OUR JOURNEY FORWARD STARTS WITH YOU!

“At Kolot Chayeinu, building a vibrant Kehilah Kedosha, sacred community, means continually striving to become the most inclusive, welcoming, justice-seeking and relevant Jewish community we can imagine. We nourish our spirits with prayer and ritual, with celebration and care. We show up for each other and rebuild our capacity to imagine a better world. After 26 incredible years of dynamic Jewish life, Kolot now begins a new chapter. Join us as we journey forward and continue to dream and build that Kehilah Kedosha!” – Rabbi Miriam Grossman

AN AUSPICIOUS MOMENT, A RARE OPPORTUNITY

It is an auspicious moment in Kolot’s history. We have reached an impressive milestone: more than a quarter-century of creating a vibrant, welcoming religious and spiritual community that embraces people of varying sexual orientations, gender identities, ages, races, family arrangements, and Jewish identities and backgrounds. Together, we joyously search for meaningful expressions of Judaism.

We now have a unique opportunity to celebrate our congregation’s hard work and accomplishments, and to invest in Kolot’s future. This investment is particularly opportune as we look ahead to our next chapter under the dynamic leadership of our new rabbi, Rabbi Miriam Grossman, and solidify our growth and transition following Rabbi Ellen Lippmann’s retirement in June 2018. It’s such an exciting time to be a member of Kolot, as we expand on the energy, engagement and investment demonstrated throughout the rabbinic search process. We are building on Kolot’s spiritual, intergenerational, educational and open-door community, and participating in important social justice movements that will influence how we evolve as a congregation, a city and a country.

All of this will require us to work together—as we have before—to lift our diverse voices, and act in accordance with our yearning for justice in partnership with like-minded congregations, organizations, and allies.

Our journey forward means all of us working together to plant the seeds for our next phase of community, prayer, learning, and action.
WE HAVE SO MUCH TO BE PROUD OF...

Our mission: At Kolot Chayeinu, doubt can be an act of faith, and all hands are needed to build our community. We are creative, serious seekers who pray joyfully, wrestle with tradition, pursue justice, and refuse to be satisfied with the world as it is.

Our growth: As Kolot enters the next phase, we are proud of our growing congregation, which continues to attract a generation often reluctant to join organizations. We increasingly offer a robust and diverse array of ritual celebrations and services, adult and children’s educational programming, partnerships, and social, economic justice, and anti-racist work.

Our impact: Our congregation is nationally recognized for its innovative approach to fostering an engaged Jewish life that provides deep meaning, strong community, and an ideologically diverse Jewish home for progressive activism. More importantly, our impact is measured by how we lovingly support each and every person within our congregation.
WE HAVE SO MUCH TO BE PROUD OF... (CONTINUED)

Our offerings: Kolot has grown to provide an intentionally broad and deep scope of programs that meets the needs of our diverse congregation:

• We host Friday night and Saturday morning Shabbat services, services for the High Holy Days and other Jewish holidays, Teshuva Circles, and more.

• Our Children’s Learning Program (CLP) serves more than 110 children and teens, offering nine different grade levels from early childhood to B’nai Mitzvah and beyond.

• Our rich array of adult learning opportunities includes weekly Torah study, adult B’nai Mitzvah, a Jewish history reading group, Intergenerational Learners Minyan, Wise Aging groups, Tikkun Middot (Strengthening Our Best Qualities Through Study and Reflection), Hebrew language studies, and more.

• In collaboration with Kolot’s Queer and Trans Working Group, we strive to be a welcoming and supportive community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people, thus bringing our identities—LGBTQ and Jewish—together in an affirming spiritual home.

• Our Race Working Group’s efforts to help us become an anti-racist congregation is increasingly recognized as a model for other synagogues and Jewish organizations across the country, so much so that Kolot was recently awarded a grant from the UJA’s Open Tent committee to support our cutting-edge anti-racist accountability work.

• Our Gemilut Chasadim (Acts of Loving Kindness) Committee organizes help for and by Kolot members in times of joy and need by, for example, hosting Shiva gatherings for our members in mourning and providing food for those in our congregation who are sick or recovering from an illness.

• Our social justice work encompasses many issues, including economic justice and refugee and immigrant rights. Our recent divestment from a major bank – the first synagogue in the country to do so publicly – shows that we put our resources where our values are.

• Our Working Group on Israel/Palestine expands our self-definition as an Open Tent that embraces a range of opinions on one of the most complicated issues facing Jewish communities today.

Distinctively open-hearted, spirited and actively progressive, Kolot Chayeinu is a source of comfort, support and solidarity as our offerings evidence.
YOUR JOURNEY

You are a part of the Kolot journey—claim it as your journey. Grow with Kolot to create a foundation that will serve you, your friends and family, and generations to come.

Kolot was founded more than a quarter century ago by a small group of people who came together to create a congregation that did not exist—we needed a newly defined Jewish community. With our growing contingent of younger members, we realize that Kolot’s founders’ vision still has relevance. Our journey forward requires that we build the next level of strength and capacity for our congregation, and bring Kolot’s resources into better alignment with the potential of the extraordinary community that we have created.

This is your opportunity to make the difference in Kolot as a sustained community. You will create this next iteration of Kolot. Your help will define what our unique congregation can become.

