

## Presidential Matters

by Marjorie Goldstein



Since the tragedy occurred at the Tree of Life Synagogue on October 27, 2018, where innocent lives were brutally taken, we have been working tirelessly at Congregation L'Dor V'Dor to obtain security and safety for our clergy, personnel and congregants, as well as the safety of the faculty and children who utilize the Montessori School on our premises. On October 29, 2018 we held an interfaith vigil in our Synagogue commemorating the lives of the individuals who were killed in Pittsburgh and collected over \$1,000 which was sent to the Tree of Life Synagogue. We established a Security Committee and found that the overwhelming immediate need was to hire security personnel at the front door on the Sabbath and special events. This is currently in place.

We were approved for a grant through UJA which enabled us to have a thorough Security Assessment of our building, internally and externally, recommending increased security cameras, improved exterior lighting, doors and glass panels and windows that will protect against forced entry attacks, closely looking at entrances and exits throughout the building, an improved alarm system with panic buttons on the bimah and improved communication devices between the custodians.

This is obviously a huge project which will require support from the Board of Directors and the Congregation. We are planning to meet with the Congregation to discuss this in the new year.

In addition to the improvements suggested throughout our Synagogue and the Montessori school, what is of utmost importance is to develop a plan in the event of a medical emergency, fire or active shooter. Mitchell Stein and I attended an active shooter presentation given by the Nassau County Police Department, which was very informative. We will need to work with congregants who regularly attend Shabbat Services who will be our leaders, trained in developing an Emergency Action Plan, i.e., designating people to be the first responders, establishing evacuation routes/safe areas identified, roll call reporting number of people in the building, knowing our exits, helping people who are less mobile with the goal of continuing to be in a safe environment when we come to Synagogue.

Our goal is to work with the Consultant from the Security Firm who conducted the assessment. He will conduct on-site security training, covering how to identify and respond to suspicious activity. The key is our comfort level and safety in continuing to thrive and be comfortable in our environment. This training will occur in the New Year. I am optimistic that in our changing world, this will be an asset to our community.

From my family to yours, wishing everyone a Safe, Happy and Healthy New Year!