NEWSLETTER / VOLUME 21:2

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NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2008

## Or Zarua's Young People

By Ilana Burgess

Did you know that Congregation Or Zarua has a vibrant and active Youth Department? The many and varied cultural, educational and social programs of the Youth Department are designed to involve our young people who are 18 and under in Jewish life. These activities, which occur in the shul and the greater Jewish community, not only give our youth the opportunity to learn and do mitzvot, but also provide them with the opportunity to socialize with other Jewish youth. Below, we provide a brief survey of some our programs and events.

One of our best known programs is the Or Zarua Hebrew School. The guiding principle of the Hebrew School is to provide children from ages 5 and above with an excellent Jewish education. The

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Hebrew School program is designed to nurture and develop caring, knowledgeable and involved young Jewish adults. We firmly believe that there is nothing more central to

living a Jewish life than providing an education to our children so that we can pass our treasured heritage to them.

Or Zarua's Hebrew School offers an engaging and rich curriculum in a positive and warm learning environment. The curriculum includes classes, discussion, lectures and as well as hands-on activities covering TaNach, Hebrew, synagogue skills, Jewish culture, values, religious life and laws, and, of course, Israel.

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Or Zarua's Hebrew School teaches Hebrew language, Jewish history, religion and love of Judaism in small classes.

#### RECEPTION TO HONOR NEW MEMBERS

Monday, November 17 • 6:30 p.m.

Each November, we hold a special reception to honor Congregation Or Zarua's new members. On Monday, November 17, 2008 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., all OZ congregants are invited to the home of Ruth Horowitz and Michael Nachman to welcome these new members into our community. Invitations will be sent by mail.

Please join us in this Or Zarua tradition—don't miss a wonderful opportunity to socialize with new and long-standing members of the OZ community in the friendly, informal setting of a member's home. Please RSVP by November 12 at 212-452-2310, ext. 39 or www.orzarua.org.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RACHEL FE



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If you would like to serve on a synagogue committee, please contact the office for the committee chair's email address.

Jay Palmer

Webmaster

### President's Message

By Andrew J. Frackman

With the High Holidays behind us, I wanted to share with you some projects on which the Congregation and Board are currently focusing.

First, we are off to a great start with our extensive programming. Behind us are the wonderful meals in the sukkah. Looking forward, we have invited Joey Weisenberg back for eight sessions to continue our efforts to enhance the musical part of our tefilah. Those of us who participated in his sessions in June know how exciting they were. I encourage others to join us in his sessions, which start on October 30. The work we are doing with Joey is designed to bring new energy to our communal daveningsomething that some congregants have spoken to me about. We need a critical mass familiar with what he and we are trying to do in order to implement any changes successfully.

Second, related to Joey's sessions and our other programming, I want to encourage you to consider personally funding one of our programs. We all have interests. For some, it is adult education. For others, it is children or youth programming. For others, it may be music. The programming committee welcomes thoughts about new programming ideas. But all of these programs require funding. As a Congregation, we can do a better job of using our programs as opportunities to celebrate life-cycle events or to remember loved ones or simply to support the Congregation in a very concrete and specific way. I encourage those of you who might be interested in sponsoring a program to speak with me, Rabbi Wechsler, or Vicky Stein about opportunities and your ideas.

Third, we are a community of faith. I want to emphasize the word "community." One of the great joys of being a community is to interact with our other congregants and their families. This includes children. Or Zarua loves having young families with their children in the sanctuary and actively engaged in our services. It is a joy to see younger children comfortable in our sanctuary. Our Shabbat service is a joyous family service, not an adult education class. From time to time, I hear from congregants that they feel that their younger children are unwelcome in the sanctuary. I want to make it very clear that that is not our Congregation's policy and it does not reflect Rabbi Wechsler's or the Board's desires. Young families with their children are the future of the Congregation, and they must be made to feel welcome if Or Zarua is to grow and prosper.

Finally, as was reported at the Annual Meeting, the Congregation has entered into a contract to purchase a condominium apartment in our neighborhood that will be used to house a new Rabbi when the time comes that Rabbi Wechsler retires. He has no immediate plan to do so, but the Board decided to take advantage of an attractive opportunity to purchase such an apartment and to rent the apartment until it is needed. Closing on the apartment, which is in the Brompton at Third Avenue and 86th Street, is expected to occur by the end of the year. We anticipate that the rental income will offset the carrying costs of the apartment.

