The Art of Healing

On a quiet morning in the Shalom Bayit office, keyboards click and phones ring as our small staff busily responds to inquiries and prepares for the day: planning a ninth grade dating violence prevention workshop, answering calls, arranging a furniture donation for a woman moving into an apartment. These activities are all part of the broad brush with which we respond to, and ultimately prevent, domestic violence.

Woven through all of these aspects of our work is a vision of refuah (healing) and tikkun (repairing)—helping individuals, families, and segments of our community heal and move forward in the aftermath of abuse. It is this healing that helps victims become survivors, that helps one who has lived the trauma of violence in her home become once again a whole person and thriving member of our Jewish community. In this issue of our newsletter, we’d like to share with you some of the ways that Shalom Bayit brings this healing to our clients.

Steps Towards Healing

A woman’s first contact with Shalom Bayit can be the first step toward healing. The simple knowledge that it happens to Jewish women too, or the affirmation that she is not to blame for being abused (contrary to what she may have been told repeatedly by her partner), can be the seeds for transformation.

Healing cannot happen without safety. We help victims of family violence find tangible resources (like housing, financial support, legal protection, and childcare), and provide the guidance they need to escape physical or emotional abuse.

By Naomi Tucker, Executive Director

Then there is the spiritual dimension, perhaps the most profound yet unquantifiable aspect of our healing work. Judaism has many tools for healing. Shalom Bayit works within a framework not found in secular domestic violence programs to weave the art of Jewish healing into all that we do. Through that healing art, we help women achieve powerful transformation in their lives.

Perfecting the Art of Healing

Jewish ethics, holidays, and calendar cycle themes are the foundation for learning, discussion and ritual in our programs. We began this tradition in 1994 with a gathering that used Sukkot as the framework for talking about and healing from abuse. The tradition of Ushpizin/Ushpizot (welcoming ancestors or guests into the Sukkah) served as the basis for our ritual and midrash. We told stories of biblical women who were not given their own voice in the Torah and imagined what lessons they would teach us today if they could speak up about the violence they experienced as women.

Harvest, another Sukkot theme, is traditionally a time of gratitude. Research on gratitude and wellness shows documented improvements in physical and emotional health among those who maintain a frequent practice of gratitude and spiritual practice (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Just as Jews are grateful for the temporary, impermanent shelter that the sukkah represents, a woman mourning the loss of the home and family...
she left behind can still feel fortunate to have escaped the abuse; and appreciate the blessing of safety and shelter. It is important to mark the intermediary steps towards our goals as part of a healing journey.

Over the years Shalom Bayit developed a calendar-year of Jewish-themed healing rituals: from discussions of Jewish women and the law at Shavuot to Rosh Chodesh reflections of motherhood; from planting the seeds of our future on Tu B’Shevat to rituals on mourning and loss during Tisha B’Av. All help women reflect Jewishly on the experience of surviving domestic violence. Our Chanukah candlelighting includes blessings for the miracle of survival and the coming of the light after a period of darkness. It has become an annual tradition and the largest gathering of our clients past and present, who find joy and profound healing from celebrating their strengths together.

Jewish healing offers a unique way to support and empower abused women, in addition to traditional psycho-educational models of support groups. The simple acts of lighting a candle, standing in a circle, praying or singing together can transform one’s state of mind in a matter of moments. These rituals, and the very notion of creating battered women’s support groups based on Jewish healing themes, have been adapted by organizations similar to ours across the country. Shalom Bayit has thus become a model for Jewish domestic violence programs nationwide.

Critical Collaborations
Shalom Bayit also works with our community’s healers to ensure they are equipped to provide meaningful support to our clients. For instance, the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, a leader in providing spiritual care for those experiencing loss or illness, collaborates on joint programming for those recovering from abuse. Rabbis and congregations offer healing services, community healing rituals, and individual spiritual guidance as an additional means of support. We count on our partners throughout the Jewish community to provide the spiritual support, as well as tangible resources, that help victims heal.

Healing and Memory
Why do all this healing work, digging in to a painful basket of memories and past wounds? Why not just forget and move on? Jewish tradition teaches us it is precisely through our remembering that we find healing and wholeness. Many holiday traditions specifically command us not to forget—such as Tisha B’Av where we collectively mourn harm done to our Temple and people over 2,000 years ago, or through the biblical calling to tell and retell the story of our exodus from slavery. Remembering is critical to learning. It honors where we have come from and binds us to a quest for justice. To not remember is to lose authenticity. In our remembering we ultimately move through our past to find healing.

