

**YES FUND (COS) EVENT HONORING RABBI MICHELE LENKE –  
by the Sisterhood of Temple Beth Shalom, Needham, MA  
December 5, 2010**

Last spring we decided that it had been too long since our sisterhood had held a YES Fund event – 15 years! The question we had was – what was the best type of event to have, one that would attract a large number of people. We thought that honoring someone was the way to go. We had no trouble deciding on who our honoree would be – Rabbi Michele Lenke, the Renaissance Rabbi-Educator at our temple. Rabbi Lenke is well respected within our temple community. She tutors all bar/bat mitzvah students, teaches adult education classes and is a strong supporter of our sisterhood and WRJ.

**Getting Started**

Forming committee – We started by asking some members of the congregation to be part of our community. Since Rabbi Lenke touches all aspects of our temple life, we wanted the event to be open to the entire congregation. We decided to ask a cross-section of men and women including two past Temple presidents, past sisterhood presidents, former (adult) students, and other fans of Rabbi Lenke. We also invited our clergy and Temple president to serve as honorary members of the committee.

Additional members – After announcement of the event (which included the host committee members) appeared in the temple monthly newsletter, we had several people come up to us and ask to be part of the committee! How often does that happen?

**Planning**

We were able to plan the event with just a few committee meetings. Committee members decided what they wanted to work on – food, decorations, mailings, publicity, set-up, etc. We decided to have a vegetarian menu, as many of the people attending are vegetarians including the guest of honor. The color theme was blue and gold – representing UCLA, a favorite of Rabbi Lenke's. The colors were reflected in the tablecloths and flowers. Our temple's Garden Club generously donated the centerpieces and bouquet. The wine was also given to us at no cost by three local liquor stores.

**Underwriters**

Since we had not had a YES Fund program for many years, we did not have a budget line item to pay for any expenses. Sisterhood offered to donate \$200 if the money was needed. We asked each member of the host committee and sisterhood board members to donate \$25 to help pay for the event expenses or to bring a food item. Any money that was not spent would go to the YES Fund. We collected \$1,500 – definitely enough to cover our costs!

**INVITATIONS**

Our invitation was done on an 8 ½ X 11 double-sided paper. The invitation side included a tear-off RSVP section. The other side contained information about the YES Fund and listed our host committee. We asked for a minimum donation of \$36 to attend and included a section for those who were unable to attend but wanted to contribute. The invitation was also included in the Temple's monthly bulletin and on the Temple's website.

Invitations were mailed to all members of our congregation as well as Rabbi Lenke's guest list. Temple staff was also invited.

**The Event**

Rabbi Lenke provided us with a list of people she wanted to include. Including Rabbi Lenke's guests and members of our congregation, there were close to 150 who attended the event.

Materials provided by the WRJ office were placed on all tables. Program booklets had a brief write-up of WRJ,

the YES Fund, a biography of Rabbi Lenke, a list of all donors, a list of underwriters, thank you's to those who donated services, and the host committee.

**Program:**

3:00 – 4:00 Wine & appetizers; 4:00 – Program

Speakers included our senior rabbi, associate rabbi, rabbi emeritus, and Carol Hanover (past WRJ District One president). The speakers incorporated the UCLA theme by using the letters U, C, L and A to describe Rabbi Lenke.

We were then treated to a “musical interlude” – song written about Rabbi Lenke and performed by a few of our committee members.

We presented Rabbi Lenke with a Chai certificate and flower bouquet.

The program ended with the lighting of Chanukah candles.

**Final Results**

We raised \$6,716! This included 127 donations from those who attended the event and those who could not be there.

**Some of the comments we received:**

*Mazel tov on planning and orchestrating one of the most delightful and memorable afternoons I have experienced at our Temple!*

*The entire event was perfect from beginning to end...The room looked beautiful, the food was plentiful, and the entire program was incredible!*

*What a most fitting tribute to Michele! This will certainly be a memory she will long cherish. Thank you for bringing our community together!*

*I second all the wonderful things that have been said--a very-special event--thank you to all who planned a perfect tribute afternoon---love, Ina*

*I 'third' all the kudos. It was an amazing and heartfelt event.*

Event Co-Chairs – Arline Aransky & Betty Weiner

Arline is a past local Sisterhood president, a past District president and past member of the WRJ Board  
Betty is a past local Sisterhood president and a current member of the WRJ Board