On behalf of the Board, I again extend to all members of our community a *g'mar hatimah tovah*.

MEET, GREET & SEAT Ushers are needed for Shabbat services throughout the year. Please email Janet Katz at jmkatz@nyc.rr.com to add your name to our list of volunteers. You will be contacted by email only. Your help is greatly appreciated.

### Fifth Annual Or Zarua Hanukkah Gift Drive

Monday, December 1 through Sunday, December 14

Help make Hanukkah special for children and teens in need!

Donate *new* unwrapped gifts (books, toys, CDs, etc.)



Educational toys and books for school-aged children are especially needed. The Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty will distribute the gifts to children through hospitals, community centers and nonprofit organizations.



Collection boxes are located in Or Zarua's social hall and on the 6th floor.

Share in the spirit and bring a Hanukkah gift to donate when you attend the OZ Dinner on December 5.

### A Few Hanukkah Basics

What's a menorah? To describe the familiar piece of Judaica we use on Hanukkah, we call it either a hanukkiah (as they do in Israel) or a Hanukkah menorah. A menorah is simply a lamp. The original menorah was the seven-branched candelabra fashioned by Bezalel for the Tabernacle and then for the Temple (Exodus 25). This type of menorah—carved in a relief on the Arch of Titus, stamped into ancient coins, and represented in the seal of the State of Israel—has no ritual function today.

What blessings do we recite before lighting the candles? On the first night of Hanukkah, we say three blessings: "L'hadlik ner shel Hanukkah," "she-asah nisim lavotenu bayamim hahem bazman hazeh," and "shehekheyanu." On subsequent nights, we say only the first two. We say the appropriate blessings and then light the candles.

In which order do we light the candles? On the first night, we put one candle on the right side of the hanukkiah. The second night and thereafter we add lights to the left. After reciting the berakhot, use the shammash (servant candle) to light the new candle first, then the others in descending order. Place the hanukkiah on a windowsill facing the street so that it can be seen from outside.

What about Shabbat during Hanukkah? On Friday night, light the Hanukkah candles first—before Shabbat—then light the Shabbat candles. On Saturday night, light the Hanukkah candles after Shabbat ends.

### Congregational Shabbat Dinner

# SHARE A TRADITIONAL SHABBAT DINNER WITH NEW ACQUAINTANCES AS WELL AS FAMILIAR FRIENDS!

A speaker will be announced soon. Watch for details via email.

#### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2008

Immediately following services, which begin at 4:08 p.m.

Please make reservations by Tuesday, December 2

\$30 adults; \$15 children aged 5-12; No charge for children under 5

RSVP: 212-452-2310, ext. 39 / mplush@orzarua.org / www.orzarua.org

#### JOEY WEISENBERG'S SPONTANEOUS JEWISH CHOIR

Everyone is invited to participate in Joey Weisenberg's Spontaneous Jewish Choir. Sessions are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on seven Thursdays: October 30; November 6, 13 and 20; and December 4, 11 and 18. We convene in the 4th floor library.

### Joey Weisenberg's Spontaneous Jewish Choir

By Marc Ashley

magine being seated in close quarters Lwith a group of almost 25 congregants in the intimate lobby outside our sanctuary, singing, clapping, and even dancing to the haunting tune of a wordless nigun (Jewish melody) recovered from the ashes of the Holocaust. Led by musician and music teacher extraordinaire, Joey Weisenberg, the convened singers—reflecting a spectrum of musical talents and backgrounds, but united by a vibrant enthusiasm and sense of purpose—produce a harmony of voices that soars to the heights of the twostory wall of windows that illuminates the neighborhood. Later that evening, the increasingly confident singers, assembled on and around the bimah, fill our sanctuary with the rhythms of the beautiful nigun, one that by now seems wholly familiar despite being newly learned.

That was the poignant scene during our stimulating sessions with Joey last spring. This fall, you have an expanded opportunity to join an inspiring, educational and unforgettable musical—

indeed, spiritual—experience.

