

For Immediate Release

February 4, 2015

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**CONGREGATION BROTHERS OF ISRAEL SETS RELIGIOUS SCHOOL TUITION AT \$360
PER STUDENT PER YEAR TO PAY FORWARD JEWISH EDUCATION**

Congregation Brothers of Israel, a Conservative Synagogue in Newtown, Bucks County, PA voted to set tuition at \$360 a year per child in Kindergarten through Confirmation going forward and starting with the 2015-2016 academic year. This move by the Board of CBOI is a permanent shift in the tuition structure for the religious school and is made possible by CBOI's endowment fund. This tuition rate extends to members and non-members alike. Synagogue membership will be required beginning in 4th grade when it is customary to assign a bar or bat mitzvah date. Current members have been paying \$1,000-\$2000 per year to send their children to the synagogue's Rabbi Howard Hersch Religious School, named for the congregation's Rabbi Emeritus. Committee members decided that the 130 year-old congregation should make it possible for as many Jewish children as possible to afford a religious school education for the next 130 years. The price was set: Two times Chai per month of the academic year - September - June or \$360 annually.

No prior religious school experience is required for any grade level and students can join during any time of the year. Kindergarten through 7th grade classes meet on Sunday mornings. Third through 7th grade also meets on Wednesday afternoons. Confirmation class meets two Wednesdays a month. The synagogue also offers a separate pre-school program for a child with an adult some Sunday mornings. CBOI is inclusive and has always welcomed children from all traditions to their religious school and their families in the synagogue. To tour the school or spend a Sunday morning or Wednesday afternoon in a class, families should contact Religious School Director Joan Hersch.

Since its days on Greenwood Avenue in Trenton, NJ, CBOI has always considered its religious school one of its biggest assets and contributions to the community. Mrs. Hersch likes to point out that many teachers in the religious school became Bar or Bat Mitzvahs at CBOI when they themselves were religious school students. The congregation moved to Bucks County seven years ago to be closer to where members lived. Since then, Rabbi Hersch, who is still very active in the congregation, retired as full-time Rabbi. Rabbi Aaron Gaber joined the synagogue in 2014 from Ventnor, NJ where he was spiritual leader of Beth Judah Congregation for fourteen years.

Rabbi Gaber is the father of four children and knows first-hand how Jewish children can benefit from a positive religious school experience and for that reason he was a strong supporter of the new tuition rate, "We have a great school, with great teachers who energize our students. This experience will now be more affordable for every parent who wants their child to have a strong

Jewish identity. I am excited to be part of a community that is paving the way for a strong Jewish future."