

LEARNING

MAKING
MEANING

TRANSFORMING



STEPHEN
WISE TEMPLE



CHANGING
THE WORLD

2015-2016
ANNUAL REPORT

GROWING

TRANSITION

WE MAKE MEANING AND CHANGE THE WORLD

We do this in sacred community through...

...ongoing, significant acts of loving kindness and Tikkun Olam
(גמילות חסדים-תיקון עולם)

...the mindful study of Torah and the pursuit of wisdom (תלמוד תורה)

...worship that inspires, uplifts, and connects us to God (עבודה)

...a lifelong commitment to one another, Israel, and the Jewish People (עמידות)

TEMPLE LEADERSHIP *(as of September 2016)*

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Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback
Cantor Nathan Lam
Rabbi David Woznica
Rabbi Ron Stern
Rabbi Josh Knobel
Cantor Emma Lutz
Rabbi Isaiah Zeldin,
Founding Rabbi
Rabbi Eli Herscher
Senior Rabbi Emeritus

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LIVING IN JOY

A Message from Our Senior Rabbi

The great Hassidic master, Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav, once taught: "It is a great *mitzvah* (obligation) always to live in joy!" What did he mean by this? That we should always be happy? Certainly not — he knew as well as we do that life is filled with joy and sadness, hardship and exultation. Living in joy, however, is not about always being happy. It's about living a life of meaning and purpose. It's about being part of something much bigger than yourself. It's about connecting to a heritage that is millennia old. And it's about being part of a community that provides support, friendship, and love.

It's what our Temple and our Schools are all about. Making meaning and changing the world for the better through study, worship, sacred community, and acts of loving kindness.

But Rabbi Nahman taught something else about joy. The continuation of his proverb reminds us that it is "a great joy always to live a life of *mitzvah*!" What did he mean by this? That great satisfaction and true happiness are only possible when we commit ourselves to embracing our responsibility to bring goodness, healing, light, wisdom, and love into the world. And this is also who we are: a community that takes responsibility for one another, for our neighbors, for Israel and for all humanity.

It is a special joy — a great *simcha* — to be a part of this extraordinary community and to be your partner in making meaning and changing the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yoshi Zweiback".

Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback

SENIOR RABBI



A Message from Our Vice-President of Development

"My involvement in our wonderful Stephen Wise community is an honor and a privilege ... Working with our talented Clergy and professional staff enriches my life each and every day.

Rick and I are grateful for the outstanding Jewish education our children received in our Schools and especially thankful for the love they both have for our Temple and our community. Their strong sense of belonging and appreciation for their Jewish values and identity are all due to our involvement at the Temple. Stephen Wise is our home and we have made lifelong friendships that we treasure. Our lives would not be the same if it weren't for the Temple."

Janine Kolodny

Janine Kolodny

VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT





OUR YEAR OF TRANSITION

Rabbi Yoshi's Installation

Hundreds of people gathered at Stephen Wise Temple for the installation of Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback as Senior Rabbi. "We make meaning and change the world," the vision statement introduced by Rabbi Yoshi, has become central to the Temple's culture.

Only the third Senior Rabbi in the 52 years since the founding of the Temple, Rabbi Yoshi succeeded Rabbi Eli Herscher, who became Senior Rabbi Emeritus last June, and founding Rabbi Isaiah Zeldin. Previously Head of Wise School as well as a member of the Temple Clergy team, Rabbi Yoshi continues his close association with Wise School, while bringing a fresh vision, strong commitment, and youthful energy to his leadership of the Temple.

In the words of Rabbi Aaron D. Panken, Ph.D., of Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, Rabbi Yoshi is a "thoughtful teacher and educator; inspiring speaker and sensitive pastor; talented musician and songleader; leader of diverse, creative and contemporary modes of religious and spiritual life and a committed Reform Jew who understands what it means to build our community."



OUR YEAR OF MAKING MEANING

Led by our internationally known Cantor Nathan Lam, Stephen Wise Temple inspires our members and the greater community with a storied musical legacy spanning over 50 years. By combining a mix of traditional melodies, modern pop-infused arrangements, and special commissions, the Wise community continues to be a shining musical light for the Reform Jewish movement.

This year, Wise expanded its reach beyond our beautiful campus by traveling throughout Los Angeles to different parks and beaches, bringing our unique musical tradition to a variety of picturesque locations on Shabbat: Balboa Park in Encino and Santa Monica's Crescent Bay Park on the beach, for example.

