Marla Minden, our Early Childhood Director. And I am continually in awe of the hundreds of incredibly committed Wise volunteers who serve as our partners in making meaning and changing the world through their service on our Board of Directors, committees, task-forces and working-groups that make—day by day—all of our good work possible.

We are—all of us—blessed and fortunate to be a part of this community, this awesome place where **we make meaning and change the world.**

In thanks,



Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback

SENIOR RABBI



STEPHEN WISE TEMPLE

is filled with possibilities. You can explore ideas, discover new pathways, and learn more deeply. You can increase joy and inspire others. You can use your heart and hands to improve lives. We invite you to engage with us in ways that feel right for you.

Here are some stories of people whose experiences with Stephen Wise Temple have had a profound effect on their lives and the lives of others.

These stories not only reflect how awesome this place is, but also how relationships **can grow and lead to incredible meaning and change in the world.** Stephen Wise Temple is that awesome place.



Left to right: Rabbi David Woznica; Rabbi Isaiah Zeldin, Founding Rabbi; Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback, Senior Rabbi; Rabbi Eli Herscher, Senior Rabbi Emeritus; Cantor Nathan Lam; Rabbi Ron Stern; Rabbi Joshua Knobel



JESSICA & ADAM

*Friends at Wise School, married
at Wise Temple*

JESSICA AND ADAM MET AS TODDLERS AT WISE SCHOOL. He asked her to marry him five times before they reached the sixth grade. Twenty-two years later they stood under the chuppah as Rabbi Ron Stern made it official. Jessica and Adam were united not only through shared memories of childhood and youth, but also deeply rooted values expressed through their Jewish faith and tradition. Their lives were shaped by their families and loved ones, and by a supportive and caring community at Stephen Wise Temple. Whether by fate or happenstance, Jessica and Adam were brought together to create new and meaningful memories for themselves and future generations. *How awesome is this place!*



IRA & CHANA

Found love again at Wise Temple

IRA AND CHANA FOUND EACH OTHER THROUGH THEIR DEEP LOVE FOR ISRAEL and its preservation as the only Jewish State and homeland of the Jewish people. That first chance meeting took place just a few years ago on our Temple campus at a crowded Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration. Ira shares that he knew right away that Chana was the one! In their later years, Ira and Chana have made Stephen Wise Temple a cherished partner in their journey to find new meaning and explore uncharted ways to celebrate life together. *How awesome is this place!*

CANTOR LAM & MELINDA

*Wise Temple's amazing cantor
and vocal coach*

MUSIC IS INSTRUMENTAL TO THE SOUL OF STEPHEN WISE TEMPLE. Here, music is never a passive experience but one that engages, inspires, and connects us with one another. Among the many reasons that make our Temple exceptional is the role our Cantor, Nathan Lam, plays in masterfully integrating music into our festival and Shabbat services. Prayer takes on an added dimension that expands the ways we make Judaism more meaningful. Melinda is one of a number of congregants and others who have voice trained with Cantor Lam. As a talented actor and singer, Melinda, on occasion, has sung from our bimah to add her beautiful voice to the chorus of others who have been inspired by Cantor Lam to pursue their music education and careers. Did you know that more young men and women who became cantors got their start at our Temple than at any other synagogue in America? *How awesome is this place!*



JESSICA & SABRINA

Deepening their love through their home at Wise

JESSICA GREW UP IN THIS TEMPLE, SO WHEN SHE AND SABRINA DECIDED TO GET MARRIED, they came to Rabbi Ron Stern. Their meetings together have sparked in Sabrina a newfound love for this place and a passion to be connected to the Temple. This in turn has deepened Sabrina's and Jessica's bond. They see personal growth as a path to helping others, and believe that through positivity, people can change their lives for the better. Jessica and Sabrina consider Wise their Temple home because it is a welcoming place where worship services are relevant to common experiences, and where people are inspired to discover greater meaning in their lives. *How awesome is this place!*





TAMI & KIDS

*Tami Weiser becomes the new
Head of Wise School*

WITH A CURRICULUM DEVELOPED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE USC ROSSIER SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, Wise School was the only Jewish day school to receive the 5-Star Award for Gifted Education from the California Association for the Gifted. The year's highlights include trophies from Odyssey of the Mind and debate tournaments, two sports league championships, the construction of the Tyberg Arts & Innovation Lab, and the smooth transition to Tami Weiser as Head of School. Through the continued active involvement of Rabbi Yoshi, the School's amazing staff, and the incredible Wise Parents Association, Wise School opens a path for students to learn deeply, be creative, experience wholeness and make great happen every day. *How awesome is this place!*