Joey, a mandolinist and guitarist who performs nationally and internationally in numerous bands, including several klezmer revival ensembles, was recently named a rising young star of New York Jewish life. Imbued with a deep (and contagious) love of Jewish music and a genuine passion for teaching and disseminating long-forgotten melodies, Joey returns with his unparalleled blend of musical expertise and pedagogy.

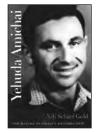
If you have an interest in Jewish music, a desire to learn melodies that will enrich our Shabbat services, or just like to sing, please join Joey and fellow congregants on seven Thursday evenings starting on October 30. No musical knowledge or skill is required. Simply bring your ruach to a program guaranteed to enhance your familiarity with and appreciation of Jewish music and our Shabbat services. To improve our already wonderful services, we need and welcome your participation.

### New Books in the OZ Library

The OZ library is a welcoming place to spend some free time. Our wide selection of books includes histories, biographies, novels, encyclopedias, biblical commentaries, and more. Here are some recent acquisitions:



Seek My Face: A Jewish Mystical Theology by Arthur Green



Yehuda Amichai: The Making of Israel's National Poet by Nili Scharf Gold



The Tree of Life: Chayyim Vital's Introduction to the Kabbalah of Isaac Luria translated by Donald Wilder Menzi and Zwe Padeh

### Or Zarua Book Discussions

Please join us in the Or Zarua library at 7:30 p.m. for our next book discussion on Sunday, December 14. All congregants and their guests are welcome to participate in any of our discussions. Mark your calendar with our January discussion date: January 25.

To learn our book selection for December 14 or if you have questions about our book discussions, please contact the Or Zarua office or Reed Schneider at arlm1199@aol.com.

### OZ Klezmer Band with Joey Weisenberg

Monday, November 3 • 7:30 p.m.

There will be an organizational meeting of those interested in establishing Or Zarua's first klezmer band on Monday, November 3 at 7:30 p.m. in the 4th floor library. Joey Weisenberg, an experienced klezmer musician, will help us organize the band and prepare it to perform. All OZ musicians are encouraged to attend.

#### WWW.ORZARUA.ORG

Use our award-winning website to:

- View calendar and service times
- Register for meals and events
- Make donations online
- Sign up for morning minyan
- Learn about educational programs

### HESED COMMITTEE EVENTS

Hesed is the expression of loving kindness—gemilut hasadim. According to Pirkei Avot, it is one of the three pillars on which the world stands and it is incumbent upon every Jew to participate. The Or Zarua Hesed Committee works to promote hesed through various projects within the Or Zarua and local community, and to help provide for needs in Israel and around the world. Please donate generously to the Hesed Fund so we can continue and expand our programs.

We will be sponsoring our annual OZ Hesed events as well as some new projects this year. Keep an eye out for flyers, emails and announcements about participating in our programs. Please send your own ideas for Hesed activities to Stephanie Failla at civilib@aol.com. November and December events include:

Fifth Annual Hanukkah Gift Drive. Help make Hanukkah special for a child in need by donating new, unwrapped gifts such as books, toys or CDs for teens and children of all ages to our Hanukkah Gift Drive. Gifts will be distributed by the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty through hospitals,

community centers and nonprofit organizations. Educational toys and books for school-aged children are especially needed. Collection boxes will be placed in Or Zarua's social hall and on the 6th floor from Monday, December 1 through Sunday, December 14. We would like to suggest that everyone attending the OZ Dinner on December 5 share in the spirit and bring a Hanukkah gift to donate.

**DOROT Hanukkah Package Delivery.** This December, share the spirit of the holidays by visiting with seniors in their homes and bringing friendship along with small packages of holiday treats. This is an excellent activity for the entire family, and a wonderful way to introduce children to the joy and importance of hesed. *Contact Aaron Shelden at 212-734-2888*.

Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve Food Delivery. Volunteer hands and vans are needed to pick up and deliver food donated by Eli's and the Vinegar Factory to Ronald McDonald House and the Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter (NCS) Residence. Contact Richard Stadin at 212-879-0448 or stadin1@aol.com.

