



“Hineni: Here I Am Autism, Jewish Education, and Inclusion”

Please Join Us at Temple Beth-El Mekor Chayim

PROGRAM OF EVENTS

EVENTS ARE ALL OPEN TO EVERYONE IN OUR GREATER JEWISH COMMUNITY AT NO CHARGE

Please RSVP for Friday evening dinner and Saturday luncheon by 2/2/2020 at inclusion@tbemc.org

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2020

Kabbalat Shabbat Services – 6:15 pm

Dairy dinner and education program following services

D’var Topic: “What Judaism Tells Us”

Using this week’s Parsha, Shelly will weave these two ideas together talking about how together, the Parsha and Judaism itself invite inclusion and belonging.

Over dinner:

Shelly will offer a short piece on Inclusion and then open the floor for Q&A

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2020

Shabbat Services - 9:30 am

Kiddush Lunch & Learn immediately following services

Topic: Hineni—Educating Children on the Autism Spectrum

Proverbs 22:6 tell us to “Teach each child according to their way.” With so many of our children receiving autism spectrum and other developmental diagnoses, we need to learn what this means as parents, educators, and clergy work together to support children in Jewish education.

Shelly Christensen is the mom of an adult son with ASD who experienced the ups and downs of navigating her son’s inclusion in Jewish preschool and religious school with positive results. She has worked with many children and their families on the spectrum as a veteran B’nai mitzvah tutor and has a lot to share about what it really means to educate and support our kids.

Havdalah Service - 5:30 pm

Topic: Celebrating Uniqueness and Togetherness

Havdalah itself is inclusive. We are all unique and different. The Havdalah candle is what weaves us together. Join us for Havdalah and learn how we can weave together our uniqueness with our Jewishness while welcoming the new week.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2020

Parent’s Morning Forum

9:30 – 11:45 am

Bagel Breakfast

TEMPLE BETH-EL MEKOR CHAYIM | 338 WALNUT AVENUE | CRANFORD, NJ 07016 | 908-276-9231 | www.tbemc.org



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For all parents throughout our greater Jewish Community.

Topic: “The Journey to Hope” How Parents Adapt to Raising a Child with a Disability

When a child is diagnosed, as parents we are suddenly overwhelmed by so many questions that we don't know where to turn first. In this community forum, author and parent Shelly Christensen, will share how parents adapt to raising their child, and the needs they have for information, support, and self-care. Parents and other family members and individuals who work with children and families will learn how understanding the journey can lead to effective collaborations that support children with disabilities and mental health conditions.

Community Afternoon Forum

2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Topic: From Longing to Belonging—The Practical Keys to Create the Structure of Inclusion

The Structure of Inclusion is a process that moves synagogues and faith-based organizations toward genuine participation and inclusion. Shelly will share the keys to lay the foundation for inclusion and what you can expect as you develop a plan to lead your organization toward genuine belonging for all people. Learn the practical steps you can take to build on what you are currently doing, how to set realistic goals, and who should be involved. In this forum, we will share several stories of how people with disabilities and mental health conditions are living the dream of belonging.



Our Speaker: Shelly Christensen, MA

Shelly Christensen, a pioneer in the faith community disability inclusion movement, is an international speaker, author and consultant. Her new book is, “From Longing to Belonging--A Practical Guide to Including People with Disabilities and Mental Health Conditions in Your Faith Community”.

Shelly co-founded Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion Month (JDAIM) and serves as its organizer. She directed the award-winning Jewish Community Inclusion Program for People with Disabilities in Minneapolis for 13 years before founding her consulting group, Inclusion Innovations. Shelly has contributed to many Jewish inclusion initiatives including the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Union for Reform Judaism, Yachad, the Ruderman Chabad Inclusion Initiative, Jewish Federations of North America, and the Jewish Leadership Institute on Disabilities and Inclusion.

Shelly believes that people with disabilities and mental health conditions, and those who love them, want what anyone else wants—to belong, to contribute, and to be a valued member of their Jewish community.

Shelly lives in Minneapolis with her husband, Rick. They have three sons, one of whom lives with a disability. With insight, passion, and humor, Shelly provides pathways that encourage all Jewish organizations to move from longing to belonging.

**This program is made possible in part by support from the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ's Greater MetroWest ABLE, the Gary Aidekman Family Foundation and the Sylvia and Seymour Rubenstein Special Needs Endowment Fund.

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