In February, as part of a memorable and special evening of unity and prayer, Cantor Lam and the Wise community welcomed distinguished guests Bishop Kenneth Ulmer and the Sacred Praise Chorale gospel choir directed by Dr. Diane White-Clayton from Faithful Central Bible Church. The choir joined our Soulful Shabbat musical team for a truly uplifting service that had hundreds of members and visitors out of their seats, clapping and singing along to new melodies and inspirational renditions of traditional tunes alike.

"To say the interfaith service at Temple was incredible is an understatement! We were filled with positive emotion."

— MEMBERS ANNIE AND TED HAAS



We are thrilled to honor Donna and Cantor Nathan Lam with an exciting concert on November 13, 2016 at the Orpheum Theatre. For more information, please visit our website at WiseLA.org or contact Jessica Lebovits at JLebovits@WiseLA.org.



A Message from Our Head of School

The enthusiasm of our students, faculty, and parents has led STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) to become an important focus in Wise School's curriculum. Over the last year, Wise School's science program has continued to inspire scientific thinking among our young Wise Scientists. A large part of this was the implementation of various engineering design challenges across the grade levels that tied into physical, earth, and life sciences. The new Tyberg Arts and Innovation Lab serves as a state-of-the-art learning and flexible creative space where students can work in a collaborative environment with each other.

In April, we hosted our 2nd Annual Family STEAM Night, where families participated in fun STEAM activities. During Open House, our 6th Grade students successfully presented their science fair projects, showcasing their research skills and abilities to use the scientific method.

Our theme for this past year at Wise School, "The Other is Me," which proved to be even more meaningful than we imagined. Put into practice every day, students of all ages demonstrated an empathy for each other and an appreciation for working together. By integrating content through our STEAM initiative, teachers created experiential learning opportunities.

For example, our 4th grade students were given the task to create a prosthetic limb using math, engineering, design principles and technology. Their finished products were functional and something to behold!

Tami Weiser

Tami Weiser
HEAD OF SCHOOL



OUR YEAR OF CHANGING THE WORLD

Teaching. Enriching. Inspiring.

Freedom School provides a six-week summer literacy and leadership program that serves over 250 students from LA's poor neighborhoods who live in at-risk environments free of charge. The academic program mitigates the "summer slide", where skills learned during the school year are lost over the summer months. In addition, the Wise Freedom School provides enrichment activities that foster self-confidence and generates a positive attitude toward learning. The children are supported by caring adults and college students, who project their enthusiasm for learning and reading, and commit to serving as mentors throughout the summer. Unique to Wise, among all the Freedom Schools in the nation is our High School volunteer program. Over 100 Jewish youths from across the city volunteer as mentors and classroom aides during our six week program. They not only provide inspiration to our young scholars, but the hands-on experience provides our Jewish teen volunteers with a life changing opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our most challenged children.

"Having worked with Freedom School for the past four years, we are so honored and excited to finally spend our summer as Servant Leader Interns. It is so amazing to see our scholars thrive and grow throughout the summer, and they truly inspire us every day."

—CARLY BERGER AND RACHEL PERSKY





“There are men and women protecting me every minute of every day, anywhere in the world there might be or could be a threat to the American way of life these people don’t know me but they are there for me. These are my heroes and it is my honor to do whatever I can to pay them back. Homes for Heroes gives me an opportunity to do this in a small way.”

– SHELLY LEVY

Welcoming Our Heroes Home

In June 2015, national and local leaders joined United Way’s Home For Good in kicking off Homes For Heroes, an effort to identify 1,000 landlords to house veterans in need. Finding housing for our veterans has never been as important as it is today, when many of our returning soldiers have no place to go at night. Property owners at Wise have designated over 60 of their units to the program.

Co-Chairs Shelly Levy and Patricia Ogden organized a drive to create “Welcome Home” baskets for our Veterans to receive when they move into their new homes. By fundraising for items, as well as collecting donations of household items ranging from linens and towels, to kitchenware, hygiene, and cleaning items, and more, we have donated many baskets to newly-housed veterans and continue to collect items at the Temple for future residents. One property owner even held a special reception and appreciation event for those who gave so much for our country and community.

