

GESHER

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY BRIDGE TO ACTION



If you're anything like me, the end of the year is a wonderful time to reflect on the year and look forward to what's to come. I'm proud to say the THI Board of Directors has demonstrated the value of *tzedek*, breaking barriers and creating opportunities to expand Tikkun Ha-Ir's impact in the Milwaukee community.

Rebecca Chagall (VP Governance), Betsy Kerns (VP Finance), Rea Katz (Secretary), and 23-24 VP of External Affairs Jill Plavnick have significantly supported the foundation of the organization. I look forward to seeing what Morgan Sweet will accomplish as the 24-25 VP of External Affairs, and I'm grateful that Jill continues on the 24-25 Board as a Director at Large.

Susan Stuckert, Rachel Howitt, Miriam Horwitz, Evan Primakow, Phillip Salat, and Robin Arenzon continue in their commitment to Tikkun Ha-Ir's success as Directors at Large. I appreciate the extensive time and effort they contribute to governance, fundraising and finance, and as representatives of the organization. Thank you to Chelsea Cross for serving on the Board in various capacities for the past five years; it has been a pleasure to serve with you. A warm welcome to Sarah Kirchner and Max Seigle as they join the Board as new Directors at Large.

Leadership Council members Linda Bader, Mara Kleiman, Susan Ellman, Jodie Honigman, Nikki Levine, Rachel Pressman, Dilli Kittner, Shai Wise, and Mary Wurzburg personify THI's value of building bridges through collaboration. My most sincere thanks for your commitment to both Tikkun Ha-Ir and the Sponsor Organizations you represent.

Recognition for contributors to THI would not be complete without mentioning Sami Stein Avner (Executive Director), Rhonda Lindner (Education Director), Brandice Kirchner (Food Justice Director), and Kathyne Gargano (Admin and Communications Associate); their passion for this organization motivates the community to get our hands moving (with vegetables or with GOTV materials) . We are excited to have Marquette sophomore Ruby Lexau as our college intern this year as well!

The core value of *tzedakah* is one every Tikkun Ha-Ir supporter shares. Thank you for your thoughtful giving which empowers everyone. I look forward to what we can accomplish together in 2025.



Tamara Stolle

TAMARA STOLLE
TIKKUN HA-IR BOARD PRESIDENT

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HOLIDAY GIFTS

Donation Drive

NOV 17 - DEC 10, 2024

**NEW
ITEMS ONLY**

ACCEPTED DONATIONS

Celebrate kindness this holiday season by participating in Tikkun Ha-Ir's Holiday Gifts Drive! We'll be collecting and distributing much-needed items to organizations serving our Milwaukee community.

- ✦ **NEW WINTER CLOTHING FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN**
winter coats, winter gear (hats, scarves, gloves, etc), socks & undergarments, casual winter clothing, loungewear & sweats
- ✦ **NEW ELECTRONIC ACCESSORIES**
headphones, chargers, powerbanks
- ✦ **NEW ADULT COLORING & ACTIVITY BOOKS**
- ✦ **NEW HYGIENE PRODUCTS & KITS**
- ✦ **NEW TOYS & GAMES (NO LARGE PLAYSETS)**
- ✦ **NEW CHILDREN'S BOOKS**

WANT TO HELP OUT WITH HOLIDAY GIFTS? VISIT OUR VOLUNTEER SIGN UP PAGE USING THE ORANGE QR CODE!



SCAN ME!



Order items online from our Wishlist and we'll take care of the rest!

DROP OFF LOCATIONS

- Congregation Beth Israel Ner Tamid
- Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun
- Congregation Shalom
- Congregation Sinai
- Hillel Milwaukee
- Jewish Community Center (West/Cafe Entrance)
- Lake Park Synagogue
- Milwaukee Jewish Day School
- Temple Menorah

LET'S TZEDEK TOGETHER - Group Shopping Trips!

Join THI and members of the community for a group shopping trip for Holiday Gifts! We'll provide suggested donation lists and you'll be able to hand off your Holiday Gifts donations to THI on the spot. Stay tuned for locations, dates, and more information! You can also visit the giving Chanukiah at any of the above organizations for a donation list.



VEGGIE CHOP SHOP BY BRANDICE KIRCHNER

It's no secret that food costs are rising. A few weeks ago, Brian Bolling of All People's Gathering Church told me that pantry service has more than doubled in the past year, from 35-40 people a week to 80-115. Hearing this drove home for me that Veggie Chop Shop (THI's community meal program) isn't just a unique program—it's a vital one.

