

Dear YINR Members and Friends,

We are delighted to announce that YINR's 59th Annual Dinner is scheduled to take place on Sunday, May 3, 2026, recognizing Yael and Rabbi Chaim Axelrod as Guests of Honor, and Tamar and Jonathan Croog as recipients of the Community Leadership Award. We are looking forward to coming together to express our gratitude to these outstanding individuals for all they do for our shul, its members, and the surrounding community.

The theme of this year's dinner is *Aseh lecha Rav, u'kneh lecha chaver*, appoint for yourself a teacher, and acquire for yourself a friend. Pirkei Avot teaches that Jewish life is deeply communal; we come closer to Torah and Hashem with the help of the people around us. A Rav supports the community with his wisdom, guidance and mentorship. The bonds of friendship form the foundations of community. Ultimately, Jewish life is shaped by the people we learn from and the people we grow with. This year's honorees epitomize these ideals.

**עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רַב** From the moment they arrived in 2016, **Rabbi Axelrod and Yael** have helped shape the heart and soul of YINR. With their vision, energy, and deep commitment to *Torah*, the YINR community has experienced remarkable growth in all areas of Jewish communal life. Rabbi Axelrod has played a central role in countless initiatives, including his weekly *Navi Shiur*, New Member *Chaburah*, *Purim Tish* and *Bar Mitzvah* Boys Program. Additionally, our weekly *Seudah Shelishit* and every *oneg* and *shalom zachar* are enhanced with his *divrei Torah and song*. We are similarly uplifted by Rabbi Axelrod's beautiful *chazzanut* and rely on his halachic guidelines before every *chag*.

Our community has also had the privilege to learn from Yael, a talented educator. She has taught countless *shiurim*, including the popular *Rosh Chodesh* series, summer breakfast series, the annual *Simchat Torah* lecture, and *shiurim* before *Pesach* and during *Aseret Yemei Teshuva*. Yael expanded and leads the YINR *Bat Mitzvah* program, teaches *kallah* classes, and provides guidance in *Taharat HaMishpacha*. On top of all that, Yael welcomes new families and enriches everyone's *smachot* with freshly baked challah, always with a personal handwritten note.

Together, Rabbi Axelrod and Yael are known for their warmth, positivity, steady guidance, and genuine care for every member of our community. As proud parents of Dovi, Akiva, Aharon, Nava, Esti and Liba, the Axelrods model a life in which *Torah*, *chesed*, *tefilla*, and communal responsibility are not ideals spoken about from the pulpit, but values lived each day.

**וְקִיְנָה לְךָ חֵבֵר** **Tamar and Jonathan** are the embodiment of *chaverim* who give of themselves endlessly to build community. Tamar has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to the shul through ten years of Board service, including five years on the Executive Board. She chaired and coordinated the shul dinner, managed the Kol Nidre Appeal, was involved in the shul extension project and helped build the toddler room. Additionally, she served as a parent liaison for the *Bat Mitzvah* program, co-hosts the Women & Spirituality *Shavuot* program, volunteers

with WIJS and serves as a CSS volunteer. As Hospitality Committee Chair, Tamar made it her mission to ensure that new and young families felt included from the moment they arrived.

Jon's gift is his ability to listen, understand, and guide, both personally and professionally; he has genuine empathy and a desire to bring happiness to those around him. Jon brought the community together beyond the shul walls when he founded *Jewventus Football Club*, a serious yet totally unserious weekly pick-up soccer program for individuals aged 16-60, who might not otherwise have the opportunity to connect. There are two elements of JFC that are Jon Croog at their core: 1) all are welcome, and 2) negativity is not tolerated. Play hard and be a mensch on the field.

Tamar and Jon, ever gracious and hospitable, serve as friends and role models for us all, but none more so than for their children, Julia, Ben and Annie. Through their warmth, thoughtfulness, and dedication, Tamar and Jon have helped cultivate the strong sense of connection and belonging that defines the YINR community.

Please join us in celebrating our YINR community and paying tribute to these outstanding honorees. The Shul relies on the Annual Dinner to raise a significant portion of the shul's operating budget, and your support and participation will make an important difference.

Journal ads can be submitted through our journal website or by clicking [HERE](#). An online dinner journal will be posted on our journal website, and a keepsake book will be created for our honorees. We hope to see our entire community represented in the dinner journal. If you have any financial concerns, please contact Michelle Halpert ([michellehalpert@gmail.com](mailto:michellehalpert@gmail.com)) or Amy Stein ([executivedirector@yinr.org](mailto:executivedirector@yinr.org)) for a confidential conversation.

We look forward to celebrating with you on May 3rd!

Ayala Helft and Sophia Spiro - Dinner Co-Chairs

Ellie Goldenberg and Teri Rosengarten - Journal Co-Chairs