

## Rays of Light

This week I saw the power of women and how they repair the world. I saw inspiration. I saw our magnificent past, present, and future leadership come together to celebrate that power.

Nearly 50 Greater MetroWest women (and me) came down to Florida to attend the International Lion of Judah Conference – one of the largest delegations present among the 1,400 participants from six countries. Three inspiring days of learning, meeting, and connecting led to incredible generosity. Just from our own community we were blessed to see four new Lion of Judah endowments, six new Lions' Leaps, two increased endowments, and tens of thousands of dollars in new funds for the United Jewish Appeal. Did you know we have a record 69 new Greater MetroWest Lions already this year? I'm incredibly grateful and proud of the generosity in our community!

It was also inspiring to hear from Norma Kipnis-Wilson, cofounder of the Lion of Judah program some 40 years ago. Jewish continuity, she said, depends on our ability to touch and bridge the old and the new. It depends on our ensuring that everyone can participate. It depends on us. This year's Greater MetroWest recipient of the prestigious Kipnis/Wilson/Friedland Award, Paula Gottesman, embodies this sentiment, through her long-standing support of and commitment to our local day schools, Jewish camps, PJ Library, and many other initiatives that engage our young people. Also at the conference were past Greater MetroWest KWF award recipients Barbara Drench, Wendie Ploscowe, Ellen Goldner, and Adele Lebersfeld.

In the words of our own Mark Wilf, chairman of our national Jewish Federation system, all people search for community and meaning. All of us. Because giving back to the community is something you need to do not just with your wallet but with your bare hands. Think about that for a moment. It takes dedication, energy, commitment. It takes you.

I was deeply proud to see the spirit and enthusiasm of our Women's Philanthropy team – lay and professional leaders working together, and with our Jewish Community Foundation – to make a great experience into a Greater one.

I'm grateful to our Women's Philanthropy President Jody Hurwitz Caplan, Director Diane Bakst, Lion Conference Chairs Stacie Friedman and Linda Rosenthal, and my colleagues Susan Ferber, Robin Leitner, Sarabeth Wizen, and Kim Hirsh for their leadership and dedication. And to all our participating Lions for their energy and vision.

To be with more than 1,400 Lions aged 24 to 93, to see the impact of this amazing group of women, and to know that in Greater MetroWest alone we've been honored and blessed to count an incredible 69 (!) new Lions this year alone – is to recognize how much that counting these numbers don't do justice to what they represent. In our Federation system, and in Women's Philanthropy, it's not really about counting people. It's about making people count.

It's very easy to sit back and be cynical in this day and age. But one speaker called it. Looking out over the packed hall she said, I see no people here. I see the essence. I see rays of light manifested as humans.