Though the VCS season has ended, I am so grateful to everyone who's supported the program—our volunteers (listed on page 9) partners, recipients, drivers, cooks, choppers, gleaners, sponsors, farmers, and you! Thank you for your kindness, generosity, and commitment to tzedek (justice) in our community.



FARMSTAND FAMILY MEALS

This season, VCS launched a new initiative to provide nutritious, grab-and-go meals for the community. We distributed fifty meals per week (~700 total) over the summer to All People's Produce Stand and Kinship Community Food Pantries, and they went *fast*. Convenient, healthy food options are a rarity in low-income areas, and we're so grateful we could help fill this need. We hope to expand the initiative next year, so stay tuned!

IMPACT
BY THE NUMBERS



4,640 MEALS
SERVED



9,000+ LBS OF
PRODUCE GLEANED



400+ VOLUNTEER
HOURS



GLEANING AWAY!



Did you know that over 854,000 tons of food waste goes to landfills each year in WI alone (Feeding America)? That’s why VCS relies so heavily on **gleaning**—collecting unused produce from markets and farms. It’s good for the environment, the economy, and our stomachs! Thank you to Food for the Journey, CBINT Mitzvah Garden, Fondy Market, Jelli’s Market, Brown Deer Farmers Market, and Gwenyn Hill Farm for donating their gleaned produce to VCS!

Special Shoutout to our VCS Staff: Ric Cabanatuan, Natasha Johnson, Micah Kulas, Madelyn Girard, and Aaron Viles! We couldn’t do this without you!

VCS & MILWAUKEE WOMEN’S CORRECTIONAL CENTER

This year, we reestablished our partnership with Milwaukee Women’s Correctional Center, where volunteers in the inmate release program come as a group to help out at VCS. We had up to 20 volunteers in the kitchen, and after cooking, chopping, unloading produce, it was a joy to sit down and have lunch together. One woman said she couldn’t recall the last time she’d used real utensils. Another woman who volunteered with us at the beginning of the season came back after her release to volunteer with her son. We’re so grateful to the women from MWCC for their help, and we’re so proud that VCS provides a welcoming, supportive, and positive environment for everyone.



6 FARMS & MARKETS
GLEANED



13 ORGANIZATIONS
SERVED

VCS wouldn’t be possible without the support and generosity of All People’s Gathering Church. Our unending gratitude to Brian Bolling, Susan Holty, Jim Spotts, Anna Lamar, Jamarri, and Tammi.



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT CORNER BY RHONDA LINDNER

I am at my computer writing this piece on October 17th, and I am mindful that when the newsletter goes out to our THI community, the November 5th election will be completed, and our uncertainty may be behind us. The election season was not always an easy one, and many of us have felt and may still be feeling anxious and unsettled. However, we can feel pride in our Jewish community for the work we did to preserve democracy. Our ancient texts teach us to not separate ourselves from the community and to continue the work of repairing the world (in this instance American Democracy) even when we cannot finish it.

As a nonpartisan community we have canvassed, registered voters, attended webinars and in-person events, written postcards, tabled, and driven voters to the polls, often alongside our many Milwaukee partner organizations that work to help our most vulnerable and marginalized populations. Any action we took was done with true purpose and intent to engage the community in nonpartisan voting rights and education. We have harnessed our collective power to defend democracy and keep the ties that bind us together as a country tight and strong.

Thank you to the many volunteers who helped to keep our elections free, fair, safe and secure. We will continue the work in 2025 as we engage voters for the Wisconsin State Supreme Court Election!



IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS



100 NEW VOTERS REGISTERED



1,000 DOORS CANVASSED



5,000 POSTCARDS WRITTEN



SPOTLIGHT: 100 WOMEN ON THE MOVE

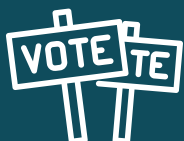
Back on March 8, 2024, which happens to be International Women’s Day, 100 WOMEN ON THE MOVE convened for the first time.

As a co-leader along with Anita Johnson of Souls to the Polls and Brenda Jackson of MICAH, I am so proud of what 100 WOMEN accomplished.

100 WOMEN ON THE MOVE is a multi-faith, multi-racial, and intergenerational coalition of women who are trained, organized, and empowered to help Milwaukee residents register to vote, gain photo IDs if needed, and to get to the polls.

Together we canvassed, participated in Juneteenth, sent postcards, educated our fellow congregants, registered voters, and increased the Milwaukee electorate in a significant way.

