



# Advocacy Update

Sent January 18, 2012

## **Or Ami Award Winning Sisterhoods, Continued**

The projects we are featuring this week focus attention on WRJ women's groups as emotionally-supportive communities.

### **Embrace -- Each Member Brings Ruach and Connects to Everyone. Congregation Emanu El Sisterhood, Houston, TX**

**(sispres@emanuelhouston.org)**

Through Embrace, the sisterhood initiates opportunities to bond with women, sisterhoods, and communities beyond its congregation through cultural, spiritual, and emotionally-supportive programming. Embrace began with the establishment of links with Temple David Sisterhood in Perth Australia. Current initiatives include: program planning with WRJ-affiliated Beth Shalom Sisterhood in Bryan Texas; a joint program with Houston's Congregation Beth Israel Sisterhood; and women chefs from Joseftal and Dado Israel participating in "Ethnic Flavors," a program of the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston, at United Orthodox Synagogue.

### **P'tach Libeynu, Open Our Hearts**

**Women of Isaiah, Temple Isaiah, Lafayette, CA**

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The sisterhood started an East Bay Area Jewish community coalition that included rabbis, mental health professionals, and representatives of Jewish agencies dedicated to eliminating the stigma of mental illness in the Jewish community. The committee organized a conference, held at Temple Isaiah, that revealed the need for safe, accepting, and welcoming places for individuals with mental illness and their families. Support groups for family members have been established and the committee is providing educational programs for clergy and synagogue leaders. Programs, as well as information for congregants through emails, conversations, and sermons, have begun the process for systemic change.

In the coming weeks, Or Ami programs and projects will be included among the social justice issues on which action by WRJ women is needed.