

Religion is not a way of satisfying needs. It is an answer to the question: Who needs man? It is an awareness of being needed, of man being a need of God. It is a way of sanctifying the satisfaction of authentic needs. (Heschel)

BECOMING A KEHILLAT CHESED:

HERE IS PRACTICAL INFORMATION WITH A HANDS-ON APPROACH FOR CREATING YOUR CONGREGATION'S CARING COMMUNITY.

YOU WILL FIND IN KEHILLAT CHESED:

- Eight clear steps that provide the How To for creating and sustaining an actively involved Caring community.
- Assessment and survey tools that help assess your congregations needs, interests and demographics.
- Basics for recruiting, training and retaining and honoring leadership and volunteers.
- Guidelines for straightforward lay-led text study with a generous assortment of relevant and accessible selections for discussion and spiritual support.
- A quick 10-point overview for review, presentations to a synagogue's board and a guide to consider goals and values.

Too many people find themselves living in isolation. In times of need they often feel cut off from a sense of community. How can our congregations create an environment in which people and their needs are noticed, understood, cared for and supported in times of pain as well as joy? Developing a "caring community" models a way of life that underscores the power of creating "sacred relationships" among the members of our congregational family. A congregation that is present and responsive to their people, no matter where they are in life's journey, is a congregation that links person to person and generation to generation.



To obtain "Becoming A Kehilat Chesed: Creating and Sustaining a Caring Congregation" contact URJ Press at URJBooksandMusic.com or call 212-650-4120.

Contact Rabbi Edythe Mencher, URJ Caring Community Specialist, to develop a consultation on "how to" bring the Caring Community program to your congregation and help with practical suggestions, plus information and resources in forming, sustaining or re-invigorating your congregation's caring community.



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It is not good for a person to be alone Genesis 2:18

"Becoming a Kehillat Chesed"

*Creating and Sustaining
a Caring Congregation of
support and inclusion*

EVERY CONGREGATION HAS THE ABILITY AND POTENTIAL TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF SUPPORT AND INCLUSION. BY CREATING A CARING COMMUNITY, A SYNAGOGUE OPENS THE HEARTS, MINDS AND SPIRITS OF ITS' CONGREGANTS AFFIRMING THE JEWISH VALUES THAT LINK GENERATION TO GENERATION.



CARING FOR OTHERS REFLECTS OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Caring Community programs' strength rests upon the strong relationship among a congregation's clergy, leadership and members. Congregations that **democratize the mitzvot** find that sharing the responsibilities strengthens the connections and commitment among their members and to their synagogue. The greater the involvement of our people in the life of the congregation, the greater is the potential to affirm the value of being "in God's image."

(Rabbi Richard Address, former Director, Union for Reform Judaism Department of Jewish Family Concerns)



How To:

- **expand a synagogue's culture so that its center value is the creation of sacred relationships**
- **create a congregational community that celebrates and supports the needs of individuals and families**
- **develop a spirit and sense of community that rejoices with life's joys and supports in life's sadness**

EIGHT STEPS IN CREATING A CARING COMMUNITY

1. **TALK TO YOUR COMMUNITY**—Support is essential for any project. Recognize and involve lay leadership and religious professionals in the process.
2. **LOOK AT YOUR COMMUNITY**—What are your congregation's demographics and how can the various needs and interests be best served?
3. **DEVELOP A WORKING COMMITTEE**—Find solid leadership and join with existing committees for a successful process.
4. **GET STARTED**—What realistic, relevant project or program will best serve and involve the congregation?
5. **EXPAND THE COMMITTEE**—Recruit, train, sustain and honor volunteers; they are the lifeblood and vigor of the committee and your congregation.
6. **WORK OUT A PROJECT'S LOGISTICS**—Set goals, establish a time and financial budget, break down tasks and divide up responsibility.
7. **MAKE THE COMMITTEE VISIBLE**—Bring attention to your committee's goals, activities and volunteers; involve as many people as possible.
8. **ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ACCEPT HELP**—Work to create an environment that is welcoming and inclusive; it builds trust and a sense that the congregation supports and cares for its members.

created by Harriet Rosen for "Becoming a Kehillat Chesed"

Rabbi Hillel taught: Do not separate yourself from the community (Avot 2.4)