

Hebrew Institute of White Plains

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Women in Leadership Positions

- 13 women serve on the Board of Directors
- 3 women serve as Officers of the synagogue
- There has never been a female President although several women have been offered the position
- There is a Women's Focus Officer (WFO) who acts as an advocate for women in all areas of synagogue life
 - The WFO serves on the Board of Directors, the Executive Board, and several other committees
 - The primary role for the WFO is to help coordinate women's programming under the umbrella of "*Isha L'Isha*" (Woman to Woman) and to serve as a liaison between women's groups and *shul* leadership
 - The position is relatively new to the congregation and therefore still evolving
- Since 2004 a Drisha scholar has served as the Congregational Intern
 - She teaches classes and occasionally addresses the congregation on Shabbat
 - She serves as a counselor and advisor to women in the congregation on both an individual and group basis

Women Speaking From the Amud

- Women may only speak from the *amud* after the conclusion of services
- Women occasionally introduce the *parsha* during services from the women's section
- There is mixed seating when a speaker addresses the congregation outside of the *tefillah* setting

Women's Ritual Participation

- A woman carries the Torah through the women's section
- A communal *misheberach* is recited; congregants may insert either the mother or fathers names in their personal prayer

Kaddish

- Women may recite *kaddish*

Women's Tefillah Group

- There has been an active WT since 1995
- Shabbat morning WT are held once a month
- Occasionally there is a Friday evening or Shabbat *mincha/maariv* WT
- Classes are offered to teach women how to lead *davaning* and *layn*
- WT *gabbriot* participate in the same training and instruction as *gabbaim* of the congregation

Life Cycle Events

- Simchat Bat: Although there is no standard or official ceremony, many families choose to celebrate the birth of their daughters
- Bat Mitzvah:
 - Many girls choose to celebrate by leading services at the WT
 - Some girls deliver a *d'var* Torah in the main sanctuary at the end of *tefillah*
 - A committee has been formed to recommend suggestions for enhancing the Bat Mitzvah experience
- Bar Mitzvah: During the service both parents publicly recite *baruch shepetarani*
 - The mother approaches the *bimah* from the women's section
 - The father and son stand next to the mother on the *bimah* from the other side of the *mechitzah*
- Wedding: The WT occasionally holds an *aufruf* for a *kallah*

Holidays

- Purim: Women's *megillah* reading since 2005
- Simchat Torah: Women *layn* from two Torah's and there is a special women's *hakafa*
- Sukkot: Special women's *hoshana*
- Rosh Chodesh: Women's Rosh Chodesh Group meets once a month in peoples homes
 - The group is led either by a guest speaker or congregation member

Mechitzah Structure

- Women sit on the sides of the main sanctuary
- The *mechitzah* height is rather low
- Full view
- A Committee has been formed to discuss better situating women and providing access to the *bimah* from the women's section

Childcare Available During Services

- Childcare is available for very young children on Shabbat morning from the start of *tefillah*
- Youth groups are offered for children ages 4 +

Other

- The Hebrew Institute of White Plains believes that the synagogue must be an important religious, spiritual and social home for women of all ages and backgrounds. To that end, the lay and professional leadership work together to insure that our synagogue provides for the needs of all, within a halakhic framework.