

We came to Norwalk and Beth El in 1989 from Westchester, when Rabbi Marder had just arrived and the wonderful, incomparable Cantor Debbie Katchko presided. I was quite pregnant with Samantha and we remember how Bob Gordon greeted us so warmly when we checked out the temple.

This will be our 20th year with Beth El. We've celebrated Samantha and Hilary's baby namings and bat-mitzvahs and Samantha's confirmation, and were so happy that the congregation, who has been so caring to us and the girls, was there to watch the girls grow up and reach these milestones. We've also mourned the passing of both our fathers. I am indebted to the wonderful Minyanaires who were so supportive to me during that very difficult time: Lucia Gertleman, Marty Wolf, Bill Grossman, Marvin Rosenbaum and Harry Morgenthaler. I miss the D'var Torahs and the very lively discussions (it reminded me of the nightly discussions I would have with my dad).

Best memory for me was in the 90's when I was on the Adult Ed committee with Gladys Pine, Lillian Tischler, Helen and Jules Wallerstein, Barbara and Dave Gertelman and Flo and Marty Wolf. We had a lot of fun hosting the dinners (without a caterer!), throwing the parties, bringing in speakers and concert performers, doing holiday programming and overseeing Adult Education, and dealing with a then-uncooperative office staff. The planning meetings we had were the most fun.

To us, we love many of the congregants at Beth El for their friendship and support over the years, but the one person we feel most epitomizes the warmth of Beth El is Lenny Schwartz. In Shul we always look forward to his hugs, kisses, handshakes and compassion. He embodies the open arms of the congregants of Beth El.

In 20 years a lot has changed at Beth El (not all for the better) but it's the special people at Beth El who make it rewarding!

Eva Greenwald