### Emergency Defibrillation at Or Zarua

By Laura Resnikoff

Congregation Or Zarua is a large, active community. And, as with any large community, sometimes unfortunate events may occur. One of these unfortunate events is heart attack. In order to deal with heart attacks within our synagogue, Or Zarua has purchased and installed three automated External Defibrillators (AED) in the building. Or Zarua has also trained six members of our community in the use of the AED and in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Or Zarua plans to train six additional people for a total of 12 trained people. Only people specifically trained

to use an AED are to use an AED.

The AED is a device used in conjunction with CPR. An AED is a small electronic device that first diagnoses arrhythmia and then delivers an electric shock to a heart that stops the arrhythmia and allows the heart the opportunity to start with a normal rhythm. People who use an AED are trained in both CPR and the use of the AED. Or Zarua has contracted with Emergency Skills, Inc. to provide training and to make sure that our Congregation has complied with all regulations regarding the AED. The six members of our congregation who have

been trained are: Ilana Burgess, Alan Mayer, Diane Okrent, Laura Resnikoff, Charlie Spielholz, and Miriam Wallerstein. If you are someone who has received training and is certified to use an AED, please bring it to the attention of the Or Zarua office so your name may be added to the list.

The three AEDs are located in the back stairwell of the synagogue on the social hall, sanctuary and sixth floors. The AED on the sixth floor contains special accessories for use on children.

We all hope and pray that all of us continue in good health.

OZ CRAFTS CLUB Do you like to knit or crochet? Join the OZ Crafts Club and knit or crochet squares for a blanket we are making for a child in need, crochet kippot for a Hebrew school in S'derot, or work on a project of your own. All ages and skill levels are welcome. We meet the second Sunday of every month from 10:15-11:45 am in the library. Our next meetings will take place on November 9th and December 14th. For more information, contact Carrie Fox at cfox@aya.yale.edu.

### ZAYDE'S SHUL REVISITED

By Barry Yood

One bright summer morning last June, right after the morning minyan, a group of Or Zarua congregants, friends and family, trekked downtown to the Lower East Side to tour the restored 121-year-old Eldridge Street Synagogue. For many on this journey, beyond the joy of seeing this grand synagogue in all its renovated splendor, the real treat was the tour guide, Or Zarua congregant Barry Yood. His great-grandfather, Rabbi Avrum Yudelovitch, was the spiritual leader of Eldridge Street almost a century ago. In the following article, Barry reflects on the legacy of his ancestor and of the synagogue.—Gerry Solomon

n Sunday, June 22, 2008, over fifty members of Or Zarua walked in the footsteps of our immigrant ancestors. We witnessed the meticulous restoration of the 1887 Eldridge Street Synagogue to its original grandeur. We were awestruck by the exotic splendor of the restored sanctuary. I believe that if the Jewish community hadn't saved Eldridge Street, we would have had to reinvent it.

In the early history of the congregation, lay leadership held power. However, by the late 1910's the balance of power had shifted to rabbis. By 1918, Eldridge Street's congregation combined its appreciation of wonderful speakers with its respect for scholarship by hiring Rabbi Dr. Avrum Aharon Yudelovitch as its rabbi. Yudelovitch, a brilliant speaker and scholar who was descended from a family of noted rabbis dating back to the 12th century, was made Chief Rabbi of the U.S. in 1919. Rabbi Jacob Joseph, who died in 1902, was the only other Chief Rabbi in U.S. history.

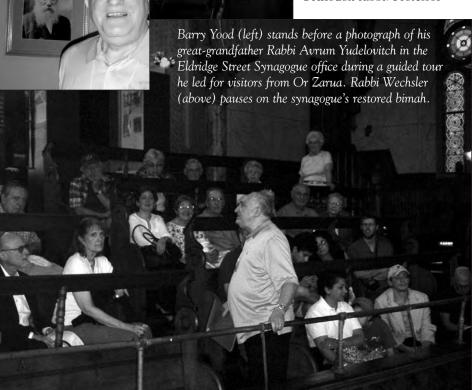
Rabbi Yudelovitch was an ardent advocate of Zionism in an era when Orthodox rabbis, for the most part, were not. Long noted for his learning, Rabbi Yudelovitch was known particularly for his researches in Talmudic law. He was one of the first professors to teach at

two rabbis to inaugurate Calvin Coolidge in New York City in 1928.