The Healing Power of Ritual
In times of despair, human beings often seek a spiritual answer to their worldly problems. Spirituality provides hope, and hope is a necessary ingredient for healing. A connection to a divine power greater than our own—however we may conceptualize that in different aspects of religious observance—may be the beacon of hope that carries one through an otherwise hopeless time.

Ritual can help someone connect her experience to that of others, or conceive of a new approach to a problem. Perhaps it is a midrash or story—such as the Jews standing on the edge of the Red Sea, desperate to escape slavery yet terrified to take that first step towards the unknown in order to seek freedom—that propels a woman to make a courageous move. Perhaps it is connecting a traditional holiday them to a relevant life experience—like discussing modern-day abuses of power during a seder. Perhaps it is a meditation or prayer that helps find solace; or seeks a quiet place in the mind in order to answer life’s complex questions.

For those who have experienced fear and danger in their own home, Jewish ritual may not evoke positive memories. Recreating those rituals in a safe environment helps some abuse survivors reclaim their Judaism and start anew. Chani was married to a man who always criticized her for being too observant. She felt ashamed of her Jewish identity, eventually moving away from religious practice. Through Shalom Bayit she brought Judaism back into her life, beginning with meaningful holiday celebrations in the company of supportive new friends.

And so it is for many women who come to Shalom Bayit. Healing the trauma of abuse through Jewish ritual, spiritual care and supportive crisis intervention is an art indeed. To celebrate this ART OF HEALING that Shalom Bayit brings to our Jewish community, our staff and board cordially invite you to join us November 9th at Creating Hope, a benefit for battered women and their children. Creating Hope will celebrate women’s transformation from fear to safety, from despair to hope, and ultimately from hardship to healing. See you there! —Naomi

Thank you!

Donations received April - July 2008
Donations received January - March were reported in our Spring newsletter

Foundation Grants

Grants of $10,000 and greater
The Hadassah Foundation
Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, & Sonoma Counties
JCF South Peninsula Region
Mount Zion Health Fund
Richard & Rhoda Goldman Fund
Walter & Elise Haas Fund

Grants of $5,000+
JCEF Newhouse Fund

Grants of $1,000+
Jewish Community Foundation & Jewish Federation of the Greater East Bay
Verizon Wireless

Individual & Corporate Gifts

Bonot Chalom/DreamBuilder:
Ellyn Kaschak, PhD
Gideon Hausner Jewish Day School

Shomeret/Guardian
Congregation B’nai Emanah
Carol & Tom Platter
Eileen & Rob Ruby

Chachamah/Wise One
The Wireless Foundation

Gomelet Chesed/Benefactor
Anonymous, in honor of David Petruska
Anonymous
Rabbi Ryan Bauer
Ellen & Jon Benjamin
Rachel Brodie & Adam Weisberg, in honor of Zephira Derblich-Milea
Sherry Brown-Ryther, Phyllis & Daniela Brown, in honor of Naomi Tucker
Congregation Emanu-El
Barbara Engler
Anne Feld
Frances D. Green
Andrea Harris
Deborah Israel, in honor of Barbara Levinson
Rabbi Janet Marder / Congregation Beth Am
Michael Bien & Jane Kahn
Linda Cantrell
Dorothy Chafets
Rabbi Steven & Leona Chester
Barbara Freeman
Carol Frid
Marianne & Herb Friedman
Diane Gooding & Paul Haas
Elvia & Jerry Harris
Marilyn Hoffman
Andrea Jacoby & Robert Brody
Larry Katz
Anna Martin
David Shaw, in honor of Roberta Stern
Barbara & Richard Tauber
Marilyn & Robert Taubman
Harriet Tucker
Alex & Ana Vazquez
Beth Anne & Marvin Wenger

