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Dear Friends,

"Do the times make the person or does the person make the times?" That question is answered in Pirkei Avot when our rabbis teach, "In a place where there are no (capable) people, you must strive to be that person" (Pirkei Avot 2:5). To which I add, leadership is not accidental but forged with determination.

Our synagogue could never have imagined the challenges it would face when Naomi Feinkind stepped into office. We had just seen the horror of the shooting at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh on October 27, 2018 and we were full of dread and fear for our safety and devastated by the loss of life of our brothers and sisters shot down for coming to shul. We wondered and watched as copycat attacks emerged and anti-Semitism grew. We began the process under the previous administration of readying ourselves for the new future of greater security and we took a breath.

Then Naomi began her presidency ready to implement the lofty goals of implementing the plans.

There was no way to know that a pandemic would literally cripple our world. Thank God Naomi was up to the task and, without missing a beat, under Naomi's detailed mind, we pivoted and we can say, because of her grit and her thoughtful energy, we are not only surviving, we are thriving as a community. The varied initiatives and programs, the financial stability and the growth in volunteerism and leadership development are the results of her tenacity and dedication.

Yet, it is her humanity that speaks the loudest; while she and Michael welcomed a new grandchild into their family, Naomi never forgot that we at GHC are her family as well. She continued to regularly call members to check in on them and make sure even our most senior members got the attention they needed.

Thank you from the depths of our souls and thank you for helping us step into the breach unafraid, secure in the knowledge that our shul is better for having had you as our president. Most importantly, thank you for your friendship.

Most fondly,

Rabbi Jay M. Stein, D.D.