

**Anshai Torah's Project 613  
Honors Wende Weinberg  
New Torah Dedicated to her Life, Love, and Learning**

*by Deb Silverthorn*

Each reader will be touched, each parsha tagged with extra heart, and every aliyah will rise higher with the opening of the scroll of the Sefer Torah that Congregation Anshai Torah is preparing to write. As a community, with all hearts in, Project 613 will kickoff at the synagogue on Sunday, September 10, from 9:15am to 1pm. The congregation's first scroll to write from the start will honor Wende Weinberg, of so very blessed memory.

From 9:15 to 9:45am, Rabbi Zerach Greenfield—the scribe writing the Torah—will fill in the very first letters of the book of Genesis for all pre-K through second grade children and their parents; and then 10 to 11:30am for students in grades 3 through 12, their parents and the congregation at large. After some light refreshments, all are invited to an interactive learning session from 12 to 1pm to deepen their appreciation for the art of Torah writing. While begun in Plano, the Torah will be worked on in Israel and completed at Anshai Torah on April 15.

"Wende was the consummate educator. She loved her students, was so proud of her Jewish identity, and she felt privileged to model and teach that which she cherished to her students," said Rabbi Stefan Weinberg. "Placing a Sefer Torah in our ark in her honor is the ideal way to memorialize Wende. Torah learning was something she cherished and taught with passion — the Torah itself the source text of all of our learning — what could be more appropriate for us to acknowledge Wende's gift of teaching and modeling Torah."

"Wende's undergraduate degree in Developmental Psychology provided her with the tools she used with such wisdom and deftness to address her life's ambition of touching young minds, hearts, and souls and infusing them with her love, respect and admiration for Judaism. Her master's degree in Jewish Studies from the University of Juda-



ism provided the depth needed to convey her message to children and adults alike that we are the recipients of an extraordinary gift," said Rabbi Weinberg. Wende was a religious school teacher and principal — 32 years as teacher, Judaic Studies and Program Coordinator at the Ann and Nate Levine Academy (previously Solomon Schechter School), always a role model and rebbetzin.

"The six hundred thirteenth commandment is to write a Torah, and we have been given the unique opportunity to fulfill that mitzvah together," said Nicole Post, Project 613 co-chair with her husband Jay, Mojgan and Farzin Bakhshian, Jaime and Michael Cohen, Pam and Jonathan Goldminz, and Jeanette and Michael Pincus. In addition, 72 others are dedicated honorary co-chairs.



"This Torah will always be with our children and the tie to Wende for us, for Anshai Torah, and for this whole community is so special," said Nicole. "We suffered an unimaginable loss last December and Project 613 is the perfect way to memorialize this woman's commitment to Judaism, family and education."

While the scribe will put his quill to parchment, those wanting to participate in the writing of the Torah, represented by Rabbi Greenfield's expertise, can donate \$18 for a word, \$180 for a sentence, \$1800 for a sedra or parsha, or \$18,000 for a complete book. Donors can share \$5,400 for one or more of many special sedrot, those that correlate to the birthdays (B'har/B'hukotai, Ekev, Naso, Vayikra) and b'nai mitzvah (Re'eh, Shimini, Tzav, Vayeshev) of Adina, Danielle, Jordana (the Weinberg's daughters), and Wende, Wende and Rabbi's wedding anniversary (Ekev) and in honor of the birth of Ariel Zev Zubery, the Weinberg's first grandson (Tazria/ Metzora).

"Each of our Torah scrolls was received as a gift of tremendous significance and each has a story tracing its roots from North Africa, Tehran, Corsicana, England, South Africa, and Iowa," said Rabbi Weinberg. "This first commissioned Sefer Torah is a statement regarding the value the congregation attributes to the wonder of Torah learning and placing another Torah in the ark will always represent Wende's story of inspiration."

When Greenfield visited Plano once before to check our scrolls, he found in the Anshai Torah ark an "old friend," the Torah donated by Dot and Basil Haymann in loving memory of Fred Haymann and Clinton Fred Haymann, of blessed memory. The scroll was one of 54 Greenfield helped rescue from Baghdad during the reign of Saddam

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Hussein, one he then lovingly restored. "I helped smuggle the Torah to safety hidden in inner tubes with the parchment packed in plastic – first into Jordan and then Israel," he said. "Amazing that years later we're here, together again, to begin a new Torah. This is a very special place."

It takes about four hours a day, usually just one column written each day because, while it's precious and wonderful work, it is also very stressful. Each Torah has 245 columns of 42 lines on each. Greenfield, the scribe of choice of the United States Military clergy, who has worked on 200 Torahs and other Judaica projects, said the scribe follows another Torah as a guide for spacing and justification of the letters and words, purposefully leaving the word "God" out as he goes along, making that the first words each morning when his mind, hand, and consciousness are most fresh.

"I go to the mikvah each morning I work to keep in mind what I'm doing, never a chance for distraction of the holiness and piety of my work," said Greenfield. "What I do links us all to Hashem and I truly put my heart and soul, a bit of my neshama in all my work that I do."

Heart and soul – and a bit of neshama in all his work. Sound familiar? Sounds like Wende Weinberg. Sounds like a match made for our community from heaven.

RSVPs to [receptionist@anshaitorah.org](mailto:receptionist@anshaitorah.org) are requested by September 5. For more information about Project 613, email [project613@anshaitorah.org](mailto:project613@anshaitorah.org) or call Harvey Swento at 972.473.7718