Ozoret/Supporter
Anonymous,
in honor of Sherry Davis
Congregation Beth Am
Michael Bien & Jane Kahn
Linda Cantrell
Dorothy Chafets
Rabbi Steven & Leona Chester
Barbara Freeman
Carol Frid
Marianne & Herb Friedman
Diane Gooding & Paul Haas
Elvia & Jerry Harris
Marilyn Hoffman
Andrea Jacoby & Robert Brody
Larry Katz
Anna Martin
David Shaw, in honor of Roberta Stern
Barbara & Richard Tauber
Marilyn & Robert Taubman
Harriet Tucker
Alex & Ana Vazquez
Beth Anne & Marvin Wenger

Chaverah/Friend
Claire Appel
Andi & David Arrick
Renee Bauer & Laurie Zimmerman,
in honor of Rosyland Bauer
Evelyn Benas
Desmid Bendix Lyon, in honor of Zephira Derblich-Milea
Leslie Berger
Michelle Booth
Randi Brenowitz
Pamela & Richard Brown
Barbara Casaretto
Caylia Chaiken
Linda Cox Myers
Ann & Ross DeHovitz
Zephira Derblich-Milea
Sharron Emergui, in honor of Barbara Levinson
Jill & Marc Engel
Robert Fink
Sara & Rabbi Gordon Freeman
Talya Gates-Montash, in memory of Harry & Ruth Yaffe
Ms. Jerilyn Gelt
George Goodman
Andrea Goshine, in honor of Donna Waterman Albam
Karen & Bill Gourdin, in memory of Millie Hirsch
Myra Green
Rivka Greenberg
Tracey Grown
Susan Hamlin
Norman & Esther Harris, in honor of Barbara Levinson
C.A. Huppert
Irving & Janice Katz, in honor of Judy Harris
Rabbi Stuart & Vicki Kelman
Wendy & Howard Kleckner
Barbara Lande
June & Wally Levin, in honor of Barbara Levinson
Rachel Levine, in honor of Lucy Edelman
Elynn & Rachel Levinson
Bonnie Lindauer
Sandra Lipkowitz,
in honor of Naomi Tucker
Phyllis Lippe
Ari Lurie
Helen McKennon,
in honor of Sandra Lipkowitz
Melissa Mednick
Alexis Milea & Jerry Derblich
Elaine Moise
Rachelle & Aaron Rosenfeld,
in honor of Sharon Papo
Benna Norman
Carol Platter
Rabbi Daniel Pressman / Congregation Beth David
Judith & Harry Radousky,
in honor of Debbie Yager
Harry Robbins
Monica Rodriguez
Stephanie Rosekind
Jim Rosenau
Leslie Simon
Shirley Smith,
in honor of Robert Flanagan
Carol Stone
Any Rose Tucker
Hermine Vinick,
in honor of Bob Flanagan
Alice Webber & Stephen Tobias
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Weil, in honor of Barbara Levinson
Ruth Wilcox
Reuben Zellman, in memory of Margaret Zellman Kukreja

In-Kind Contributions
Cornerstone Properties
Marjorie Griffin
Stacy Kahn
Aviva Kardener
Barbara Lande
Mara Langer
Haley McLeod
Peninsula JCC
Shane Pitcock
Truman Ports
San Francisco Giants

Volunteers

Rivka Greenberg, Simon Levi, Marilyn Hoffman, Marjorie Swig

Thanks to all who contribute to making our programs a success. Any omissions are unintentional.

A special Thank You to the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin & Sonoma Counties for your generous award this summer of ongoing funding to sustain the work of Shalom Bayit.

We are grateful to be a new JCF beneficiary. The board of directors, staff, and women who seek our services humbly express our gratitude to you for your support.

Page 3
San Francisco Support Group

Shalom Bayit is holding our spiritual healing support group this fall in San Francisco. Each year an 8-session support group rotates to a different place in the Bay Area. Last year we brought this important program to Marin, and in the previous year to Palo Alto. We are looking forward to reaching women in San Francisco.

The group is open to women who are seeking support from abusive or controlling relationships (past or present). It will be facilitated by our San Francisco counselor Talia Korenbrot and Rabbi Elisheva Salamo.

The support group is a joint project with our wonderful collaborative partner, the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, and is made possible by generous support from the Jewish Community Endowment Newhouse fund. Support from Mount Zion Health Fund and the SF-based Jewish Community Federation provides additional San Francisco services.

