

Sim Shalom 2009 Report to ER/WUPJ (brief edition)

Our community had a vibrant and challenging year. I'm writing this report as we are making our final preparations for our first ever Shabbat services in our new synagogue location. With a long-term lease contract, it is a 150 sq. meter space in a residential building with the right internal structure and divisions so we can function as a house of prayer, of study and of community. After 4 years of operating out of two separate locations, having our main programs in an inconvenient shared space in a Jewish community center building, it is wonderful to unpack our long-hidden library, children's creative workshop tools and other items that we were unable to access or use. This would not be possible if – during the course of the last 2 months - we had not found the right place, if we had no access to a generous government grant for renovation, and if our members had not raised their donations to cover a large percentage of the rent for this year.

However, we were not sitting idle before this remarkable development either. Our holiday services (including Seder, Shavuot, Chanukkah) were running with full house, our first year Talmud Torah continued into its second year and we had several wonderful Bnai Mitzvah and conversion occasions to strengthen our member's Jewish identity and our membership. Our spring family camp had close to 80 attendees.

Our Board optimized its operation by starting a dedicated finance/budget committee while its strategic meetings provided a foundation for the growth of the congregation. Our teenage youth group continued to be active in photo projects documenting Jewish sites in Hungary, with several members visiting US summer camps.

We helped to start ARZENU in Hungary, which connects us with Israel and hopefully with the other Hungarian progressive community. We took part in establishing an interfaith group which includes a Muslim community as well as 6 other denominations, with activities ranging from representing our common interests to the government to learning more about each other during visits to each other's services.

February , 2010.

Gabor Radvanszki

President