

It is with a true sense of Hakarat Hatov that I greet our Shul community as we embark on the campaign for our Shul's 59th Annual Dinner. The dinner campaign is a special time of year that allows us to reflect on the beautiful Shul which we are blessed to be a part of. Each year, I like to connect my message to the Gematria of our dinner year, and this year's number, 59, corresponds to the word *Achim*—literally “brothers,” but more broadly a term that speaks to the bonds of family. While we are each blessed by Hashem with our own individual families, we are also fortunate to have another family, our YINR family. The communal bonds formed through our Shul are powerful connections that enrich each of our lives. I am continually inspired by the care and concern that our members show for one another. There is a genuine sense of unity and harmony within our unique and diverse community. As we gather to celebrate at the Dinner, the feeling that our Shul is like a warm extended family is something for which I am especially grateful to Hashem.

Mazel Tov to Tamar and Jon Croog, our esteemed Community Leadership Award recipients. Tamar and Jon are truly a dynamic duo when it comes to communal involvement. They support one another and consistently step forward together in whatever communal project they happen to be involved with at the moment. Our community is so fortunate that their unique talents have helped shape so much of the positive energy of our Shul. There are very few roles within the lay leadership of our Shul that Tamar has not taken on. In fact, one could say that she has embraced responsibilities that touch nearly every aspect of communal life. I find it especially inspiring that Tamar's number one fan is, by far, Jon; his admiration and pride in her leadership is something from which I continue to learn. On a personal level, my family and I are deeply grateful for the friendship and connection we have built with Tamar and Jon. We owe them a great deal of Hakarat Hatov for the care they have shown to our family both personally and in their roles as lay leaders during our time here. A special shoutout to Coach Jon for perfecting the algorithm that ensured equitable and fair playing time in the infield during those early Little League years. May Hashem continue to bless Tamar and Jon with abundant nachat from Julia, Ben, and Annie, and may they continue to inspire and bring joy to our community for many years to come.

The feelings of Hakarat Hatov with which I began are heightened this year by the choice of Guests of Honor. Yael and I are humbled and immensely appreciative that our Shul has chosen to honor us in recognition of ten years as part of this amazing community. On one hand, it is hard to believe that we have already been here for ten years, and at the same time it is hard to imagine a time when we were not here. We have truly made our home here and have raised our family within the fabric of the YINR community.

I extend my deepest thanks to Rabbi and Rebbetzin Fink for their partnership in strengthening our Shul, and for their invaluable mentorship, guidance, and genuine care for our well-being. I am grateful to Elly Goldenberg and Rachel Berger, along with the members of the Executive Board and Board of Trustees, for their unwavering support and leadership. I would also like to

thank the many board members over the past ten years whose service to our Shul included hiring us and supporting us at every step of our journey here. A special thank you to Amy and Isio for their tireless efforts behind the scenes, ensuring that the daily operations of the Shul run seamlessly.

Above all, I thank the entire YINR family for welcoming my family and me with such warmth, for embracing us as part of your community, and for allowing us to share in your lives. The Axelrod family is excited and honored to continue serving this incredible Shul in the years to come. Finally, I thank Hashem for the blessing of being part of such a special congregation and for granting me the opportunity to contribute to the continued growth and success of the New Rochelle Jewish community.

I look forward to celebrating with you all at the Dinner!

Rabbi Chaim Axelrod