

TEENS FROM THREE TEMPLES HAVE SOCIAL WEEKEND TOGETHER

A “Three Temple Teen Retreat,” held from January 14-16, brought 23 area teenagers together for a weekend primarily of socializing. The students came from Congregation Emeth, Morgan Hill; Congregation Ohr Tzafon, Atascadero; and Temple Beth El, Salinas. These three temples are all small Reform congregations in small communities, therefore enabling Jewish teens to meet and spend time with other Jewish teens was the main objective of the retreat.

The weekend included Friday evening Shabbat meal and services at Congregation Emeth, followed by mixers, programs, and an overnight at the temple. The service was a “Debbie Friedman Shabbat Service,” using the compositions of this prolific writer and singer who recently passed away. Shabbat morning services were led by the supervising Rabbis and the teens, joining Congregation Emeth’s Junior Congregation students. The rest of the weekend was strictly fun and included dinner and a dance, with a live DJ, at Temple Beth El, a trip to the Santa Cruz Boardwalk, and team building exercises at the Monterey Mirror Maze.

The retreat was organized by three Rabbis who had been classmates and friends at the Academy for Jewish Religion (AJR-CA), who coincidentally are serving congregations in this area. The Rabbis are Marcy Delbick (Salinas), Debbie Israel (Morgan Hill), and Janice Mehring (Atascadero).

The teens are already planning future get togethers on their own, as well as planned activities by the temples.

CONGREGATION EMETH HOLDS CAMP SHABBAT

Congregation Emeth is proud of the many students who choose to spend their summer at a Jewish camp. To celebrate and acknowledge them, the temple held a Camp Shabbat, on Friday evening, January 7. Camp Newman’s head songleader, Rachel Mylan, led the service, along with summer campers, including Zac Jenkins, Evan Jordan, Sarah Langerman, Masha Maskell, David Miller, Rachel Neto, Joshua Toch, and Sarah Zajac.

“Our intention was not only to celebrate our students, but also to give the adults in our community a taste of a Shabbat at camp,” explained Rabbi Debbie Israel. “Some of us have vivid memories of the remarkably spiritual experience of observing Shabbat in a camp setting, but for others, it’s a foreign concept. They can’t imagine it. While it’s not possible to truly replicate the experience in a temple sanctuary, the music and the spirit of the service opened the door just a little, and hopefully inspired other families to consider Jewish summer camps.”

For a small congregation, Emeth has many students who attend either Camp Newman or Camp Towanga. The congregation offers financial aid to help its students have this important educational experience. For more information about Congregation Emeth, go to www.emeth.net, or call 408-778-8200.