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**CONGREGATION B'NAI B'RITH OF SANTA BARBARA, CA
Receives North American Award for Innovative Audacious Hospitality Program**

June 16, 2019, Santa Barbara, CA – CONGREGATION B'NAI B'RITH was one of eight winners from across North America of the 2019 Union for Reform Judaism's Belin Awards. The Belin Awards are presented to congregations who represent audacious hospitality with creative, original, and outstanding initiatives that welcome seekers and engage prospective and current congregants.

Eight winners were awarded \$1,000 funded through the generosity of David Belin, z"l, the first chair of the URJ-CCAR Joint Commission on Outreach and Membership. Ten other congregations received honorable mention for their exceptional programs. All will be honored this December in Chicago, IL at the [URJ Biennial](#), attended by more than 5,000 Jewish leaders from the Reform Movement.

Over the past few years, Santa Barbara has welcomed an influx of doctoral and post-doctoral students from Israel. In welcoming this population to the U.S., and specifically to our Santa Barbara Reform Jewish community, we have created partnerships with individual Israeli families in order to create meaningful opportunities for this population to engage in Jewish communal life

CBB's winning project, ***Creating a Home Away from Home: Empowering Israelis to Engage in Congregational Life***, aims to engage a significant population of young Israelis who have joined its Reform Jewish community. The program allows Israeli participants to create connections with other Israelis (which supports their unique cultural identities), as well as to be leaders in bringing Israeli-Jewish experience to our American Jewish congregation. These connections have resulted in two new yearly offerings: **Yom HaZikaron**, an intimate ceremony in Hebrew to honor fallen soldiers, and **Yom Ha'aztmaut**, which draws on childhood memories, family recipes, and life experiences of Israelis to bring an authentic Israeli Independence Day celebration to Santa Barbara.

"The Belin Awards recognize and celebrate outstanding leadership in what must be our highest priority – helping more people create deeper, richer, and more meaningful Jewish lives. I have called this work Audacious Hospitality, which encompasses the core Jewish values around welcoming guests (*hachnasat orchim*), having an open tent (*ohel patuach*), lovingkindness (*chesed*), and respect (*kavod*). These exemplary communities promote a welcoming, inclusive Judaism, and we applaud their creative approaches," said URJ President Rabbi Rick Jacobs.

For more information, visit: <http://urj.org/cong/outreach/belin/>.

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