If you’re a property owner and would like to add housing units into the program, please contact Rabbi Stern at RStern@WiseLA.org. To volunteer in other ways, contact Jennifer Smith at JSmith@WiseLA.org





“Being a part of the Melton School program has been a truly wonderful and rewarding experience for me. Delving into our history, customs, and traditions in this class allowed me to grasp a better understanding of my religion. I look forward to my continuation of learning with Melton and increasing my knowledge of our rich Jewish heritage.” –HILDA BERGER

OUR YEAR OF

Wise’s Melton School Wins International Acclaim

This year, the Melton School of Stephen Wise Temple’s Center for Jewish Life was honored to receive the Florence Melton Award for true excellence exhibited by our program. In sharing the news of this international award, Judy Mars Kupchan, the CEO of the Florence Melton School, wrote that “among our 50 schools, this coveted recognition is in tribute to the outstanding model that you have created at Stephen Wise Temple.”

On Sunday, January 17, 2016 Rabbi David Woznica and Rabbi Karen Strok were recognized at the International Melton Conference and accepted the award on behalf of our congregation. This was truly a proud moment in the history of continuing education at Wise and a testament to the commitment of all those who participate in our Center for Jewish Life. Wise’s Melton School is the largest Synagogue-based Melton School in the world.





“Traveling with TALAVI gives you an experience you could never hope to have with any other group. For 10 days, you will be totally immersed in another culture. The sites, the activities, the food, but most especially the people make the TALAVI experience once-in-a-lifetime.”

– DANTE VAISBORT, L.A.

COMMITTED LEARNING

Expanding the World for Our Teens

WTY (Wise Temple Youth) welcomed Lithuanian and Israeli 9th and 10th grade guests to Los Angeles for 10 days as part of the Jewish Federation School Twinning Program. TALAVI (Tel Aviv-Los Angeles-Vilnius, Lithuania) brings together teens from three countries in an effort to show our teens Jewish life across the world; to build community; forge lifelong friendships; and educate our students about Jewish history and culture.

Teens from WTY and Santa Monica Synagogue hosted 18 students from Israel and Lithuania for a weekend at Camp JCA Shalom. Together they celebrated Shabbat, visited the Museum of Tolerance, volunteered with Russian senior citizens, and learned from residents at Beit T’shuvah. For all involved it was an incredible and meaningful experience that bridged many cultures and traditions from across the Jewish world.

“For me , TALAVI was a great opportunity to meet new people from different countries and to create real friendships with them. I think It’s a life changing experience because you don’t usually have the chance to meet other Jews from other communities and to bond with them.”

– BENNY ROTLEVY, ISRAEL





OUR YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION

On June 3, 2016, Wise held its first groundbreaking ceremony on our Temple's campus in 25 years. Community members and major donors to the project, including the Katz family, joined City Council-member Paul Koretz, Clergy and Wise School students for this historic occasion. The construction project will transform Hershenson Hall into an arts, sports, and cultural pavilion that makes use of state-of-the-art technology to provide a versatile event space. Katz Family Pavilion and Shalom Garden will become the hub of innovative programming, compelling events, and unforgettable experiences, all while providing a warm and welcoming atmosphere for the community for years to come.

This next major phase in the history of Stephen Wise Temple and Schools marks the continuation of a vision inspired by Rabbi Zeldin, shepherded by Rabbi Herscher, and now carried on by Rabbi Yoshi as we look toward the future of the Wise community.

“We were so inspired by Rabbi Herscher’s vision for the future of the Temple and School and what wonderful opportunities this Pavilion will mean for our congregants and students. From Bar and Bat Mitzvahs to basketball games to High Holy day services, this Pavilion will be a place for all to gather, celebrate and play. We are thrilled to be a part of the future.”

– RON, TODD, AND RANDALL KATZ AND FAMILY



A Message from Our Temple President

During this past year the world has seen a lot of chaos, terror, and acts of violence. At home we are in the middle of a very polarizing political campaign. However, here at Stephen Wise Temple and Schools we have seen a year which has completed the revitalization and rebirth of our special and sacred place on top of our beautiful mountaintop! Wise School (under the leadership of Tami Weiser) is thriving, and our clergy are energized and focused on providing a deep and moving experience for every Temple member. We are providing a community for all of us to enjoy and be proud of, and where we can learn, engage, study, act together to support Israel and our community through acts of Tzedakah and Tikkun Olam, celebrate simchas, practice Jewish values and to comfort those in our midst that are in need of healing.