WISE MOMS

Friends making meaning and changing the world

STEPHEN WISE TEMPLE BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER. The relationships that we develop here create a warmth of community and welcome for newcomers. Paola, Debra, Orley, Ilyse and Evelyn are actively involved in Temple life and the Wise Parents Association (WPA). Their passionate commitment to our community and the authenticity that they bring to their shared experience creates genuine friendships, nurtured by a common purpose and goals. *How awesome is this place!*

DADITUDE

*Making memories with children
and meeting other dads*

LIVES ARE CHANGED THROUGH THE PEOPLE WE ENCOUNTER. Our Temple's "Daditude" program was designed to create quality time for fathers and their young children, like Joey and his daughter, Lyla, and Ronen and his daughter, Ava. Fathers also have the opportunity to engage with one another and build long-term friendships. The result for dads and kids alike is treasured memories and connections that expand deeply in the soul of our community. *How awesome is this place!*





CHOCOLATE BAR KIDS

Two kids can change the world

THIS IS A PLACE WHERE MIRACLES HAPPEN, where young children like Dylan and Jonah, with the love and endless encouragement of their parents and the extraordinary support of our Temple and Wise School community, can make a difference and change the world. Their close friendship and boundless determination became the driving forces to take on an extraordinary feat of raising worldwide awareness and securing over \$1 million to help cure a rare disease. Through the writing and sales of the Chocolate Bar book, Dylan and Jonah give hope to people living with Glycogen Storage Disease, and inspire many to face the challenges in their lives with courage and strength. *How awesome is this place!*

TIANA & BRANDON

Becoming leaders and friends through CYE

TEENS ARE GIVEN EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH OUR TEMPLE'S CENTER FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT (CYE) and Wise Temple Youth (WTY) to connect with other Jewish teens and create relevant Jewish experiences for themselves and others. Tiana and Brandon became friends in WTY, but arrived at the Temple through different paths. Brandon, WTY's Co-President, has been a part of Wise since Mommy and Me and is a graduate of Wise School, while Tiana rediscovered her love for this community by working at Camp Wise during the summer and joining WTY in high school. For Tiana, Brandon, and many other CYE youth, this is where leadership takes place and young people build life skills and relationships. These experiences take them through adulthood, inspiring the positive changes that transform communities, our society, and our world. *How awesome is this place!*





KELLY & MARIO

Wise is where adults continue to learn and grow

MARIO AND KELLY ARE FRIENDS AND ENERGETIC EXPAT EAST COASTERS, who find joy in their families. Each has also managed to carve out time for the Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning at Wise. Kelly is grateful to the Melton School for enhancing her appreciation of and connection to Judaism after she converted to Judaism more than 17 years ago and her formal Jewish education had stopped. Mario is an internationally known artist, as well as our artist-in-residence at Wise. As transformative as the adult education programs are at Wise, the friendships among students are what build a sense of community. *How awesome is this place!*

WISE TEMPLE YEAR IN REVIEW



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1

1 *Soulful Shabbat is pure Wise! It's a wonderful way to welcome Shabbat.*

2 *Religious School kids celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel Independence Day.*

3 *Rabbi David Woznica in dialogue with Mayor Eric Garcetti.*

4 *Freedom School students with Andrea Sonnenberg, Executive Director of Wise Freedom School.*



3



5



6

5 *Charles Fox and Rabbi Eli Herscher take a short stroll together before the Shabbat service honoring Rabbi Herscher's 40 years at Wise. Charles Fox's composition, "Eli, Eli," which premiered during the Shabbat service, was a beautiful and moving tribute to Rabbi Herscher.*

6 *Rabbi Joshua Knobel blesses children at a Simhat Torah celebration.*



4

WISE TEMPLE YEAR



7 Our Shavuot celebration highlights Hagigat HaTorah where our kindergartners receive their Torah.

8 From left: Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback, Rabbi Eli Herscher, and Rabbi Isaiah Zeldin.

9 At Wise Freedom School, the children are encouraged to be creative. Here a teen leader and a student paint a tile together.

10 Wise Temple Youth (WTY) teens at a regional convention for North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY).

IN REVIEW



11

11 Our Wise Freedom School volunteer counselors worked with students to paint giant spheres that filled MacArthur Park Lake as part of Portraits of Hope, bringing artwork to public spaces.

12 From left: Rabbi Uri Herscher, Bonnie Herscher and Rabbi Eli Herscher enjoying the Shabbat service in honor of Eli's 40 years of leadership.

13 A highlight of the summer of 2014 was our congregational trip to Israel.

14 The Facilities team, who work very hard to make the year's events happen without a hitch.



12



13



14



15



17



16

15 Rabbi Ron Stern at the swearing-in ceremony of David Ryu, L.A.'s first Korean American City Council member.

16 Cantor Nathan Lam and his wife Donna Lam, who will be honored next year.

17 At Wise Freedom School, Rabbi Ron Stern, a teen leader and students jam at the Wise School Music Innovation Lab.

wish you a happy and healthy 5776!

