Stanmore and Canons Park Syngaogue officially launches first ever Yad B'Yad initiative

Award-winning Stanmore & Canons Park Synagogue has officially launched the first ever Yad B'Yad (Hand In Hand) social action project, with the support from the United Synagogue (US) Community Development Fund (CDF).

In March this year, the US advertised for communities to apply for the Community Development Fund. The Fund challenges communities to "Do Shul Differently" in order to increase active participation and membership, reach new demographics, develop community leaders or adapt to changing circumstances. The application was for new and different ideas to help the community become even more vibrant and engaging, and it was decided that Stanmore and Canons Park Synagogue should apply for a CDF grant for the new Yad B'Yad/Hand In Hand project. This initiative has now been given a grant and Stanmore's bold social action initiative has gone live.

This project uses Stanmore's award winning Shabbat UK/Mitzvah Day programmes as a springboard to develop and enhance the community so it thrives throughout the year. Its aims are to increase membership, community participation and involvement. Stanmore is at the vanguard of this initiative and the hope is this project can be replicated within other US communities to community-build and enable Synagogues to become more of a community centre with something for everyone. As a community, Stanmore and Canons Park Synagogue has already successfully launched, over the past year, the Knitting and Crochet Group, weekly Bridge Group, the B's Buttons Project, the Great Stanmore Honey Cake Bake, SAFIRE, Gardening at the RNOH, Collection for the US Asylum Seekers Centre and the Camp Simcha Toy Drive. These are all great achievements and there are many more ideas planned for the year ahead, to increase engagement and involvement across the entire community.

Merrick Wolman, Chairman of Stanmore and Canons Park Synagogue, said: "As a community, we have constantly looked for ways to involve our members more and that there are more benefits to being a member of a synagogue than visiting 3 days a year! Building on the successes of our Shabbat UK and Mitzvah Day initiatives, where we try to involve our entire membership, we have created the Yad B' Yad programme.

"To this end, the award of the US community development fund grant to Stanmore and Canons Park Synagogue is a real testament to our ability to be a community leading the way in innovation to increase active participation within its membership. The Stanmore Yad B'Yad Project, being spearheaded by Juliette Harris and Samantha Jacobs and their team of dedicated volunteers, is an opportunity to enhance and develop both ours and the wider community in important social action."

by Susan Azulay, Stanmore communications committee

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