Yudelovitch was recognized as major representative of the Jewish community and was often quoted in *The New York Times*. In 1927, his highly controversial ruling supporting the legitimacy of appointing an agent to act on behalf of a woman in a Levirate marriage was widely

repudiated by almost all the sages of the time. His responsa was published in Av Be-Hochmah, a series of eighteen volumes published by Yudelovitch; Rabbi Wechsler has been engaged in studying the details of the ruling.

When Rabbi Yudelovitch died in 1930, there were thousands of mourners, but nary an Orthodox rabbi. Professor



Yeshiva University, and one of five rabbis honored at its 100th anniversary celebration. An ardent anti-communist and a staunch Republican, he was also one of Kimmy Caplan, the noted Jewish historian in Jerusalem, has called him the most fascinating, brilliant and controversial rabbi of the 20th century.

SERRY SOLOMON

### Or Zarua's Young People

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Small class sizes are a key in providing a superb educational atmosphere; with only 10 students, teachers can customtailor educational opportunities to each child. Classes meet twice a week, after secular school hours, on Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday, from September to May.

In addition to meeting during the week, the Or Zarua Hebrew School meets one Shabbat a month for Shabbat services. Students in grades 2 through 6 attend Shabbat services as a class. The young people then have the opportunity to become familiar with and participate in synagogue ritual, a key aspect of Jewish religious, social and cultural life.

Or Zarua's Hebrew School is also very involved in tzedakah. Once each month, our students travel to the West Side to prepare and serve meals for the homeless at B'nai Jeshurun's homeless center.

It is very important to note that the Or Zarua Youth Department does not just include those children in Hebrew School. For example, Or Zarua has a large contingent of children who attend the various Jewish day schools in our city: Solomon Schechter School of Manhattan, Abraham Joshua Heschel School, Beit Rabban, and Ramaz, as well as others. In addition, Or Zarua has young people who attend the wide variety of high schools in New York City. In order to engage all of our children, the Youth Department has developed a wonderful set of programs that allow Or Zarua youth from all different educational venues to come together and participate in the life of the Congregation.

First, there are youth services on Shabbat and during festivals, divided into age groups, starting at 10:30 a.m. on the seventh floor of our building. And, of course, on the High Holidays as well. The children participate in a prayer service, study Torah, have a snack and also have time to socialize at Kiddush.



In small classes, teachers can custom-tailor educational opportunities to each child.



Teens partied at the kick-off event for OZ's Kadima and USY chapters last October.



Young OZ fans cheered for the Mets last season at the first Kadima and USY event.



Ilana Burgess, Youth Education Director (front), at the 2005 Salute to Israel Parade.

Other activities during the year include a talent show, marching together in the Israel Day Parade, decorating the sukkah, an overnight sleepover in the sukkah (on the roof of our building), movie nights, and special programs just for children while their parents attend Shabbat dinner and lunch discussions.

Each event is packed with activities; for example, the sukkah sleepover begins with Havdala followed by dinner in the sukkah. Then there are games and socializing before eventually going to sleep under the stars on Or Zarua's rooftop. The synagogue not only becomes a very familiar place, but children also get to experience first-hand the mitzvah of "sitting in the sukkah."

Finally, in association with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Congregation Or Zarua began Kadima and United Synagogue Youth (USY) chapters which are open to all Jewish youngsters. Kadima is for students in grades 6 through 8 and USY is for high school students. Their purpose is to keep Jewish youth associated with the synagogue after their Bar and Bat Mitzvahs and give them the opportunity to socialize with other Jewish kids. The groups were so successful that in September they celebrated the opening of Or Zarua's youth lounge furnished with pool, foosball and ping pong tables. What better place to hang out than in a synagogue!

Last year the group had many events including a dance party, bowling, billiards, a casino party and helping the homeless. This is only the beginning; we look forward to another great year ahead!

The Youth Department wants our youngest members to feel and to know that being Jewish is a significant part of their lives whether studying, taking on community responsibilities or spending time with other Jewish youth. We seek to instill a lifelong intellectual, emotional and spiritual connection to Judaism.

