



**Moving Traditions Benefit Honoring
Alisa Robbins Doctoroff**

Launching the Pathway to Flourishing Jewish Teens

Wednesday, May 15, 2019/10 Iyar 5779

Congregation Rodeph Sholom 7 West 83rd Street, New York



Alisa Robbins Doctoroff brings to Moving Traditions a deep commitment to Jewish education and to excellence, as she does for so many organizations.

Alisa's board service helped shape Moving Traditions' focus on immersive Jewish experiences, on high quality training of Jewish educators, and on the pursuit of personal meaning in Jewish life. With Alisa's strategic input, Moving Traditions expanded its offerings from Rosh Hodesh, a group for teen girls, to a continuum of programs for Jewish teens of all genders from 6th grade through high school, called the "Pathway to Flourishing Jewish Teens."

Alisa's impact extends well beyond her role at Moving Traditions. A past president of the UJA-Federation of New York, the Abraham Joshua Heschel School and Congregation Or Zarua, Alisa currently serves on the boards of the Jim Joseph Foundation, the Jewish Theological Seminary, Hadar, and Montefiore Medical Center.

While she is not one to seek the limelight, nonetheless **Alisa generously shoulders leadership out of her passion for creating vibrant Jewish community.** So, when we asked Alisa to be our 2019 honoree, of course she said "yes."

Alisa lives in New York City with her husband, Dan, and they are the proud parents of Jacob, Ariel, and Jenna.

An evening honoring
Alisa Robbins Doctoroff
and celebrating the
national launch of
the "Pathway to
Flourishing Jewish Teens."

Evening Program

Welcome

Deborah Meyer, Moving Traditions Founder and CEO

Panel with Teen Group Alumni and Group Leaders

Becky Barnett, Rosh Hodesh Alumna

Bennett Decker, Shevet Alumnus

Julia Friedman, Rosh Hodesh Alumna

Andrew Sobelsohn, Shevet Alumnus

Dana Levinson Steiner, Rosh Hodesh Group Leader

David Lieberman, Shevet Group Leader

A B'nai Mitzvah Program Experience

Hope Suttin, Moving Traditions Board Chair

Alisa Robbins Doctoroff, Benefit Honoree

Honoring Alisa Robbins Doctoroff

Sally Gottesman, Moving Traditions Founding Board Chair

Blessing

Rabbi Daniel Brenner, Moving Traditions, Chief of Education

Rabbi Tamara Cohen, Moving Traditions, VP, Chief of Program Strategy

Dessert



**With your love of the
Jewish people, you
show that committing
precious energy,
tzedakah, and time will
build a life of meaning.**

A Letter from Hope and Deborah

Dear Alisa,

It is a pleasure to celebrate you—for all you bring to Moving Traditions and to Jewish communal life as an engaged participant, philanthropist, and leader. Even more—it is a pleasure to honor you for the way in which you lead: with vision, deliberation, discernment, generosity, strength, and kindness.

As someone dedicated to Jewish education and to conveying Jewish values, you set a beautiful example of engaged and compelling leadership.

You evoke those who Margie Piercy exalts in her poem, *To Be of Use*. She loves those people “best” who “do what has to be done, again and again.” This is you, Alisa. The poem ends:

The work of the world is common as mud.
Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.
But the thing worth doing well done
has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.
Greek amphoras for wine or oil,
Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums
but you know they were made to be used.
The pitcher cries for water to carry
and a person for work that is real.

With your love of beauty and your love for the Jewish people, you demonstrate to us—and to so many people in so many Jewish communal organizations—the value of committing your precious energy, tzedakah, and time to building Jewish life, which in turn becomes a life of meaning.

Thank you for inspiring us by your example and for helping to build Moving Traditions into the organization it is today.

With love and admiration,

Hope Suttin
Board Chair

Deborah Meyer
Founder and CEO



**In these challenging
times, we are so
fortunate to have
your leadership, Alisa.**

A Letter from Linda Mirels

Dear Alisa,

It is a great honor to co-chair this year's Moving Traditions Benefit, which recognizes your critical contribution both to the organization and to promoting Jewish identity and values.