Our support group is open to women of all Jewish backgrounds, as well as non-Jewish women desiring a Jewish spiritual atmosphere. We welcome those in interfaith relationships, same-sex relationships, and all age groups from teens to seniors. The group meets in a confidential location and is free of charge. Childcare is available with early registration. For more information and to register please call us toll free at (866) SHALOM-7.

Spring Workshops Help with Next Steps

This spring Shalom Bayit sponsored two very successful events for women in the community. In May we collaborated with Jewish Vocational Service to offer “Women in Career Transitions,” a workshop for those re-entering the workforce after life changes (such as parenting or divorce). Held at Jewish Family Services of the East Bay, the workshop was a great success. The many women who attended said it was very helpful as a first step on their paths of getting back into the workforce, discovering and identifying their interests, and learning about available resources. Economic hardships and difficulty re-entering the workforce are both significant barriers for battered women seeking to leave an abusive relationship. Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) is an excellent organization in our community providing a critical resource, especially in these difficult economic times. JVS offers classes in resume writing, computer and internet skills, returning to the workplace and much more. For a list of their upcoming events and classes, please check out their website at www.jvs.org.

In June, we presented “Releasing Your Inner Leader Through Voice,” another wonderful workshop for women. Hosted by Jewish Family and Children’s Services in San Mateo, the workshop was an informative, experiential and fun way for women on the Peninsula to examine their own sense of leadership throughout their lives. Participants used song and voice as a means of expression and empowerment. The workshop was developed by Dr. Kay Kleinerman, Director of the Music in Schools Program at the Community School of Music and Arts, and a recently-appointed educational leadership consultant to the SF Bureau of Jewish Education. Kleinerman has developed and presented many interactive workshops that explore the use of singing and voice as an avenue of transformational learning and development.

Welcome to Our New Community Educator

We are delighted to announce a new addition to the Shalom Bayit staff team this month. Deborah Stone joins us as Shalom Bayit’s first-ever Community Educator, bringing much-needed educational programming and community organizing to enhance the prevention and outreach components of our work. This brand new position is made possible by grants from the Walter & Elise Haas Fund, the SF-based Jewish Community Federation and its South Peninsula Regional Commission, and Mount Zion Health Fund.

Staffing the new San Mateo office, Deborah will provide an important Shalom Bayit presence for the Peninsula Jewish community. She will also coordinate community education programs around the Bay. Deborah is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with many years of experience in community organization and clinical practice. As a former custody mediator and evaluator for Santa Clara County Family Court Services, she has addressed issues of domestic violence in custody cases. She has lectured in the Schools of Social Work at San José State University, CSU East Bay, and her alma mater, Case Western Reserve. Deborah and her husband Martin have two adult children and one teenager. They live on the Peninsula, and enjoy participating in the many and diverse events offered by the Bay Area Jewish communities.

To schedule a speaker, or set up a domestic violence training for your group, Deborah can be reached at (650) 574-SAFE.
Domestic violence is when one’s significant other abuses them. A person could abuse his partner physically, sexually, mentally, or financially. Physical abuse includes any form of violence that hurts one’s body. Sexual violence could include criticism of one’s body or sensuality or forced sexual acts, including rape. Mental abuse is the use of verbal attacks against one’s self-esteem through vulgar name-calling, or it could also be causing one to believe that they are going insane, causing deep paranoia, or creating constant fear. A person might control or abuse their partner financially, also, by controlling all their money, or by criticizing or threatening their economic status and basic needs. Abusive relationships are based on a person’s mistaken belief that they have the right to control their partner. The relationship is from then on controlled by one person’s possessiveness and yearning for control over the other. In abusive relationships, the abuse not only affects the couple, but anyone in their family. A man who beats his wife is twice as likely to beat his children too, and the type of abuse used in violent relationships can be applied to any member of the household, and usually is.

Many people have underestimated the amount of homes that have been broken by domestic abuse, and therefore do not feel it is important. However, they are sadly mistaken. About one-third of women have reported being sexually or physically abused by a boyfriend or husband at some point in their life. That’s the lady who lives across the street, the nice woman at the store, and the young girl down the block. Which one of them is being abused? None of them deserve it.

Judaism states “Thou shalt not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor.” These women, many of which are Jewish themselves, are everybody’s neighbors. No one can stand idly by as they are beaten and killed by the people they once loved and trusted, yet now fear and despise without going against Jewish text.

