



March 15, 2022

Re: *USY & Kadima*

Dear Parents and Teens:

As some of you are aware, in August of 2021, allegations appeared in The Times of Israel against a former staff member of USY/Kadima from the METNY region. At that time, United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism sent a response to said allegations.

At that time, our chapter decided to take a step back from USY/METNY as we had been dissatisfied with the response from USCJ as well as the communication we were receiving regarding the allegations.

In January an email went out to the congregation again informing everyone of the step back we had taken. Since that time, myself, Jeff Schragenheim, Gail Kaiser (Co-Presidents) and Mitchel Speigel (of the Youth Committee) met with Rabbi Rabin, head Rabbi of the METNY USY program to discuss how METNY USY intends to move forward.

In order to share this information with you, as well as move forward as a chapter, we have set up a Sicha to be held **on April 3rd at 6PM** in our youth lounge with myself, Rabbi Kurland and Tara Roggensinger, LCSW. Tara is a licensed social worker, who has worked with teens for many years. She specializes with teens who have experienced trauma.

This event is open to all 9th-12th graders of our congregation both actively involved in USY or have been, and we also invite recent alumni. In the first 30 minutes we invite the parents to stay for an information session to get a full understanding of all information we can provide regarding the allegations in The Times of Israel as well as the plans from both our chapter and METNY USY on how they plan to move forward. Following this, the parents are invited to step out with Rabbi Kurland for a light snack. The teens, myself, and our licensed social worker, Tara Roggensinger, LCSW will then meet for further discussion. This will be formatted just as any other Sicha that the teens have attended at Kinnus, Encampment, Shul-ins, etc., and will also serve as a group session for the teens to open up about any feelings they have about the information with which they have been provided and to make USY a safe place again for them.

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In order to attend you must RSVP to me via email. I am happy to answer any questions as well in advance, however, because there is quite a bit of information to be provided regarding the next steps from METNY it is requested that you attend this session in person. It is important that we move forward as a group and allow our teens to get back into a program they love, in a safe environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel Benner", written over a horizontal line.

Rachel Benner
Youth Advisor
Congregation Shir Shalom

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