

...AND THE YOUTH SHALL SEE VISIONS

HONORING VALUED VOLUNTEERS

by Lois Silverman

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- 1: Tonight we have the privilege of being your representatives as we honor our valued volunteers. We will do this with the help of the song you just heard—"...And the Youth Shall See Vision" adapted from Joel 3:1 by Debbie Friedman.

- 2: *And the old shall dream dreams*
- 1: *and the youth shall see visions,*
- 2: *And our hopes shall rise up to the sky.*
- 1: *We must live for today,*
- 2: *we must build for tomorrow.*
- 1: *Give us time,*
- 2: *give us strength,*
- 1: *give us life.*

- 2: What is age?
- 1: And What is youth?
- 2: When you look into the mirror is the face staring back at you the image that you have of yourself?
- 1: Do you think and feel like the young person you were years ago and are you amazed that face in the mirror etched with the experiences of life is really you?
- 2: Certainly age is relative. The valued volunteer, no matter what her age, is always young because she does for others.

- 1: The valued volunteer no matter what her age is always young because she dreams dreams and sees visions of what should be and then works to make those dreams a reality.

- 2: Ruth Oretskin of Vestal is one such woman. Born 80 years ago, she lost her father at an early age, but she was determined to say *kaddish* for him daily. When she moved to Binghamton after her mother remarried several years later, she drove her stepfather and his friends to *minyan* every day, and to this day is a member of the minyan club of Temple Israel.

- 1: She lives her faith and still delivers Meals-on-Wheels, Ruth participates yearly in Operation Brotherhood relieving gentile workers in nursing homes so they may spend Christmas with their families. She raised 4 children and has 9 grandchildren passing to them her dreams and vision. She is not here today because she is in Virginia watching her granddaughter receive her doctorate in Slavic languages. Diane Herz has written about her:

- 2: "What makes her special is her smiling serenity. She is totally gracious, always calm, and in 26 years, I have never seen her ruffled no matter how acute the crisis. And I have never seen her miss an opportunity to help others. No one ever seems to have to ask her, as soon as she hears the need, she's there, willingly, unobtrusively and happy to help."

1: Edythe Aroneck, Auburn, has served her Congregation and Sisterhood for over 50 years, coordinating her Congregation's bulletins, rummage sales, fundraising activities, and New Year's greetings as well as being in charge of the Judaica Shop and serving on the Congregation Board. She has certainly touched the lives of many as she shared her dreams.

2: Volunteers don't always work alone in pursuing their dreams: Dorothy Wallach and Virginia Yaeger of Temple Shaarey Tzedek, Buffalo, have worked almost 60 years together for their Synagogue and Sisterhood.

1: Dorothy, a Canadian by birth, started her lifelong volunteer work in the Canadian Jewish Federation's dental clinic. She moved to the US in 1936 when she married and immediately joined the Sisterhood.

2: Through adult education classes Dorothy met Virginia, and since their children attended the same religious school classes, they began to work together for the Religious School PTA. Dorothy became Vice President and Virginia did publicity.

1: Dorothy served as PTA President and Virginia was there to lend a hand.

2: Dorothy served a term as Hadassah President as Virginia worked as Sisterhood Treasurer. After completing her presidency, Dorothy became Major Gifts Chair to Torah Fund helping her friend Virginia who was then Torah Fund chair.

1: *We must live for today,*

2: *we must build for tomorrow.*

1: *Give us time,*

2: *give us strength,*

1: *give us life.*

[PAUSE]

2: *Today's the day I take my stand, the future's mine to hold.*

Commitments that I make today are dreams from days of old.

1: A congregation of 50 members that is active and dynamic seems like an impossibility in this day and age, but because of people who make a commitment to work for what they believe in—people like Florence Cummins—Temple Beth Joseph, Herkimer, with its 50 members, is both vigorous and vital. Florence has been an enthusiastic behind-the-scenes worker who proudly represents her Congregation and Sisterhood in the community and who seldom gets the limelight. She helps organize the annual InterFaith Council Christmas dinners, works as a literacy volunteer and drives people to meetings or medical appointments. To her fellow Sisterhood members, she is, according to her Sisterhood President Judy Schommr, a "one of a kind" volunteer in this congregation of volunteers.

2: Pearl Siegler, Rita Kanter and Joyce Goldberg of Temple Adath Yeshurun, Syracuse, have taken

stands based upon the traditions of the past in order to pass on a vibrant heritage. Each one is committed to excellence and to Judaism.

- 1: Rita Kanter besides serving 6 years as Sisterhood President and holding many chair in her Sisterhood and Branch, she is an active member of her synagogue Board of Directors. As her Sisterhood President, Cheryl Patt states:

“She can always be counted upon to volunteer when needed. Do you want an opinion? You’ll get it with no minced words. Will she support you? Absolutely! Wonderful art sense. She can always be counted upon, even to help *kasher* a kitchen!”

- 2: Pearl Siegler also served as her Sisterhood’s President for 6 years—alone. Her Sisterhood President Cheryl Patt writes about her:

“Here is a women who can always be counted upon to be present at every meeting and program, and make her presence known. She has opinions and a strong sense of the moral imperative. She’ll share them—forcefully, if need be! She is a voice of fiscal, ethical and moral reason on the Temple Board, with an historical perspective. She has the uncanny ability to reduce a conundrum to its most simple black and white components, making its solution obvious. She is honest, she is reliable, she is indispensable. She is an inspiration with a sense of humor.”