I am proud to report that we are operating with a balanced budget, have just broken ground on phase one of the redevelopment and re-imagining of our campus which will include transforming and enlarging Herschenson Hall into a much needed full-size gym and a multipurpose space. This new area of campus will be known as the Katz Family Pavilion in honor of the Katz family and their very generous lead gift to the project. We are so blessed to have so many amazing lay leaders who tirelessly and selflessly volunteer their time and give so generously of their resources. With their and your support Stephen Wise Temple and Schools can be such an amazing place and offer all that it does, including making membership possible for all those who wish to belong. We want everyone who desires to be a Temple member to feel welcome!

I feel particularly fortunate to have this opportunity to be your President and I am committed to do all that I can to make sure that every encounter that each of you has with our Temple and Schools is meaningful, warm, and welcoming. I feel very strongly the responsibility we have to make sure that we honor the legacy and vision of Rabbi Zeldin and the many founding members of Stephen Wise—and to make certain that it is strong, growing, and is the leader in the Los Angeles and greater Jewish Community.

I encourage each and every one of you to be present frequently, and if you are not already doing so, to take advantage of all of the amazing studying and learning opportunities that are taking place constantly both on our campus and in the homes of our members in your neighborhood. In the weeks and months ahead we will be continuing this outreach into the community to bring Jewish study and celebrations closer to your homes. Please spend some time on our web site, WiseLA.org. There is so much for you to learn and take advantage of. You can even watch all of our Rabbis' sermons.

Please feel free at any time to reach out to me at SFishman@WiseLA.org with any suggestions, comments, and even criticisms. I welcome your valuable feedback.

Warmly,



Steven Fishman

100% Teacher participation and **91%** Parent Participation in our successful Wise School Annual Giving campaign

6000

students enrolled at Wise School

Over **5,600** Temple members and guests worshipped with us during the High Holy Days

WISE BY THE NUMBERS

We had over **250** Freedom School students across 3 campuses

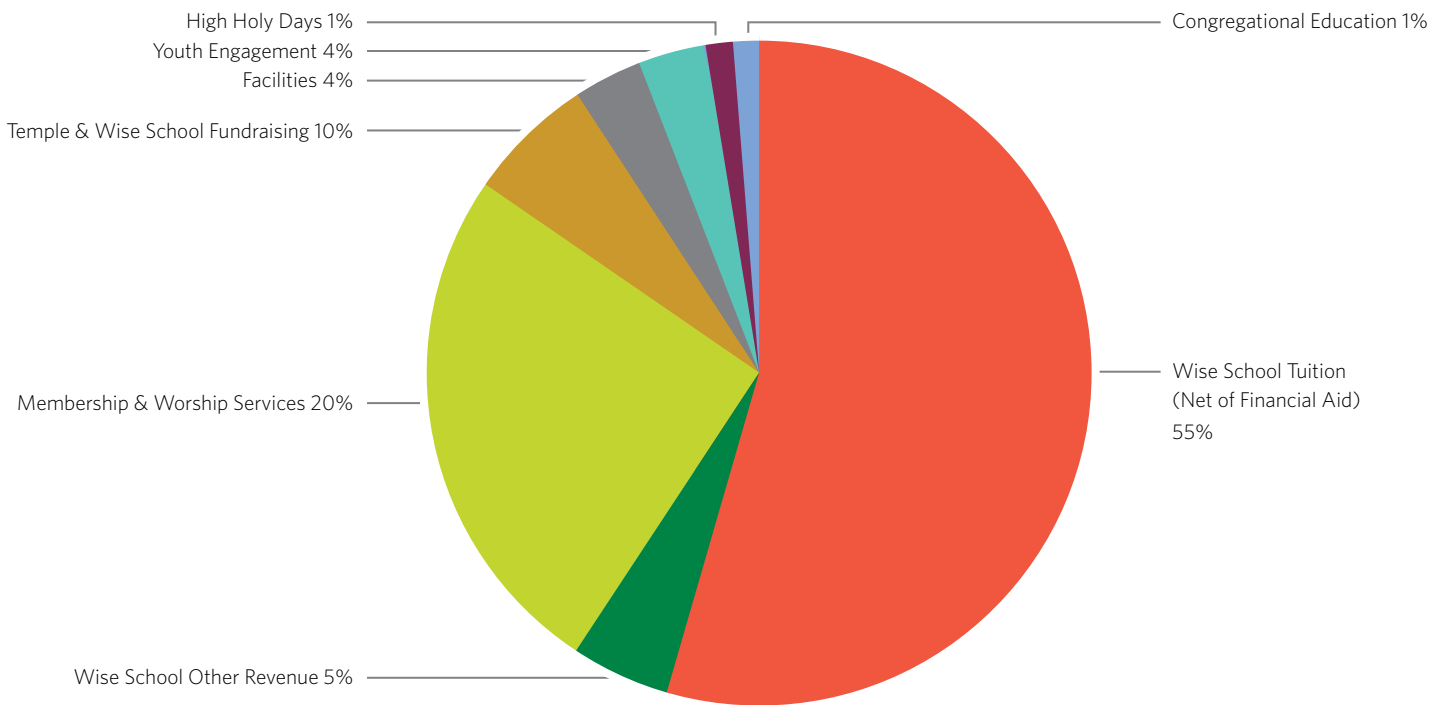
3,000 lifelong learners attended one or more Center for Jewish Life dialogues, lectures, or classes

