

chair) on the *bimah* to receive an honor; and a “no-shush” policy allows everyone to express prayers in personal ways.

To integrate children with special needs into the religious school classroom, Simona Sklash (**photo #5**), director of Temple Kol Ami Emanu-El’s religious school, offers these “must-haves”: an experienced special needs teacher who can work cooperatively with the classroom teacher; repetition of instructions and explanations for students; and direct, clear, and regular communication with their parents—both in person and in writing.

Hornstein adds that congregations should consult with speech, occupational, and physical therapists as well as other local professionals who work with students with special needs; often these individuals can assist in training religious school teachers and classroom aides.

“If a child can make the educational and social transitions [necessary to be] in a regular classroom, inclusion is great,” Christensen says. “Synagogues are moving in that direction—using classroom aides, adapting the curriculum, providing individualized tutoring or other accommodations—thereby creating meaningful Jewish social connections for children with special needs and firsthand awareness of disabilities for their classmates and peers.”

“If your student needs help expressing himself orally, prep him/her privately before class, choose simpler questions, present multiple-choice questions, and wait longer for the answer,” say Dr. Shana Erenberg and Alan Levin (**photo #6**) in the article “Eight Techniques for Helping Students Succeed” (<http://chai.urj.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=1002>). “And if your student needs help organizing materials, give him/her the materials one step at a time.”

Children with ADHD can benefit from reducing the number of concepts covered at one time, relating information to the student’s experiences, and providing consistent review before introducing new information; for other Union for Reform Judaism recommen-

dations visit <http://urj.org/learning/teacheducate/specialneeds/>.

#### Union for Reform Judaism Support

The Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) offers additional resources and expert guidance. The Union’s Disabilities Awareness Project provides ideas and strategies for increasing the inclusion of Jews with special needs in the congregational setting. At the site <http://urj.org/life/community/disabilities/> you’ll find such resources as how to create lifecycle events for children with special needs, how to develop successful disability programs, a guide for parents navigating the special education system, nonverbal learning disabilities, sensory integration dysfunction, ADHD, and more. At <http://architecture.urj.org/special/accessibility> you’ll discover “Low Cost Accommodations for Accessibility in Your Synagogue” and information on assisted technologies. Rabbi Richard F. Address (**photo #7**), the Union’s Caring Community and Family Concerns specialist, as well as a cadre of experts are also available to consult with congregations about specific disability issues; to begin, contact Rabbi Address at 212-650-4296 or [raddress@urj.org](mailto:raddress@urj.org).

In the camp setting as well, the URJ welcomes children with special needs and encourages their full participation. Campers with autism may use a “visual prayerbook” during Shabbat worship. During sports activities, those in wheelchairs may play baseball by batting and having a bunkmate run the bases. Each of the Union’s twelve summer camps employs inclusion specialists who work with children with special needs and their families—both before and during their stay at camp—making modifications to enable students to participate in the same activities as their peers. At the Union’s Kutz Camp in Warwick, New York (<http://kutz.urjcamps.org/mc/program/>), a Mitzvah Corps initiative pairs adolescents on the autism spectrum with teen mentors from NFTY’s leadership program who work along-

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## NOTEWORTHY

bers will perform in a series of benefit concerts this December (URJ campership month) across North America; visit [www.urj.org](http://www.urj.org), [www.accantors.org](http://www.accantors.org), or [www.urjcampers.org](http://www.urjcampers.org) for a concert happening near you.

#### New Sisterhood Organization in Israel:

Fifteen Reform congregations in Israel have joined Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ), becoming part of the brand-new affiliate WRJ-Israel. To build bridges between Jewish women in the Diaspora and Israel, join the WRJ twinning program; for more information email Resa Davids, [rsdavids@gmail.com](mailto:rsdavids@gmail.com).

*continued on page 62* ►

## IN MEMORY...

### Dr. Alfred Gottschalk 1930–2009

Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk, a builder and pioneer of Reform Judaism, devoted his life to Jewish learning. As president (1971–1996) and chancellor (1996–2000) of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, he ordained America’s first woman rabbi (1972) and cantor (1975), Israel’s first Reform rabbi (1980) and woman rabbi (1992); enlarged HUC-JIR’s facilities, programs, and enrollment in Los Angeles, New York, Jerusalem, and Cincinnati; and initiated the required Year-In-Israel program for rabbinical, cantorial, and education students. A refugee from Nazi Germany, he helped establish the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. In gratitude to his wife Deanna, children Marc and Rachel, and colleagues, he recently wrote: “I thank you, O God, [for setting] my portion among those who study Torah.”

*Zecher Tsaddik Livrachah.*