You are reading an Annual Report that bears similarities to a typical report, but differs in some material ways. Sure there is the requisite financial information, but the most important part of our report is the amazing and transformative work our Temple is doing in building community, creating meaning, sustaining the Jewish people, engaging our youth and supporting Israel.

We are ending a most remarkable year at Stephen Wise Temple. For only the second time in our history, we chose a new Senior Rabbi. Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback, who has been at the helm of our schools for the past three years, has seamlessly stepped into this awesome role. He brings with him a lifetime of service to, and love for, Temple life, Israel and the Jewish people. His vision begins with the twin objectives of “making meaning” and “changing the world.”

These simple words really encapsulate what our Temple is all about. We all struggle to find purpose in our lives and to find community for celebration, solace when we need it, intellectual growth and education for our children. Stephen Wise Temple helps give our lives meaning and satisfies the hunger of our souls. Our Temple also works together, employing our Jewish values, to make the world a better place.

Our rabbinic transition is big news, but there has been so much more. With most of the contributions for Katz Pavilion and Shalom Garden in hand, we will break ground in 2016 on these needed facilities. We have improved our catering operations at the place with the best views in the city. We have imposed rigorous cash management and balanced budgeting. We have handled the transition of Milken Community School, have revamped our communications and branding, and are in the process of meaningful upgrades in our communications, information technology and membership management systems. These improvements will enable us to personalize our communications and make membership renewal and the procurement of High Holy Day tickets less complex, all while saving us money. In the coming year, you should see improved communications and better member service. This could not happen without a great staff and dedicated lay leadership, beginning with an extraordinary Board of Directors, who give selflessly of their time and talents. We are blessed with dedicated and visionary Clergy, teachers and professional staff who support our mission in all they do.

Our Temple must be run as a “business,” but it is really a holy place, an educational institution, a provider of social services, and a sacred community. We are grateful for the membership contributions of each and every one of you. Our obligation to our community, to the next generation of our people, to Israel and to making the world a better place is ongoing. Thank you for your support of our important mission.

My hope for us all in 5776 is that we become even more engaged and committed to our beloved Temple and the values—and mission—for which it stands.

Warm regards,



Glenn Sonnenberg
TEMPLE PRESIDENT

MESSAGE FROM OUR TEMPLE PRESIDENT



STEPHEN WISE TEMPLE BY THE NUMBERS

Through Bet Tzedek, **25** attorneys provided legal aid to Holocaust survivors.

7,000

pounds of groceries donated to SOVA by our Temple and School community.

60

homeless veterans were housed through the Home for Good program.

225

students attended Wise Freedom School this summer, supported by over **175** volunteers with students on three campuses

Over **400**

people attended the dialogue with Mayor Eric Garcetti and Rabbi David Woznica.

82

teens participated in WTY, one of the biggest Temple youth groups in Southern California.

234

kids served by Camp Wise, among the top 3 largest Jewish day camps in Los Angeles.

1,286

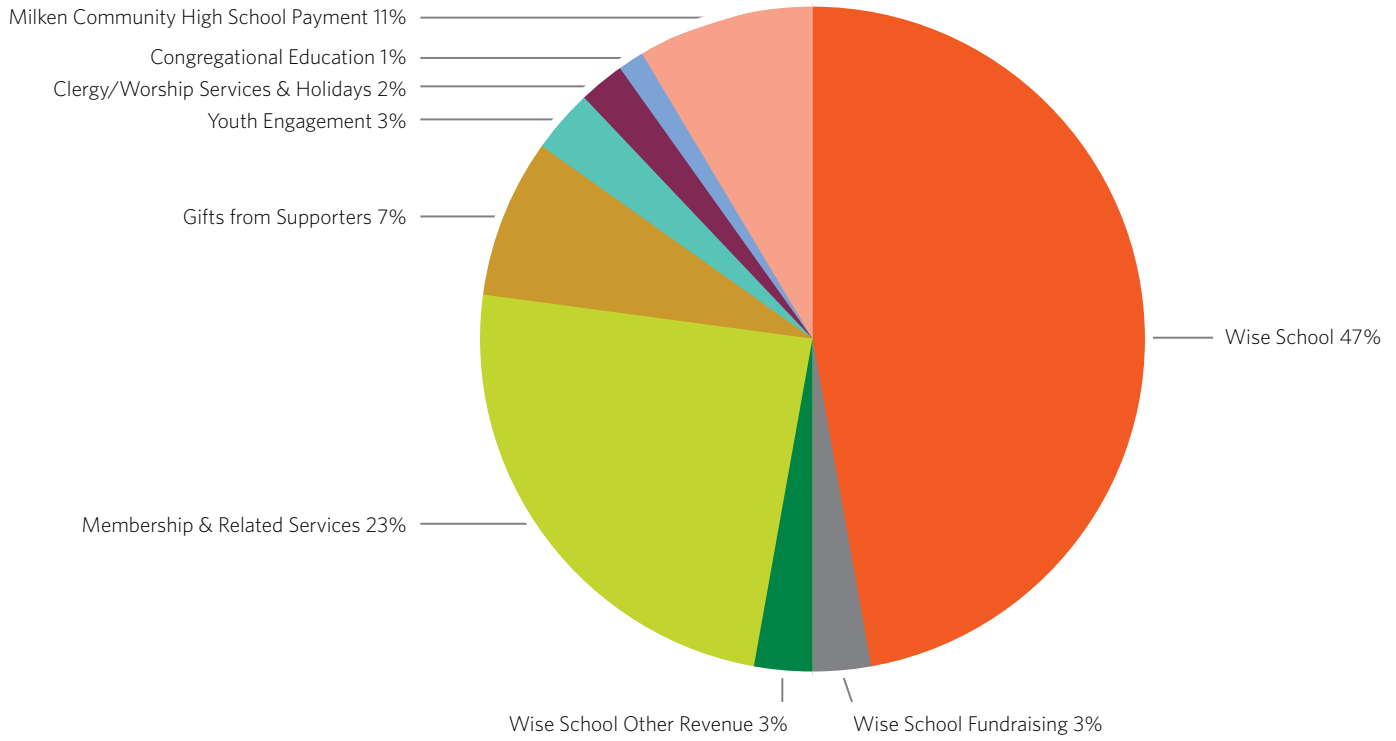
people attended the Shabbat service honoring Rabbi Eli Herscher.

