

President Rick Cornfeld's Yom Kippur address to the Congregation, 2008

Good Yontov everyone. I am Rick Cornfeld, president of our Congregation, and I have a request to make.

No, it's not what you are probably thinking, not a request for money, at least not today. Our financial needs *are* real, although I am proud to report that for the first time in our long history we had a better year than Bear Sterns, Lehman Brothers and the rest of Wall Street.

My request will be directed to everyone who has ever volunteered for our Congregation.

We depend on volunteers, like our adult choir and other musicians and singers, including our Youth Choir and the Teen Team that sings with Rick Recht. They all add so much to our Shabbat and holiday services. If we had to hire them, the cost, I shudder to think.

And while I am talking about music I will also direct my request to everyone who has ever performed in a Temple show or worked backstage or helped on the business aspects of the show or on our galas. What would THAT cost?

This year's show is called "Encore" and will include a reprise of past showstoppers and what will certainly become new favorites. I don't want to give anything away, but just wait till you see thirty adults sing a number called "Our Favorite Son" while playing what looks like a game of Patty Cake ... on steroids!

Opening night we will present the first Irene Fox United Hebrew *Ruach* Award to a member who embodies the spirit of UH. The first recipient will be Irene herself. Come help us honor her and enjoy the seventh show by Irene and her talented cohorts.

Now, in the request I am going to make I will include everyone who's ever served on a Temple Committee. We couldn't function without our committees.

There's the Building Committee, which arranged for our attractive new signs, thanks to an anonymous contribution, and the repaving and restriping of our parking lot, thanks to the funding from Torah Alive. Was it easier fitting your car into a parking space this year? Be grateful to the Building Committee and Torah Alive.

And on the subject of parking, I want to extend a special thanks to the Betty and Gene Wolff Transportation Fund for the valet parking our handicapped members enjoyed this season.

Now we also have committees that provide educational programs, such as the Adult Education Committee, the Outreach Committee and the Israel Committee. This year they will present

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their programs on the same evening each month. Because of its alliterative name, we can't possibly forget when to show up. It's called, "Third Thursday," the third Thursday of every month.

The Synaplex Shabbat Committee will again be in action the last Friday of the month. I am already spooked by the next program, *Demons and Spirits*, on, of all days, October 31st.

Other committees oversee our schools and youth activities. And we also have parents who volunteer in the schools. For example, this year 34 volunteers in the preschool. I will direct my request to them also.

And our Youth Group? The best in the Midwest. Now, before you say, "Well, you're the UH president," I admit I don't know anything about any of the other youth groups. But the National Federation of Temple Youth does, and they're the ones who said ours is the best large Congregation Youth Group in the Midwest.

And did you know that this week our Youth Director, Lee Rosenberg, was named Reform Judaism's national Youth Worker of the Month? Of course I *am* UH president, so I say, "Why just a month?" To us he's youth director of the month every month, right, Rabbi Rosenberg?

At the other end of the age spectrum, we have lots of activities by the Senior Committee, and lots of volunteers who run their programs.

And there are also committees that provide important services, such as the Library Committee and the Membership Committee.

Other committees provide services to people in need, the Mitzvah Committee and the Community Action Committee. And while I am at it, I will also direct my request to *all* the Mitzvah Day volunteers.

Then there are the Temple auxiliaries. As you leave the building, turn to the left and take a look at the beautiful Messing Garden that the Sisterhood fixed up. We recently received a reservation for our first wedding there, but plenty of prime wedding dates are still available.

This year the Sisterhood will be sprucing up one of our Ladies Rooms. Now, the Brotherhood decided to leave the Men's Rooms alone. What they are doing is sponsoring the book fair and the pancake breakfast and supporting our video library and our new web site.

Keep an eye out for the web site later this year. It will allow our committees and auxiliaries to communicate directly with us and will provide an easy way to pay our dues and buy tributes.

Now, I know I said I wouldn't discuss our finances, and I won't, but we have many volunteers who help us stay afloat. They serve on the Budget, Dues, Endowment, Fundraising, Investment and Finance Committees. I know that that sounds like a lot. It tells you how important the subject is.

Those committees have two vital functions: First, to make sure we have the resources to support our operations and, second, that we spend no more on those operations than absolutely necessary.

There are also lots of people who volunteer without being on a committee. My request will go to them also, such as the ladies, and one gentleman, who work in our gift shop. Have you been in our beautiful gift shop lately, where you don't have to pay sales tax? You can now also buy your Dierberg's cards there.

We also have volunteers on ad hoc projects, such as Torah Alive or the special memorial Bulletin for Rabbi Grollman. Other volunteers stuff envelopes, serve as ushers, or help with holiday celebrations. We have members who have made things for us such as the beautiful Torah covers and the Torah stand.

And members who donate their professional expertise, accountants, architects, artists, interior designers, landscape designers, graphic designers, video specialists, photographers, educators, financial advisors and professionals in insurance, health care, and computers, and of course lawyers. And, oh yes, one spectacular Shofar blower. Every one a volunteer.

And let's not forget our Board of Trustees and officers who oversee our congregation and are all volunteers.

Now you probably noticed that I didn't mention anyone by name. I wanted to. I wanted to read from this list. I even had it made into a scroll. But Rabbi Kaplansky only gave me eight minutes.

So instead, and here is my request, in a moment I will ask every volunteer here today to stand so that we can acknowledge them. If you have *ever* volunteered for us, and I don't mean just this year, don't be bashful.

When I ask the volunteers to stand, if you ever helped out in your child's class, stand up. Or if you helped on Mitzvah Day or the Purim carnival or Torah Alive! Or if you ever served on a Committee or on our Board.

If you have difficulty standing, raise your hand high instead. And when our volunteers stand or raise their hands, remember what day it is and where we are, so please don't applaud. But let's look around and see how many volunteers there are.

So, at this time, would all of our volunteers please stand up or raise your hands.

To all of you, let me express the thanks of our grateful membership. This is why we have such a great congregation. Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

To everyone else, if you would like to stand the next time we do this, call me. I am in the Temple Directory and the phone book, and we always welcome volunteers.

And to everyone here, have an easy fast and a wonderful New Year.