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Good Morning.

In this month's Link column, I compare a membership in Keshet Israel to having an insurance policy. Keshet Israel is here 7 days a week with a full array of services and programs available at all times for you when you need them. In addition your synagogue, its professional staff, volunteers and members are here to provide emotional support and comfort whenever needed.

This past few weeks, we as a community, as well as all Americans, have suffered together in the aftermath of the horrifying terrorist attacks.

Many of us arrived at Rosh Hashanah services disturbed and stunned at the images that we had recently seen and experienced. While we were not hurt physically we were hurt emotionally and spiritually. Many of us questioned how God could let this happen.

So we came here on Rosh Hashanah to make a claim on our insurance policy.

The beauty of our new room, the power of the prayers, the sense of community in being together, the uplifting voice of cantor Nathanson, and the meaningful and comforting words from our Rabbi that helped so many of us to begin to make sense of the unexplainable, all added up to leave many of us with the hope and the reassurance that better days lie ahead for us and for all Americans.

Yet, by the end of the second day of Rosh Hashanah I had the feeling that something was different this year at Keshet Israel, and for awhile I had trouble figuring out what it was.

At first I thought it was the fact that for the first time in 10 years I wasn't tapped on the shoulder during services and told that our toilets weren't working.

Later in the day, I realized that I hadn't been tapped on the shoulder at all. Of course, that was before last night's sound system problem.

This year we had the inconveniences of an unfinished building, the inconveniences of the parking situation and the security, and major changes to the child care arrangements. Any one of these would normally cause considerable consternation on the part of our membership. Every other year, I turn this way and hear it's too hot in here and I turn that way and hear it's too cold.

This year I have heard almost no complaining by members.

Now I must tell you as a card carrying synagogue president that this is shocking!

I have heard it said that for the person whose car was stuck in traffic on the Long Island Expressway on September 11 and who was late to work in the world trade center, that person will never, ever, complain about traffic the rest of their life.

So it is with us. As Rabbi David explained so eloquently last night, we Americans have received a rude awakening. If we look to find any little bit of good coming out of what has happened, as Rabbi said, most of us have a much clearer picture now of what is important and what is trivial in our day to day lives and we have a much stronger sense of gratitude for the many blessings and gifts that God has showered on us. In times of trouble Americans tend to flock to their religious institutions. As I said on Rosh Hashanah we are so very fortunate here in our little corner of the world to have our Kesher Israel community.

So today I would like to once again thank the many High Holiday volunteers who are named in the thank you and acknowledgement pamphlet and many others not mentioned that keep our wonderful synagogue community running all year long.

I would like to extend a thank you to Cantor Joel Nathanson for helping to make our services so beautiful and enriching.

And to Rabbi David Glanzberg-Krainin---Your leadership of our services, your dedication to the spiritual, educational, and emotional needs of all Keshet Israel members, the depth, comfort and power of your sermons which helped bring at least some explanation and meaning to last weeks events, and your reassuring presence and friendship are all very much appreciated by your congregation.

I think I speak for the entire congregation when I say that we are grateful to have you as our spiritual leader and we thank you.

Incidentally, if you did not hear Rabbi David's 2nd day Rosh Hashanah speech, which was so very moving, I will make sure that it is available, at your request, through the front office.

Today I want to say a few words about volunteerism at Keshet Israel. I have both spoken and written many times over my term trying to encourage more members to become involved in synagogue life through volunteerism. My previous exhortations have been in the form of helping members to see how much their volunteer efforts would benefit Keshet Israel. Today I would like to take a 360-degree tack and offer you a few reasons why volunteering would benefit you.

I understand that many of you are either moderately or very involved as volunteers at Keshet Israel. In addition, some of you volunteer for other community groups and charitable organizations. My remarks are directed at those of you who do not yet have an ongoing volunteer component in your weekly life.

There are many personal benefits to volunteering. Time does not permit me to discuss in any depth most of these benefits.

I would however like to offer you a few major benefits that I have experienced with the hope that of you will relate to some of these and find the motivation to add a volunteer component to your life.

Maybe it is genetic, I don't know, but it seems we humans have a drive to be a part of a group. We feel comfort and connection in a group. We feel powerful in a group. Like we can get more accomplished.

Many of us here in Chester County live far from relatives, some of us don't get along with our relatives, some have been transferred and the like. We can feel isolated, alone, particularly when the Jewish population is so spread out in Chester County.

Thousand of years ago Hillel said, "Do not separate yourself from the congregation, trust not in yourself until the time of your death." These words ring as true today as they did then. Just by joining Keshet Israel you automatically reaffirmed yourself as part of a group that has a common heritage, a common belief system, and a mission to repair the world under God's Rule. And we Jews have been meeting regularly for 5,762 years.

As you volunteer at Keshet Israel you deepen your connection to the community and the bonds that hold us all together. How does this benefit you? For me it has taken several forms.

Over my years of volunteering at Keshet Israel I have worked with many men and women that I have come to respect and admire. Some of these have become close friends. Being a part of this community for me has meant having a place to go where, like Cheers, everyone knows my name and I know everyone else's. It is a very secure feeling to be in a place where, despite our occasional differences, we all count on each other and support each other.

Being a part of the community has helped me to be a better person. Like all of us, I have what Jewish teaching calls a *Yezer Tov*, and a *Yezer Hara*, an urge to do good and an urge to do evil.