476

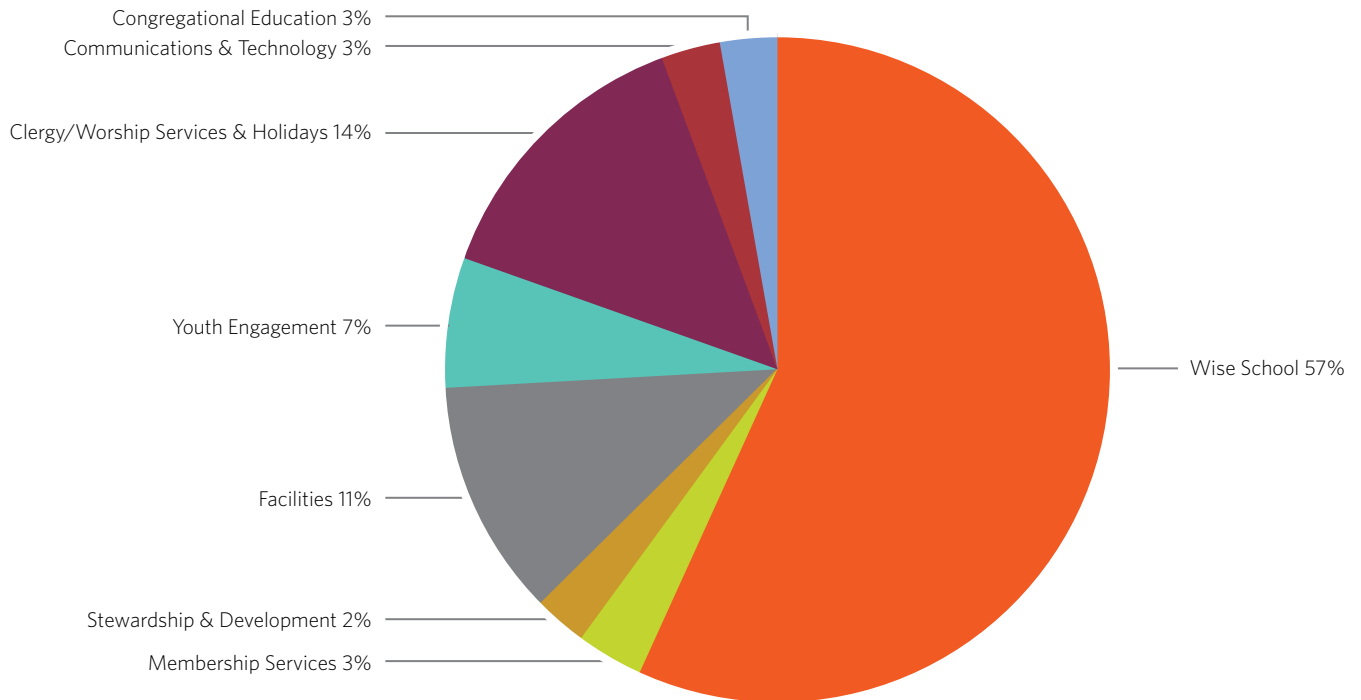
children enrolled in Wise School

2014/2015 Stephen Wise Temple

SOURCES OF REVENUE – \$17 MILLION



EXPENSES – \$17 MILLION



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