

# Consummate Volunteer

Pikesville resident Arlene Mazer was recently honored for her decades of service.

By Caryn R. Sagal



**Arlene Mazer:** *"It gives you a good feeling to help somebody, and I wanted to help as many 'somebodies' as possible." (Provided photo)*

**A**rlene Mazer says she wanted to "do something constructive" with her time when her son, Millard, entered the first grade. At her aunt's suggestion, she joined Temple Oheb Shalom's sisterhood.

"I collected money at the door for meetings, and that's how it began," Mazer says.

Fifty-four years later, she has devoted countless hours to the sisterhood, spearheading cookbooks and other fundraising projects, organizing trips to New York, gathering each Friday morning to organize the evening's *Oneg Shabbat* celebration and holding all of the executive positions — including sisterhood president — multiple times.

Most recently, she served as sisterhood treasurer until Oheb Shalom merged with Har Sinai Congregation in 2019.

"If it was important to the sisterhood, I had time to help," she says. "They could call on me 24/7 and come over anytime. My dog even got used to people regularly visiting the house."

For her decades of giving back, Mazer, 85, recently received the Lillian E. Shusterman Woman of Valor Award from Har Sinai-Oheb Shalom Congregation at the Women's Club *Shabbat* Service.

The award is named in honor of the wife of Har Sinai's late Rabbi Emeritus Abraham Shusterman. Lillian Shusterman, who died in 1971, served as sisterhood president and was a congregational leader.

The award was created to "honor an active member of Sisterhood who has given of herself in service to the temple and is exemplary of honor and dedication."

Says Susan Yaffe, co-president of HSOSC's Women's Club: "Arlene Mazer is intelligent, charming, hard-working and great fun to be with, and we have been very blessed to have her among our members. She always says yes to whatever she is asked to do, and she does it in her own way that all the members have grown to love."

A Pikesville resident, wife, mother and grandmother of three, Mazer considers receiving the award the "thrill of a lifetime."

"I didn't expect it. All I wanted was to help people in the community, and this is the reward," she says. "It gives you a good feeling to help somebody, and I wanted to help as many 'somebodies' as possible."

In addition to her roles with the sisterhood, Mazer was a two-time president of both the National Council of Jewish Women and the Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations of Maryland. She also served on the National Board of Sisterhoods for 10 years and was treasurer of Miriam Lodge.

"Arlene has always displayed kindness, understanding and dedication," says CeCe Rund, the federation's vice president and an HSOSC Women's Club member. "She brought much wisdom to our meetings and spoke with knowledge and experience. She is ageless."

Arlene Burman, assistant treasurer of HSOSC's Women's Club, says she met Mazer in 2004 through her work with the federation. She describes Mazer as "the consummate volunteer — always willing to do any job, do it well and with a smile."

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Besides being an active member of the Women's Club, Mazer currently serves as an auditor with the federation and remains involved with NCJW. At HSOSC, she regularly attends Friday evening *Shabbat* services with husband, Bernard, after whom the congregation's Mazer Morning Minyan Lecture and Discussion Group is named.

"I love who we are today," Arlene Mazer says of the Women's Club. "There's a great camaraderie. We're all here to help each other and build a strong community." 🗨️

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