Being an active and visible part of our community means that my actions reflect not only on my family and myself but also on my community. As I go through my day, as I do my work, make decisions, as I speak to people, my actions are guided by my desire to do good and have my actions reflect well on my community. (Pause)

In fact, being a part of the community can really be a pain in the neck sometimes, but it can also constantly help to nudge you in the right direction.

Being an active member of the community has deepened my sense of responsibility for the welfare of all members of the community. After a long day at work I would like nothing better than to flop down and watch TV all evening. I am constantly reminded as part of my volunteer work here at Keshet Israel how important it is for me to demonstrate my support for other members in concrete ways. Therefore, it is much easier for me to motivate myself to call a member who is sick or get myself out of the house for a Shiva call. It is part of my responsibility as a member of the community.

All this talk about responsibilities and doing good may not seem like benefits to you. But they are. It gives you a wonderful sense of fulfillment, of self-esteem, and a sense of balance in your life when all of your productive work is not being done for compensation.

Volunteer work, whether you also work for pay in your life or not, gives you a deep sense of satisfaction and a feeling that you are a contributor, that you are doing important, valuable work in God's eyes, and are not just a consumer.

Also, being a volunteer at Keshet Israel often leads to an increased level of observance and a closer relation to God. Doing good leads to being good.

It has become a common occurrence around KI for a member to join a committee, work on some projects, move up the ranks, start attending services regularly, study Hebrew and then trop, and become a regular Torah reader or have an adult Bar or Bat Mitzvah. And many of our volunteers are making positive changes in their lives in other ways.

In addition to the more intangible benefits, there are the more practical ones.

If you knew me 15 years ago when I was still a relative newcomer to Keshet Israel, you would never have thought that some day I would grow up to be President of the congregation.

Actually, some of you may still think that.

At that time I was very shy, tentative, I hung back and waited for others to direct me, I was an observer and not a do-er, a person that was more likely to

critique other's work than take initiative on my own. Can any of you relate to some of these traits?

Rabbi Simeon, in the Pirke Avot, says, "All my days I have grown up amongst the wise and I have found naught of better service than silence, not learning but doing is the chief thing, and whoso is profuse of words causes sin."

Rabbi Chanina adds, "He whose works exceed his wisdom, his wisdom shall endure, but he whose wisdom exceeds his works his wisdom will not endure."

Being a volunteer and a leader at Keshet Israel has taught me some valuable life skills.

I have learned that getting things done is much more important and valued than just talking about getting things done or worse yet, critiquing how others have done things. In other words, Keshet Israel has turned me into a do-er. I have come to understand that it is important to have good ideas about how to improve the world, but it is not enough. The ability to gain a consensus for our good ideas and then take the responsibility for carrying the ideas through to completion is key.

If you would like to have the opportunity to develop your leadership skills, if you would like to be known as a person that gets things done, if you would like to work closely with some very fine people, people with whom you share a common mission, if you would like to make some close friends, share some laughs, and feel like you are making the world just a little bit better of a place, then I urge you to consider volunteering in a non-profit charitable organization. You will have the chance to improve your skills and grow personally.

Naturally, I hope that many of you choose Keshet Israel for your self-improvement project.

I know I did and it has made a world of difference in my life.

They say the first job that a leader in a non-profit organization should undertake is to work on finding and training a successor.

To that end, I am pleased to announce that our membership committee will be holding KI's 1st ever Volunteer Fair during Sunday School on Sunday, November 4th from 9:30 AM to 12:30PM in the Mandell Social Hall.

The purpose of the volunteer fair will be to expose members who would like to be more involved in congregational life to the full range of volunteer opportunities that are available. Representatives from all of the various committees and groups in the synagogue will be on hand to answer questions and provide information.

If my remarks have piqued your interest at all today, then I hope you will take note of the November 4th date and will make a special effort to attend.

Look for a notice in the Link and for more information contact Ann Thomas who is coordinating the volunteer fair.

And now it is time for my annual ritual, the fund raising joke

You will remember from Rosh Hashanah that I announced that Capital Campaign Phase II would start after the holidays. Certainly a primary goal of the campaign has been to eliminate a long-term mortgage on our building project. Equally or even more important has been a goal of having every member of Keshar Israel participate in the fund raising for the project at whatever level that they are able.

As President, and chief cheerleader for the congregation, over the last few years I have written letters, made speeches, and written articles all with the intent of encouraging participation in the project.

I have done everything but get down on my knees and beg. (Look around)

Well, there will be no begging today.

Instead, I will leave you with a story---with the hope that this last ditch effort will motivate 100% of you to participate in the Capital Campaign for Keshar Israel Congregation.

Morris and Sarah, an older Jewish couple, decide to go on a sailing trip around the world. One night they are in the South Pacific when a huge storm batters their ship. When they awake in the morning they are shipwrecked on a small island. For two days they wander around the island looking for help. They find no one, not even Tom Hanks. Dejected and alone they sit on the beach knowing that they will have to live on the island for a very long time, if not for the rest of their lives.

Suddenly Morris turns to his wife and asks, "Esther, did we pay our pledge to the Yeshiva yet?" "No Morris" she responds.

Morris smiles, then asks, "Esther, did we pay our Federation pledge yet."

"Oy no, I forgot to send the check"

Now Morris laughs.

"One last thing, Esther. Did you remember to send our Keshet Israel pledge check this month?"

"Oy vay Morris, I forgot that one too."

Now Morris is laughing hysterically.

Esther asks Morris, "So vot are you smiling and laughing about?"

Morris responds, "Don't worry Esther, they'll find us."

May you all have a sweet New Year and be inscribed in the Book of Life.

Thank you.