

Kol HaLev's Strategic Planning Process

by Greg Selker

In 2009, Kol HaLev adopted a Vision of “A sacred Jewish community that celebrates the Divine, builds meaningful human connections and repairs the world; and our Mission of being “A vibrant Reconstructionist Jewish community dedicated to the continuity and evolution of our people and tradition.” Since then, we have been actively engaged in using this Vision, Mission and our Core Values as source documents to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for Kol HaLev.

Over the course of the last two years we have had several community strategic planning retreats; the last one held prior to our last High Holy Days. At this last retreat we had 50 members of the community including the majority of our various committee co-chairs and board of directors, assisted by facilitators for each of the 5 major goal areas of the mission, began the process of prioritizing the various Objectives, Strategies and Tactics identified in the plan. While all of these were originally created by looking at a five year window for implementation, we needed to determine which of these would become the strategic focus over the next two years. These prioritized actions would then become the work of our community.

This process of prioritization has largely occurred by individuals determining which goal area they are most interested in, looking at the various activities outlined under each, and self-selecting the strategies and tactics they personally are most interested in seeing brought to fruition and with which they wish to be involved. In addition to our Community Strategic Planning retreats, the 24 participants in the Leadership Seminar, now being offered its second year through funding provided by the Legacy Heritage Grant, have also begun a similar process with the Strategic Plan, looking at the full spectrum of activities identified and voicing their interest in terms of activities that they personally are committed to both participate in and be realized in the community.

This process of prioritization and self-selection has now led us to have a more clearly defined set of strategic actions to guide our efforts as a community over the next several years.

Our strategic plan has 5 major Goal Areas:

- Create a welcoming and caring community based on heart-felt Jewish values that serves the needs of our members
- Create a vibrant spiritual community celebrating and cultivating self-expression and holiness in the rhythms of Jewish life
- Become a learning community that provides creative and engaging Jewish educational experiences
- Become an informed and involved community serving the needs of our broader society
- Be an open and democratic community sustained by our members' financial commitments, participation and volunteerism

Our existing committee structures fit easily into these Goal Areas. For example, the committees and or task forces of High Holy Days, Holidays, Rabbi Liaison, Religious Practices, and Space are predominantly working on activities that are identified as Objectives, Strategies and Tactics under the goal of: *Create a vibrant spiritual community celebrating and cultivating self-expression and holiness in the rhythms of Jewish life.*

The same is true for each of the other 4 Goal Areas, each one contains Objectives, Strategies and Tactics that to a large degree define a good portion of the work that is being done, or is thought of being done in different committees and/or task forces within Kol HaLev. In this way, you could say that the Strategic Plan is stating the obvious, and in some cases this will be true. But it also points to where our emphasis now needs to be, and within each of the Goal Areas what we have determined is strategically important over the next several years for our community.

In this way, each Goal Area of the Strategic Plan is an evolving work in progress. It is a good definition at this point of time outlining the work we are committed to undertake as a community. It is also an evolving set of actions that will change dependent upon our involvement as a community with the work defined in the plan.

The prioritized Strategic Plan is now available on our website, in 5 one page, easy to read documents, each page representing a different Goal Area of our Mission. I encourage you to review each of these simple documents, and if there is one Goal Area with which you personally feel the most resonance, use this to reach out to one of the Committees defined in the Goal area and offer your assistance.

While these documents represent the culmination of a lot of work across our community over the past several years, they point the way for the fun and work that now is waiting for us as we move forward into our future.