

Rabbi Adam Wohlberg of Temple Sinai in Dresher, PA used this press release in his synagogue newsletter:

FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY
Rabbi Adam Wohlberg

Are you ready for some startling statistics? I just learned that:- 30% of 9-year-old girls are afraid of being fat – just when they are entering puberty and are filling out; - almost 5% of all young women have an eating disorder; - close to 20% of 9th-grade girls – and 51% of 12th grade girls – are sexually active; - 23% of 9th grade girls binge drink. These numbers suggest a lot about our society, none of it positive. One thing that they are telling us, loudly-and clearly, is that girls are dealing with a lot of pressures these days at a time in their lives when bad choices can have serious consequences.

Fortunately, there are groups that are helping girls and young women learn to cope with many of the challenges that they face during adolescence and through their high school years. One such organization is *Moving Traditions* which has created a pro-active and innovative informal Jewish educational program called *Rosh Hodesh: It's a Girl Thing!* In fact, I came across the aforementioned statistics on the *Moving Traditions'* website (www.movingtraditions.org). So what is *Rosh Hodesh: It's a Girl Thing!*? It is “a multi-year, monthly celebration of the ancient New Moon holiday for pre-teen and teenage girls (grades 6-12) that builds self-esteem, leadership skills, and Jewish identity.” Sounds ambitious, doesn't it? Well, it is succeeding all over the country and we currently have 32 girls from Temple Sinai who are in the program and who will tell you that *Rosh Hodesh* is “awesome!”

Launched nationally in 2002, approximately 6,000 girls have participated in *Rosh Hodesh* groups operated by 190 Jewish institutions of all affiliations, across North America. *Moving Traditions'* national office is in Wyncote, and this year, because of the tremendous impact that the organization is having on Jewish girls in Greater Philadelphia and nation-wide, the organization received a generous grant from the Women of Vision Fund, a philanthropic Jewish women's foundation at the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia. Recognizing the value that such a program has for girls and young women during their formative years – both in terms of their maturation and their connection to Judaism – our synagogue is now proudly sponsoring five *Rosh Hodesh* groups. We are currently the largest provider of *Rosh Hodesh* groups in the Philadelphia area and one of the largest in the country. I now regularly meet with girls who are about to celebrate becoming *b'not mitzvah* who tell me how much they enjoy and get out of being a member of one of the groups - and their parents are equally enthusiastic.

The success of the program at Temple Sinai can be attributed, in large measure, to our talented and dedicated group leaders – Stefanie Ravitz (also the *RH:IAGT* Temple Sinai coordinator), Tami Relles Astorino (also the National Education Specialist at Moving Traditions), Rabbi Robyn Frisch, and Lisa Friedman – all part of the Temple Sinai family. And a great deal of thanks must also go to the Jewish Federation of Greater

Philadelphia, which here in Bux-Mont has supported our *Rosh Hodesh* program through a generous grant. This is but one more example of how the dollars which we as individuals contribute to Federation strengthen our community, and make a difference in the lives of Temple Sinai members.

I ask you to show your support for the incredible work that Federation does locally, nationally and internationally by making a donation to the 2009 campaign. This year, the Federation's Super Sunday will take place on Sunday, January 25. Log onto www.jewishphilly.org and you will be able to register as a volunteer for Super Sunday and even take an online training session that will save you time on the 25th. I hope that you will join me at the Radnor Campus, 272 S. Bryn Mawr Avenue, Bryn Mawr, PA on the 25th, but if you cannot, I ask that you respond generously when one of the volunteers calls your home and asks you to help fight hunger in Philadelphia and to strengthen the Jewish community here and around the globe.