Shalom Bayit helps women recognize the danger of an abusive partner. Shalom Bayit strives not to keep the family together at all costs, but to bring true love and peace to as many women and children as possible. Over 16 years, Shalom Bayit has helped many women within the Jewish community. Its teen program reaches hundreds of girls all across the country, and their efforts have raised awareness, caution, and understanding throughout the Bay Area.

Hillel once said, “If not now, when?” If domestic abuse isn’t stopped now, when will it be? The longer an abusive relationship goes the more intense it becomes. If a man starts calling his wife vulgar names when they are in their twenties, by the time they are in their forties he might be beating her daily, or end up beating her to death. If people do not advocate for these women now, when will they? Will the response be too late? What if the women are already dead, killed accidentally or on purpose by their abusive spouse? What about their children? Who will help them? Is it too late? No. It is not too late. Not if people take a stand, as Shalom Bayit is doing. Not if the Jewish community realizes the danger and reality of domestic abuse and responds immediately to it. No one deserves to be abused by a partner, and Shalom Bayit works extremely hard to bring peace and love to women’s lives everywhere.
Shalom Bayit
P.O. Box 10102
Oakland, CA  94610
www.shalom-bayit.org
www.love-shouldnt-hurt.org
Phone: 510-451-8874
Helpline: 510-451-SAFE or 650-574-SAFE
Bay Area toll-free helpline: 866-SHALOM-7

Rabbinic Advisory Council
Steven Chester & Mimi Weisel
Co-Chairs
Leslie Alexander  Camille Angel
Melanie Aron  Ryan Bauer
Pam Frydman Baugh
Allen Bennett  Mark Bloom
David Booth  Karen Citrin
Micah Citrin  David Cooper
Menachem Creditor
Judah Dardik  Lavoy Derby
Dennis J. Eisen  Kim Ettinger
Nat Ezray  Dan Feder
Yitzchok Feldman
Michelle Fisher  Stacy Friedman
George Gittleman
Rosalind Glazer  Dan Goldblatt
Marv Goodman
Lynn Gottlieb  Roberto Graetz
Sarah Graff  Margie Jacobs
Burt Jacobson  Yoel Kahn
Stuart Kelman  Dean Kertesz
Noa Kushner  Chai Levy
Sheldon Lewis  Michael Lezak
Jane Litman  Janet Marder
Jackie Mates-Muchin
Sydney Mintz
Laura Novak-Winer
Adam Rosenthal
Elisheva Salamo
Julie Saxe-Taller  Avi Schulman
Miriam Senturia  Judy Shanks
Shula Stevens  Eric Weiss
Bridget Wynne

Advisory Board
Ellen Benjamin
Michelle Booth
Celia Harms
Laura Katz
Rebecca Schwartz
Kate VanZanten

Honorary Members:
Deborah Edelman, DrPh
Minouche Kandel, JD
Pam Kramer
Roselyne C. Swig

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

If you will be observing Sukkot with friends and family, or attending a community celebration, please consider tying purple ribbons on your Sukkah in honor of domestic violence awareness month. (Sukkot begins October 14th.) You may request ribbons from Shalom Bayit, or make your own! If you are part of a congregation, please encourage your rabbi to include the ribbon in Sukkot services.

Every Jewish family and organization is invited to tie a purple ribbon to their sukkah, and recite the following blessing, or any appropriate words, when hanging the ribbon (or whenever eating or gathering in the sukkah throughout the week):

We bless the Divine Presence, whose wings shelter us with peace.
Redeemer of Israel who brought us out of Egypt, on this festival of Sukkot our thoughts turn to those who dwell in fear and danger in their own homes. With compassion and an outstretched arm, bring them forth into freedom, and shelter them in your sukkah of peace.

Please join our communal call for peace

Sunday, October 12th  2-4pm

May Our Homes Be a Shelter of Peace

Shalom Bayit’s annual prayer for peace in the home and community gathering in the Sukkah

At a private home in Berkeley

For tickets, location, & more information: (510) 451-8874
Advance thanks to Temple Isaiah Mitzvah Day volunteers for making this event possible.

Inkind and financial contributions are fully tax deductible.
Please send your gift to “Tides Center / Shalom Bayit”
at PO Box 10102, Oakland 94610
or donate securely online at www.shalom-bayit.org