



September 1, 2017

Dear friends of Hillcrest Jewish Center,

The High Holy Days mark not only the beginning of the new Jewish year, but the beginning of the annual synagogue calendar.

September marks the start of our four youth services. Every child and young man or woman between the ages of 2 and 18 years old will have a unique space at Hillcrest Jewish Center to learn and to live their Judaism every Shabbat morning. Jordan Beloosesky, Sam Katzap and Leila Romano will join Jonathan Schulman and Rabbi Uri in leading these services. Hillcrest will extend these services and ritual events to include Shabbat dinners and havdalot for young people, lunch and learn programs for families, special activities around the holidays, and much more.

In addition to the services and spiritual and ritual events, opportunities for further Jewish learning will resume in September. Many of our lay leaders will be leading Torah classes. Rabbi Uri will be putting together an additional Torah class for young parents during the week, while Leila will lead two weekly programs, one for babies and one for toddlers. Rabbi Uri and I, together with two dedicated lay leaders will be opening a new space, "Open Beit Midrash," to study Torah every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday half an hour before evening minyan. "*Responsa in a Moment*," the weekly shiur before Mincha on Shabbat, will also resume in September, and of course "Starting Shabbat with Torah," which didn't go on vacation, will continue every Shabbat morning at 8.30 AM before services.

Hillcrest also proudly offers other outlets for spiritual and Jewish connections, and we look forward to having Cantor Fuchs continue his monthly *Ahava* Meditations, and to having Gary Baker lead mindfulness meditation sessions every Monday morning after minyan.

It fills me with joy to realize how many opportunities Hillcrest has for young children to be involved with Torah during the week and throughout the year. In September we will welcome Jeffrey Kelman, our new Ohr Chadash director, who brings a renewed enthusiasm and fresh ideas. H2I, our award winning joint youth group with Hollis Hills Bayside Jewish Center, and ICCJ will resume its activities around the High Holidays. And of course, looking backwards, we reflect on the end of another great year of HJC Day Camp, with record participation.

This Jewish New Year brings the start of another year of social activities for Youth and Family, as well as Sisterhood, Men's Club, and Hadassah activities, plus the Simon and Roslyn Gold Senior Center. Thanks to congregants who have stepped up

and helped create such wonderful programming, I look forward to seeing new adult education programs, new educational trips, another year of Tea and Schmooze, the library's digital expansion, Tea and Torah, Israeli dances, and family celebrations. And of course, as my children continue to remind me, these upcoming holidays will give all of us a good excuse to buy presents for our loved ones at the beautiful and well stocked Sisterhood gift shop.

This year at Hillcrest Jewish Center we will continue with our many Chesed programs and activities. Among other activities, our members will have the opportunity to volunteer to clean a cemetery, stock a food pantry, serve food at a Seder for the Disabled and deliver flowers for Shabbat. This year we will continue to stand with Israel and to create awareness about mental illness and its challenges, but also the opportunities it brings to grow in kindness and compassion. We will also have the chance to celebrate 70 years of the State of Israel with a congregational trip to Israel during the new year of 5778.

This coming year promises to be a wonderful one, filled with opportunities to engage in Torah study, Tefilah, and Chesed, to fortify old friendships and to make new ones. If you haven't found an activity that spoke to you in the past, I hope you will find one in this coming year. After all, a new year brings new beginnings and new possibilities.

Cantor Fuchs, Rabbi Uri and I, together with the professional and lay leaders of Hillcrest Jewish Center, will of course continue to be here for you and your families, as you have been and continue to be there for us.

Silvia, Daniela, Ilan and Abby join me in wishing all of you and your loved ones a year of blessings, health and peace. A good and sweet year. Leshanah Tova Tikatevu!

From my heart with many blessings,

Rabbi Manes Kogan