

President's Message January 2007

I have this theory that if one person can go out of their way to show compassion then it will start a chain reaction of the same. - Rachel Scott

Rachel Scott was the first person killed at Columbine High School on April 20, 1999. Her acts of kindness and compassion coupled with the contents of her six diaries have become the foundation for one of the most life-changing school programs in America - Rachel's Challenge.

I viewed the Rachel's challenge program at Hackettstown High School this past month with my daughters. It was run by Rachel Scott's father, Darrell. It was one of the most emotional programs I have ever attended. For anyone involved in a school, I would recommend that you bring up this program to your administrators and bring Mr. Scott in to your school to speak.

The program that he brings is one of simple kindness to other human beings. In my opinion, that is what religion is all about to me. All of the rituals and rites that we as Jews perform, as well as all of the other religions of the world, are to prepare you to do one thing, do unto others as you would have them do to you.

Do you see people for who they really are? Can you see through the facades that we all employ and see the real person behind the facade? Do you see that a simple hello, or thank you, or even just a smile can turn a person's whole day around? The next time you are feeling sad or lonely, instead of thinking about what you need, try smiling at another person. They will usually smile back, and if you start a chain reaction of smiles, how many people's lives can you make better? It doesn't take a Herculean effort to engage in this challenge. It just takes the desire to want to make some one else's life a little better.

May you all have a HEALTHY New Year and may you make a difference in someone's life.

I love each and every one of you and we need all of you at the temple to be involved in our community.

Shalom
Howie