Moving Traditions impact can be seen across its programs, which have inspired 21,000 teens and trained 1,600 adults as mentors. Its innovative approach has delivered an increased sense of Jewish connection to participants, to their peers, and to the community. Our future Jewish teens are so fortunate to have you as a leader at Moving Traditions to support them.

Slingshot notes that Moving Traditions “trains Jewish educators to draw on ancient Jewish wisdom and the latest in adolescent psychosocial development to help teens explore their identities and ethics, communicate face-to-face, and build healthy relationships. To make sure it reaches teens wherever they are (even in the summer), Moving Traditions partners with congregations, camps, and other Jewish institutions to train staff and professionals. Their work emboldens teens by fostering self-discovery, challenging sexism, and inspiring a commitment to Jewish life and learning.”

I cannot think of a more perfect honoree for this evening's gala. Your deep commitment to Jewish education and promoting Jewish identity in our communities is notable. Your mark can be seen in your extensive communal engagement. You are sought after by so many important organizations as a thought leader; your wisdom moves the agenda forward.

It was a great pleasure and privilege for me to work alongside you for so many years. I have learned so much from you, witnessing first-hand your deep knowledge, tireless commitment, integrity and smarts. You rise to every occasion and are always available when called upon. In these challenging times we are so fortunate to have your sound, informed, thoughtful leadership serving both this and so many other important communal endeavors.

I raise a toast to you!

Linda Mirels



You have so many wonderful and admirable qualities: wisdom, humility, fairness, caring, and a deep sense of responsibility.



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Dear Alisa,

I want to congratulate you on the great honor you are receiving from Moving Traditions. Having worked with you as a fellow Director (and classmate) at the Jim Joseph Foundation for many years, I have witnessed firsthand your passion, commitment and drive to strengthen our Jewish community, build the next generation of leaders, engage the unengaged, craft strong Jewish identities, and inspire others to live vibrant Jewish lives.

I have had the privilege of seeing you dive into complex problems, generate new ideas and opportunities, and build consensus among your colleagues about new pathways that enable others to reach new heights in Jewish education, leadership development, and Jewish experiences. You have been a role model to so many of us.

Most importantly, I have been so fortunate to work alongside you and be inspired by who you are as a person. You have so many wonderful and admirable qualities that exemplify the values that we hold so dearly as a Jewish people: wisdom, humility, fairness, caring, and a deep sense of responsibility.

I know that this wonderful recognition is simply a thimble of praise in the ocean of what you deserve for all of the incredible time, energy, dedication and resources that you pour into our Jewish community and beyond. I look forward to your upcoming leadership as the new Chair of the Jim Joseph Foundation and our continuing work together to make the world and our Jewish community a much better place. Mazel Tov Alisa!

Very Warmest Regards, Dan

Dan Safier
Chair, Jim Joseph Foundation



**You cannot know how
much your values
have burrowed down
into our very beings.**

A Letter from Alisa's Children

Mom — Hi!

Everyone is here tonight to celebrate the contributions you have made to Moving Traditions — and to the Jewish community more widely. And as your children, we have had front row seats to your devotion to the work you do.

It's a familiar sight — you, at the computer or sitting on your bed late at night, reading up on a meeting you have the next day. You are nothing if not prepared.

The three of us have also been on the receiving end of a few (very long) emails or text messages, detailing a camp you've just visited or an inspirational woman you've just met, your excitement or concern radiating through the screen.

And best of all, we've also seen, in person, how incisive your questions are, how thoughtful you are in coming up with solutions, and how much respect there is for your opinions.

Because you don't just affirm or reject, you dig in. For you, this isn't about being a passive observer or a rubber stamp, it's about doing the work to make things better for people both in the Jewish community and outside of it.

You are relentless in your pursuit of that goal, an endless well of support, always ready to take on something new. No matter how busy you are, there is always another organization worth joining.

Sometimes we say that your parents affect you — whether they do everything right or everything wrong. We're lucky enough to be in the first category. You cannot know how much your values have burrowed down into our very beings. We can only hope that one day, we can have even half of the impact you've had. Not that you're a particularly easy act to follow! We admire you. We love you. And we are so, so proud of you.