106 congregants joined the Wise delegation at the AIPAC Conference in Washington, D.C.

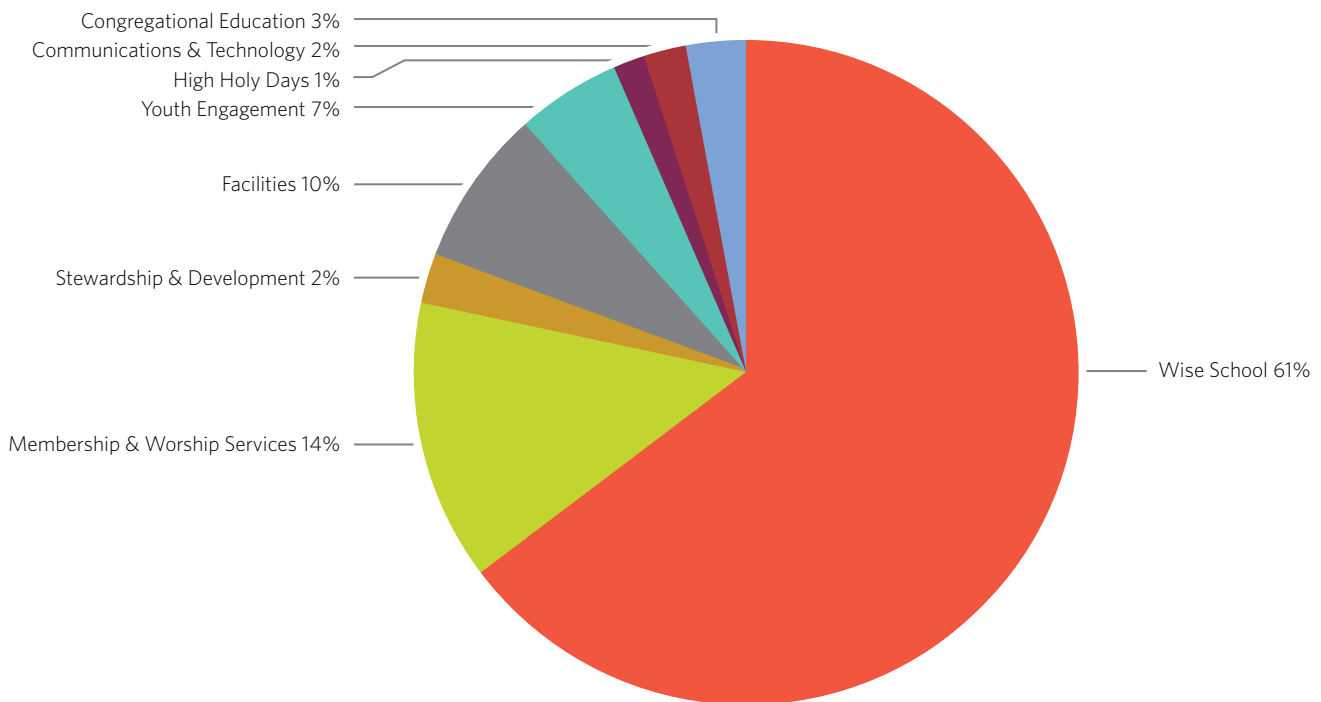
Nearly **300** campers experienced **1,023** camper Weeks, a new record!!

2015/2016 Stephen Wise Temple

SOURCES OF REVENUE - \$17 MILLION



EXPENSES - \$17 MILLION



Thank you to our generous donors who make our great work possible!

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