

Adath Israel to Celebrate Sukkot in a New, State-of-the-Art Sukkah Plaza



This October, Adath Israel Congregation families and friends will step into a spacious new sukkah built and decorated on a beautiful new sukkah plaza, thanks to the foresight and generosity of Josephine G. Stillpass and her family.

“I wanted to be able to initiate and direct the project, and create something nice and permanent that would honor our generational commitment to Adath Israel,” said Josephine, who added that her intent was for the sukkah plaza to stand as a testimonial to her family’s dedication to Adath Israel.

A lifelong member of Adath Israel, Josephine notes that her parents, Sol and Ethel Goodman, and her husband, Stanford’s, parents, John and Bessie Stillpass, also were active members and supporters of the congregation. Late last summer around sukkot, her son, John, approached her with the idea of funding a new sukkah plaza. She immediately agreed and embraced the project as part of her participation in the Create Your Jewish Legacy program.

“For the last two years, as an Adath officer and board member, I was working with Adath Israel on the potential future project of the sukkah plaza not knowing that my family would become involved,” John said. “The concrete on the plaza was deteriorating after about 50 years and the temporary structure used for Adath Israel’s sukkah was becoming more and more burdensome to put together.”

Coincidentally, Josephine was looking for exactly this type of project - something that would honor not only her Adath heritage, but celebrate her family’s living commitment through her son and her daughter, Joy, and their children.

“Members of the Stillpass family have not only been members of Adath Israel for generations, but have been dedicated to enhancing our synagogue in the present and committed to its future,” said Senior

Rabbi Irvin M. Wise. “Jo and her family's generosity in giving us our new sukkah plaza is the most recent example of the Stillpass family's commitment.”

Gary Meisner, principle with Meisner and Associates, a landscape architecture company, was hired to work Josephine’s vision into reality. Gary, who has provided design services for various projects around the synagogue, including the new sign, landscape designs around the additional exterior installations, and additions to the exterior lighting plan, suggested a large pergola made of sturdy Douglass fir from the Pacific northwest.

“Because of my artistic background, it was exciting to see the design unfold and become such a highly functional part of the building not only for sukkot but for many events and functions,” Josephine said.

Townscapes, a division of Towne Properties, stepped in as the concrete contractor. Tri-State Fabricators created the column supports, and Jeff Ridner’s crew, The Finishing Company LLC, did the carpentry work. Mayers Electric Co. put the final touches on the LED lighting inside the pergola and is pre-wiring the structure for a sound system. The surrounding landscape by JR Morris Landscaping LLC, sets the area apart from the parking lot.

One of the unique features of the new structure is a large Star of David built into the roof, which creates the same shadow in full sunlight. Gary said it was important to him to bring Josephine’s dream into reality, and incorporating the Star of David into the design helped reflect the legacy she envisioned.

“It’s a simple, multi-purpose space with an elegant structure with symbolism built into the framing,” he said.

Not only beautiful, the three-season, versatile structure is a perfect complement to Lerner.Fisher Hall, or on its own, for weddings, wine tastings, cookouts, and other social events. Portable heating can be brought in and permanent anchors in the concrete allow for easy tenting. Along with Adath’s Kosher facility, the sukkah plaza enhances a unique and elegant space available to the community.