Love,

Jacob

Ariel

Jenna

Panelist Bios

Teen Group Alumni

Becky Barnett

Becky Barnett is a graduate of Cornell University, and currently conducts clinical research in women's health and infectious disease at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Becky grew up in Armonk, NY where she attended Temple Sharaay Tefila of Bedford and participated in Rosh Hodesh through 12th grade. She lives in Manhattan and enjoys hiking, photography, tutoring and exploring NYC. Her Rosh Hodesh group still gets together once a year at Thanksgiving.

Bennett Decker

Bennett Decker is a junior in the Joint Program between the Jewish Theological Seminary and Columbia University. Bennett hails from the city of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia, PA where he first got involved in Shevet. He currently studies Political Science and Talmud, as he is unsure whether he wants to be Abraham Joshua Heschel or Joshua Lyman after college.

Julia Friedman

Julia Friedman is a freshman at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. From Park Slope, Julia participated in Rosh Hodesh at Congregation Beth Elohim from 6th grade through 9th grade, and served on Moving Traditions' Rosh Hodesh Youth Advisory Council. She is looking forward to a few weeks at home before she heads to Camp Schodack this summer to be a group leader.

Andrew Sobelsohn

Andrew Sobelsohn is a senior at Columbia University, double-majoring in History and English. Born and raised on the Upper West Side, Andrew attended Shevet at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun from middle school to early high school. Next year, he looks forward to pursuing a Master of Arts in Middle Eastern Studies at Tel Aviv University on a Fulbright Fellowship. Outside of his studies, Andrew is the lead guitarist and vocalist for Patches, a student-led folk-rock band.

Group Leaders

David Lieberman

David Lieberman is a graduate of Vassar College, and an Emmy-winning editor and story producer of documentary films and television. His feature documentaries include: Magic Camp, We Could Be King, Keepers of the Game, and Don't Be Nice. David is a Shevet group leader at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in New York City. He has been leading groups for Moving Tradition for eight years and has trained other Shevet leaders across the country as part of our training conference faculty. He is grateful for the opportunity to connect with Jewish youth and youth educators, and for the mentorship of Rabbi Daniel Brenner.

Dana Levinson Steiner

Dana Levinson Steiner is Director of ACCESS Global at AJC, where she oversees an international program to engage young professionals through transformative leadership development. Dana holds a B.Ed. from McGill University, an M.A. from the Jewish Theological Seminary, and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in education and Jewish studies from NYU. Dana sits on the board of the Jewish Women's Foundation of New York. She served as a Rosh Hodesh group leader at Temple Israel Center in White Plains, NY, as well as the 92nd Street Y, and wishes something like Moving Traditions had existed when she was a teenager.

Hineni. Here I am.

Moving Traditions encourages pre-teens to embrace the spotlight during their b'nai mitzvah. In the session "Center of Attention," we introduce pre-teens to the *Hineni* prayer (on the right), which cantors often recite during High Holidays to express their trepidation at representing the Jewish community in penitent prayers.

The pre-teens are asked to focus on the word *Hineni*, which means "Here I am," and to rewrite the prayer in their own words. In this way, they create their own personal ritual for the morning of their b'nai mitzvah, to help them be present and prepared for their service and celebration. Please use the card on the next page to create your own ritual for situations where you are called on to be the center of attention.

Note: This is an adaptation of a traditional r'shut (permission) prayer developed in the 16th century by an unknown author and used commonly in Eastern Europe. The prayer has been adapted to the possibility of a leader who uses masculine or feminine pronouns. It has also been adapted to include alternating masculine and feminine language to address God. See more in *Mahzor Lev Shalem*; Ed Feld, editor; Rabbinical Assembly, 2010.