Thank you to the many women of THI who joined and brought a Jewish presence and perspective to this amazing coalition. After a celebration and brief rest, we will be back at it again to engage Milwaukee voters for the April State Supreme Court election.



15+ TABLING EVENTS



10+ GOTV COMMUNITY EVENTS

Thank you to our civic engagement partners, allies, and friends. We’re especially grateful to Sherman Park Grocery Store and Dollar Tree-Brown Deer Road for supporting our tabling efforts to GOTV!

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING SURVEY: RESULTS & RESPONSE

Thank you to the many participants who filled out the Educational Programming Survey this past summer! The staff at THI took a deep dive into the answers and left with some new perspectives and fresh ideas. We look forward to bringing these to fruition for future programming that is both available and engaging to our diverse community.

We learned through our deep dive that young families and empty nesters make up the majority of our participating membership. Most affiliate with at least one of our eleven sponsor organizations and also work with other networks throughout the Milwaukee area. While the majority of those who answered the survey identify with the Reform movement, there is a great sense of Jewish pluralism as well. As we begin to develop our programming for 2025, we will take these demographics into account.

Additionally, we asked participants to choose topic areas of social justice that concern them the most. The top priorities of study and action were **poverty alleviation (and the issues of housing, health care, and racial justice that encompass economic disparities), the intersection of the Jewish calendar and social justice, and gun violence prevention.**

THI is ready to roll up our collective sleeves and bring educational and action-based programming to both examine and bring our efforts to repair the city.

SERVICE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: NIA IMANI FAMILY, INC

Nia Imani Family, Inc. has been a longstanding partner of Tikkun Ha-Ir, often connecting to Veggie Chop Shop meals and items from Glean Machine. Tikkun Ha-Ir thanks them for their partnership and the amazing work they do in the community!



"Nia Imani Family, Inc. will forever continue to support and empower families through holistic and transformative programs rooted in Afrocentric principles that foster unity, healing, and community building. We aim to create environments where families can thrive, children can grow, and communities can be strengthened".

"The partnership with the Veggie Chop Shop represents the congruency and integrity of our mission. The meals have provided holistic nutrition that we strive to instill in the lives of our participants and their families."

–Director of Programs, Kendricke Pittman

WELCOME TO OUR NEW INTERN!

My name is Ruby Lexau, and I am a sophomore at Marquette University. I am currently majoring in psychology with a minor in criminology & law studies. I work at Marquette’s Service-Learning Program as a student coordinator. My job is to get students connected with community service sites around Milwaukee, and I also communicate their hours to their professors. I am also a member of the Alpha Xi Delta sorority. I am from St. Paul, Minnesota. Whenever I am home, I work at an elementary school in the after-school and summer program. I have worked here for the past five years. I love going on walks, spending time with my friends and family, and listening to music. My favorite spot in Milwaukee is The Public Market!



THI OUT & ABOUT

It’s been a busy year! From walking to gleaning to canvassing and more, THI has been out and about in the community! Here are just a handful of people we’ve met, places we’ve been, and things we’ve accomplished. You might even see yourself in some of our photos! A huge shoutout to everyone who’s volunteered with us across MKE.



Mitzvah Day at CEEBJ.



Glean Machine in action!



Brandice presenting at the Food Justice Walk.



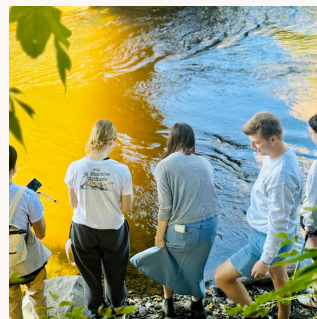
Getting out the Vote with 100 Women on the Move!



Gleaning with family at Gwenyn Hill Farm.



Sending out over 2,000 voter engagement postcards with NCJW!



Tashlich with Hillel at Riverside Park.



Rhonda speaking at the MJF panel, “Civility in Our Times.”

THANK YOU DONORS & VOLUNTEERS!

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Tikkun Ha-Ir of Milwaukee builds a more just community by uniting the Jewish community in study, action, and civic engagement.

KEY DATES WITH TIKKUN HA-IR

NOV 17 - DEC 10 - HOLIDAY GIFTS DRIVE

DEC 16 - COMMUNITY CHANNUKAH CELEBRATION

DEC 24 - VOLUNTEERING AT CATHEDRAL CENTER

JAN 20 - MLK DAY PROGRAMMING

APRIL 6 - *SAVE THE DATE!* GOOD DEEDS DAY AND COMMUNITY-WIDE PASSOVER FOOD DRIVE DISTRIBUTION DAY

AND MORE!