

# Temple Beth Abraham: BRIDGES

## Connecting TBA's Rich Tradition to a Vibrant Future

Temple Beth Abraham was the first Jewish institution established in Tarrytown and the surrounding communities, giving us a unique and important role in the life of the Rivertowns. For more than 100 years, we have been *the* place for the Jewish community to celebrate and to mourn, to educate our children and ourselves, to join together in worship and spirituality, and to volunteer and repair the world. We are a link to the wider Jewish community, and the face of Judaism to our neighbors. For all who are part of Temple Beth Abraham and for all those yet to come, we offer the wisdom of a timeless tradition expressed in new and meaningful ways and the opportunity to apply our approaches and teachings to deepen and enrich our lives.

TBA was conceived in the 1880's by a small group of visionaries who saw the need for a place to serve as the heart of their fledgling Jewish community. Strongly rooted in their European past while building new lives in America, they imagined a synagogue that would serve as a bridge, linking them and their children with an exciting future empowered by the freedom and opportunities offered in America.

We are living proof of their success. While much has changed since TBA began, our fundamental mission remains the same. We are still the heart of the Jewish community in the Rivertowns, and we continue to be the bridge to a vibrant Jewish future here.

One of the most inspiring characteristics of our founders was their courage. It took courage to leave the Old Country, and then courage again to leave the familiar confines of the Lower East Side for what must have seemed like the wilderness of the Hudson Valley. It took a leap of faith to believe enough in their future here that they invested in it by building a synagogue. Through the years, the members of TBA have continued to believe in a Jewish future and continued to build. Now in our third home, we plan to build on their investment.

We have inherited the fruits of our founders' collective courage, wisdom and generosity. We have inherited their questions as well: What kind of future do we imagine for our community here in the Rivertowns? What will the Judaism of our children and future generations look like, and what can we do today to make that future possible? Together we will answer these and other questions. Together we will dream of TBA's future and help bring it to life. Together we will build the bridge that allows future generations to inherit the fruits of *our courage, wisdom and generosity*.

As a thriving, unified community, we will build a bridge to:

- Financial Sustainability

- Continued Growth
- Programmatic Excellence
- A Contemporary, Inspiring Home
- Affordability
- A Fully Welcoming and Connected Communal and Jewish Experience

We ask you to invest in our congregation's future as we launch this transformative campaign: **Bridges: Connecting TBA's Rich Tradition to a Vibrant Future.** This effort will bring new life to our building, expand the range of programs and services, and secure our financial future. Together we will renew the links between our pride in our past, our joy at what we have made real, and our dreams of what is possible.

The recent renovation of our main sanctuary has shown us how a modern, refurbished space can function. We have made the room fully accessible, helping us to make our services warmer and more intimate, and, through the addition of technology, we have expanded our reach beyond the walls of the building. The joy with which the renewed sanctuary has been received also highlights how much work is necessary to make the rest of the building equally able to meet the needs of our current and future community. We have created a comprehensive facility master plan for the next phases of our building renovations. One of our primary goals is to make the building warmer, inviting and accessible to all, a truly key aspect of being a welcoming congregational community in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

At the same time, even as we enhance our physical structure, we must also build a foundation for financial stability and security which will support TBA well into the future. Changing from a traditional dues model to voluntary commitments is an important first step, making it easier for families to connect and helping us lead the way to a new paradigm for the Jewish community. The next step is to create a meaningful endowment fund which will help ensure that TBA can continue to fulfill its mission, while also being fully affordable. An endowment will help guarantee that our community is always led by dynamic clergy, offers inspiring educational opportunities from pre-school to post-retirement, features innovative programming, effective communications, and boasts a variety of ways for members to connect with one another and with Jewish tradition.

Simply put, the endowment aspect of our campaign is critical to our growth and ability to fulfill our mission. Our current endowment of around \$350,000 is a start, but is not enough for an organization with nearly a \$1.5 million annual budget. Our endowment should be several times the size of our annual budget, not a small percentage of it.

A robust endowment will allow us to innovate and try new, bold approaches that honor and expand upon our rich traditions, and remain on the cutting edge of American worship and

spiritual communities. It will provide resources which will enable us to better serve *all* of our members by:

- Strengthening our services for Seniors
- Bolstering family programming
- Funding lecture series and scholar-in-residence programs
- Building an even stronger religious school
- Improving our marketing and communications
- Having a stronger financial base from which to operate

Our forebears invested time, energy and money to build what has been, for over a century, the center of Jewish life in the Rivertowns. We invite you to invest in what you believe in – the future of TBA, and of this Jewish community. We have placed ourselves at the forefront of congregations who are reinventing the American synagogue for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and setting the course for the next phase of the American Jewish experience. Join us as we build on our past and create a powerful, meaningful, life-affirming Jewish future.