הַנְּנִי הָעֲנִי/הָעֲנִיָּה מִמַּעַשׁ, נִרְעָשׁ/נִרְעָשֶׁת
וְנִפְחָד/וְנִפְחָדֶת מִפְּחַד יוֹשְׁבֵת תְּהִלּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל.
בָּאתִי לְעַמֶּד וּלְהִתְחַנֵּן לְפָנֶיךָ
עַל עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתָּנִי.
אִךְ עַל פִּי שָׂאִינִי כְּדָאִי וְהִגּוֹן/כְּדָאִית וְהִגּוֹנָה לְכָךְ.
לְכֵן אֶבְקֶשׁ מִמֶּךָ.
אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב.
אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה אֱלֹהֵי רִבְקָה אֱלֹהֵי רָחֵל וְאֱלֹהֵי לֵאָה.
ה' ה' אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנוּן אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׂדֵי אִיּוֹם וְנוֹרָא,
הֵי הָאֵל נָא מְצַלִּיחַ דְרַכֵּי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי הוֹלֵךְ/הוֹלְכֶת
לְעַמֶּד וּלְבִקֶּשׁ רַחֲמִים עָלַי וְעַל שׁוֹלְחֵי.
אֱהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה . . .
כִּי אַתָּה שׁוֹמַעַת תְּפִלַּת
עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרַחֲמִים.
בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה שׁוֹמַעַת תְּפִלָּה

Hineni: Here I Stand

Here I stand, impoverished in merit, trembling in the presence of the One who hears the prayers of Israel. Even though I am unfit and unworthy for the task, I come to represent Your people Israel and plead on their behalf. Therefore, gracious and merciful Adonai, awe-inspiring God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, I pray that I might successfully seek compassion for myself and those who send me.

You, who responded to Moses, saying, "I will be there with you, in the way that I will be there with you,"...because you listen to prayer with compassion, praised are You who hears prayer.



Before I

I will

הַנְּבִי

Thank you for honoring
Alisa Robbins Doctoroff
and supporting the work
of **Moving Traditions.**

Visionary

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Linda Mirels* and Wendy Fisher
Shonni Silverberg and John Shapiro

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Special Thanks

Moving Traditions would like to thank the following for their contributions to our Benefit: EK Productions; Fluent Imagery; Amber Lane, MOD-Lab; Deena Parnass Kleinman; Philly Custom DJ; Pride Caterers; Congregation Rodeph Shalom; Shelley Silver



Our Mission

**Moving Traditions
emboldens teens
by fostering
self-discovery,
challenging sexism,
and inspiring a
commitment to
Jewish life
and learning.**

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Our Impact

Moving Traditions believes it is critically important for the Jewish community to help teens navigate the world at this time of cultural upheaval and polarization so they will thrive as healthy, ethical, and Jewishly connected people.

However, while a majority of Jewish teens will become b'nai mitzvah, most drop out of Jewish life soon after, leaving the Jewish community at a critical stage, just when they are figuring out who they are and how to behave in a society that often dictates narrow and unhealthy gender roles and ways of dealing with differences.

Moving Traditions connects the issues teens care about most—such as body image, friendship, social and academic pressure, romance, and sexuality—to enduring Jewish values, fosters positive peer-to-peer relationships through our trained educators and mentors, and inspires participants to develop an ongoing connection to Jewish community. By promoting a more inclusive and expansive view of gender for Jewish girls, boys, and transgender and nonbinary teens, we create a more vibrant, engaging Judaism that helps all teens to flourish.

Established in 2005, Moving Traditions launched with a Teen Group program for girls, Rosh Hodesh, and has since created Shevet for boys and Tzelem for transgender and non-binary teens. Our new B'nai Mitzvah program helps 6th and 7th graders and their parents develop strong communication and empathy through a tested curriculum, and the Carol Lowenstein Moving Traditions B'nai Mitzvah Training Institute which prepares clergy and educators to lead meaningful, Jewish conversations to help families navigate this important “coming of age” celebration. Together, the Moving Traditions B'nai Mitzvah program and Teen Groups comprise the "Pathway to Flourishing Jewish Teens".

Our latest training initiative, CultureShift, prepares camp leaders to train their counselors and staff to eradicate sexism, sexual harassment and assault at camp, and to foster safety, respect, healthy relationships and equity.

To date, Moving Traditions has emboldened 23,000 teens, trained 1,850 adults as B'nai Mitzvah program leaders and Teen Group mentors, and partnered with more than 400 congregations, JCCs and other Jewish entities across North America. We operate six staffed regions in Boston, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, New York, and Philadelphia.

As a result, with your support, Moving Traditions is helping more pre-teens and teens find meaning and connection in Jewish life.