Grow with Kolot as a donor and map its journey forward for future generations.
WHERE WE ARE IN KOLOT’S JOURNEY — AND WHAT WE NEED TO GO EVEN FURTHER

Increasing Kolot’s capacity across our priorities of people, programming and space requires an enhanced financial foundation that matches our aspirations. We have identified the following areas in which Kolot needs to build its capacity in order to ensure our ability to grow.

People

Expand and ensure fair and equitable pay scales for our clergy.

While our clergy are the heart and soul of our spiritual community, our pay-scale and benefits have remained low compared to other synagogues of Kolot’s size and program scope. To remedy this, we seek to raise funds to enable us to pay our clergy at a rate that is commensurate with their hard work, commitment, and talent. In addition to providing more equitable compensation, it will also position us to maintain and attract the high quality clergy our congregation needs and deserves over the long term.

Additionally, our aim is to ensure that our clergy members have manageable workloads that allow them to do their best work. We also wish to create a clergy-to-congregant ratio that facilitates the degree of personal attention and connection Kolot members value so highly. As our congregation has grown in size and as our ritual, learning, and social justice activities have expanded, Kolot has reached the point at which it is prudent not only to maintain our Student Rabbi position, but to bring on new positions to support the work of our clergy team.

Expand and ensure equitable pay scales for our administrative, school and program personnel.

We have accomplished extraordinary things with very limited staff. At each juncture of personnel expansion in the past, from part-time to full-time executive staff, we have realized important gains. The time is now to invest in a sustainable staff structure that has the capacity to support our current scope and provide for growth.

When we initiated Our Journey Forward over a year and a half ago, we aspired to expand our staff in multiple ways. Thanks to the support of dozens of members, we have been able to upgrade our Administrative Assistant to full-time and hire a children’s learning development specialist. Both additions are already helping to create the well-rounded staffing model that best matches the needs of our congregants and students. With additional support, we will be able to sustain these staff additions, as well as to continue to grow, as determined by our members’ needs.

To attract and retain administrative and educational personnel with the appropriate skills and expertise, we need to ensure that our salary and benefits structures align with market standards. Kolot’s existing staff are underpaid; we seek to increase their salaries and benefits to match or exceed the going market rate for similarly-sized congregations. This is essential from the perspective of fairness and equity and is a tangible expression of how much we value and appreciate our diligent and excellent staff.

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Programming Costs

As we have grown significantly over the past 25 years, Kolot’s budget has not kept pace with our programming. As a result, we find ourselves continually challenged to support the expansive and important programs on which our congregation relies and anticipate the needs of a growing congregation of diverse individuals. While we engage in a very broad array of activities and priorities, the impact and reach of those efforts are hampered by inadequate resources. For example, we need to replace our aging and outdated prayer books, and we seek to repair both Torahs and purchase a fireproof safe to ensure their safety and security. We also require state of the art media equipment so we can more effectively document our efforts and communicate with our broader community. Last but certainly not least, we must invest in equipment and other supports that will expand access for differently-abled congregants. These purchases are vital to ensure an inclusive and accessible environment that reflects Kolot’s values and community.

High Holy Days Space

Honoring our open-door values, Kolot charted a new course for 5780 High Holy Days (HHD) by holding services in a larger, fully accessible, more accommodating space at City Tech. That decision allowed us to welcome close to 4,000 people to share in the spiritually, musically and communally inspirational Days of Awe. The experience was overwhelmingly positive, and the services have been characterized as “beautiful”, “inspiring”, and “powerful”. Our 5780 services are a wonderful example of how Kolot can better meet the spiritual needs of our congregation and our broader Jewish community. This level of growth and excellence demands a new level of financial investment.
HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Our Journey Forward will require each of us to make a financial contribution to Kolot payable over 3 years – a contribution that is personally significant to you. At a minimum, we ask that your 3-year gift includes membership dues plus a philanthropic gift. You are also welcome to include a High Holy Days donation and other individual giving, such as life cycle events, in your 3-year pledge.

Make a three-year commitment to ensure Kolot’s vibrant persistence and growth. Give, and encourage others to give.

To accomplish our people + programming + HHD space goals, Kolot seeks to raise a total of $455,000 in Our Journey Forward gifts this year. Last year, we received contributions totaling more than $372,000 through the OJF campaign, a phenomenal accomplishment, particularly since it was the first year of the Campaign and our interim year without a rabbi! We invite you to join us on this exciting journey!
As Rabbi Emerita Lippmann reminds us, “We reached the 25-year mark and built an amazing community. If we value it, love it, and want it to continue, we simply must do more fundraising. By giving more generously, we are funding Kolot’s values, supporting others, and building our community—what could be a more soulful antidote to the crisis of our current society?”

“Always looking to the past with an eye to the future, Kolot’s spiritual, communal, social justice and education programming touches all our lives and—in times of bewildering madness and blindness—provides not just a spiritual refuge, but a place that looks outward, to truly renew the world. To build on this foundation, we are stronger together and all hands can help the community flourish.” — Kieran Lettrich

As we launch Kolot’s next 25 years, honor Rabbi Lippmann’s extraordinary tenure as our founding rabbi, and solidify the foundation upon which Rabbi Miriam Grossman will lead Kolot to grow and thrive, join us in bringing our values to life by contributing to the next important steps in Kolot’s journey forward.

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