- 1: Joyce Goldberg is a woman who has been Sisterhood President, Branch President and National Vice President. What she does she does with intelligence, professionalism, poise, and wit. Although she doesn’t seem to be one, she is a gadfly to the Temple Board. She keeps them on their toes, reminding them of what is expected, what is right, how it SHOULD be, and she does so like a LADY. Joyce has been responsible for the improvements made to her Temple to make it accessible, and continues to do so now concentrating on getting a ramp for the Chapel’s *bimah*. Cheryl Patt says of her: “Joyce is protocol, Joyce is proper, Joyce is ethical, Joyce is full of surprises! She always makes herself available as a resource to her Sisterhood, to her Temple, to her Branch Board and the National Board.”

- 2: *I have to make the way for generations come and go.*

I’ll have to teach them what I’ve learned so they will come to know:

- 1: A number of our valued volunteers tonight are educators. They know that we must educate ourselves as we teach our children.

- 2: Dr. Sarah Brooks of Temple Beth El, Utica, holds a Ph.D. in math which she earned after raising her three children. She also holds three bachelor and two masters degrees. It was after a distinguished career as a teacher that Sarah started a new career as volunteer at the top—as the first woman elected President of the Upstate Apple Users Group—now one of the largest Macintosh computer groups in the country—and then as President of the Sisterhood. She soon became a member of the Congregation Board, and it was she who trained the Congregation’s staff in computer usage. She continues today as a professor of math and as Sisterhood President for the fourth year.

1: Sadie Schneider, Congregation Agudat Achim, Schenectady is a retired guidance counselor. She has been President of her Sisterhood and helped restructured that organization into Women's Network about 12 years ago. It is widely felt that without Sadie's instigation, there would be no woman's organization at Congregation Agudat Achim; certainly the kind of caring organization that this group is has a lot to do with Sadie's ability to see what people needed as volunteers and as beneficiaries of the organization's services. Sadie has held many portfolios on the Branch level, in her synagogue, and in her community. She co-chaired her synagogue's 100th anniversary celebration. But most remarkable is that she has been a member of the synagogue's adult education committee for more than 40 years thanks to her own continuing quest for knowledge and her ability to convey her enthusiasm to learn to people of all ages.

[PAUSE]

2: *Now I'm grown, the years have passed, I've come to understand.*

There are choices to be made and my life's at my command.

1: *I cannot have a future 'till I embrace my past.*

I promise to pursue the challenge, time is going fast.

2: Challenges of balancing commitment to one's family, to one's faith, to one's organization, and to one's own needs is important to the Sisterhood volunteer of the fast moving 90's.

1: Edna Kielar, of Temple Beth El, Tonawanda, currently is Branch Recording Secretary as well as Sisterhood Corresponding Secretary. She has been Sisterhood President, Vice President, Recording Secretary as well as Nominating Chair, Book Fair Chair, Hamantash Baking Chair, Oneg Shabbat Chair, and more. She also volunteers for Meals on Wheels. Sharon Kostiner, her Sisterhood President, writes:

"She has probably done almost everything through the years! Edna is always willing to do whatever is asked of her and expects no recognition. She has certainly been a great asset to me over the years."

2: Sharon Glass, of Temple Beth El, Ithaca, is Executive Advisor and Program Vice President of her Sisterhood. In her years as a volunteers, she has organized many programs and fund raisers for her Sisterhood as well as serving as Branch Jewish Living Chair. Her Sisterhood President Linda Myers writes about Sharon:

"Squeezed into her very busy life, she always has time to lend an ear, give advice, and help out with the many things the Sisterhood does during the year. Over the 18 plus years she has been in Ithaca, she has participated in the Sisterhood in many ways. She has organized programs, been a participant in the programs, organized fund raisers, donated money, time, ideas, and energy."

LOIS Bette Siegel, Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas, DeWitt, has served as President of her Congregation as well as Sisterhood President and Branch Recording Secretary and Spring Conference Chair. She is now Congregation Treasurer as well as a Branch Vice President. A volunteer for Religious School events, she has recently learned to chant Haftorahs. Her Sisterhood Co-

Presidents Alice Pearlman and Carolee Smith say about her:

“Bette has given generously of her time and culinary talents to various congregational social events and fund raisers. She can always be relied upon to be available to help with Hebrew school events. She performs all her duties with devotion. She is an exemplary model for all women in and out of Sisterhood.”

2: Debbie Friedman writes in her song

1: *As I grew up, I came to learn that life was not a game,*

2: *That heroes were just people that we called another name.*

1: We therefore present to you our heroes, the New York State Branch's Valued Volunteers.

...AND THE YOUTH SHALL SEE VISIONS

Music by Debbie Friedman

Lyrics adapted from Joel 3:1©1991 Deborah Lynn Friedman (ASCAP)

Childhood was for fantasies, for nursery rhymes and toys.

The world was much too busy to understand small girls and boys.

As I grew up, I came to learn that life was not a game,

That heroes were just people that we called another name.

Chorus:

And the old shall dream dreams and the youth shall see visions,

And our hopes shall rise up to the sky.

We must live for today, we must build for tomorrow.

Give us time, give us strength, give us life.

Now I'm grown, the years have passed, I've come to understand.

There are choices to be made and my life's at my command.

I cannot have a future 'till I embrace my past.

I promise to pursue the challenge, time is going fast.

Chorus

Today's the day I take my stand, the future's mine to hold.

Commitments that I make today are dreams from days of old.

I have to make the way for generations come and go.

I'll have to teach them what I've learned so they will come to know:

That the old shall dream dreams and the youth shall see visions,

And our hopes shall rise up to the sky.

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