### TALMUD CLASS

#### Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m.

First chapter of Masekhet Kiddushin, on betrothal and marriage, as well as respect for parents and treatment of the elderly

### conducted by RABBI WECHSLER

Classes are taught in English; familiarity with Hebrew or Aramaic or previous study of Talmud is not necessary.

### OZY SHABBAT CLASSES

Each Shabbat, four different gradelevel classes meet from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.:

#### Seventh Floor

Class I: Kindergarten (ages 4-5)

Class III: Grades 1 to 3
Class III: Grades 4 to 6

Sixth Floor

Class IV: Ages 2-3

Each month during the school year, we have a special Hebrew School

Shabbat Class, which all Hebrew School students in the third through sixth grades are expected to attend. Parents and students from other schools are welcome as well.

Hebrew School Shabbat Classes will be held on Saturday, November 8, and Saturday, December 13.

This year we will be taking attendance in order to award a prize to every student who comes to class 10 times from September to May.

KADIMA FIELD TRIP Kadima will be going on a field trip on Sunday, November 16 to the Sports Museum of America in Lower Manhattan (www.sportsmuseum.com). This will take place about 2:00 p.m., after the Youth Talent Show. For more information, please contact Ilana Burgess at iburgess@orzarua.org.

#### Youth Education Calendar

#### NOVEMBER 2008

Sat 8 Shabbat Class, 10 a.m.

Sun 16 Annual Talent Show (all children are invited)

Mon 17 B'nai Jeshurun, 6 p.m.

Wed 26 Thanksgiving (no classes)

Thu 27 Thanksgiving (no classes)

#### DECEMBER 2008

Sat 13 Shabbat Class, 10 a.m.

Mon 22 Winter Break (no classes)

#### JANUARY 2009

Mon 5 Classes resume

### THIRD ANNUAL OZ YOUTH TALENT SHOW

Sunday, November 16, Social Hall, 11 a.m.

Due to our huge success in past years, the Third Annual Or Zarua Youth Talent Show will be held on Sunday, November 16 at 11:00 a.m. Please join us in applauding Or Zarua's own talented youth (10 years old and up) as they dance, sing, and play music. The social hall will reverberate

with sounds of joy as our young people raise money for the young people of S'derot, Israel. Tickets are a suggested donation of \$18 at the door.

If you are interested in performing, please contact Ilana Burgess at iburgess@orzarua.org.

#### NOVEMBER/DECEMBER CHECKLIST

- RSVP by noon, Wednesday, November 12 for the Congregational Reception to Honor New Members on November 17.
- Attend the OZ Youth Talent Show (starring OZ youngsters 10 years and up) on November 16 at 11:00 a.m.
- Donate to the OZ Hanukkah Toy Drive between December 1 and December 14. Collection boxes are located in the social hall and on the 6th floor.
- RSVP by noon, Tuesday, December 2 for the Shabbat Dinner on December 5.
- Fulfill your desire to be part of the OZ Klezmer Band by attending the organizational meeting on November 3 at 7:30 p.m. in the 4th floor library.
- Be part of Joey Weisenberg's Spontaneous Jewish Choir by attending sessions scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on seven Thursdays: October 30; November 6, 13 and 20; and December 4, 11 and 18.
- Mark your calendars for Talmud Class with Rabbi Wechsler on Wednesday nights at 8:00 p.m.
- Participate in the Dorot Hanukkah Package Delivery and OZ's Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve Food Delivery programs.
- Do you have an idea for an article that is appropriate for publication in the Or Zarua Newsletter? Is there an Or Zarua program you feel is being overlooked by the editor? Please contact Charlie Spielholz at cssrs@earthlink.net.

# Or Zarua's College Connection

# Holiday Gift Packages for College Students

We are once again collecting the school addresses of all congregants' children who are away at college in order to mail gift packages of food to the students on Hanukkah and Purim.

To help us remain in contact with these family members while they are away from home, please send your child's name, school address, and email address to the synagogue office by email to Melissa Plush (mplush@orzarua.org) or mail the information to the synagogue office, attention "College."



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