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**Temple Israel of Boston Selected for  
Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Project**

*Will be Recognized at Community Inclusion Event May 23*

(GREATER BOSTON, MA)—May 19, 2017 – Temple Israel of Boston is one of nine synagogues in Greater Boston, spanning all movements, that was selected to become a Congregational Partner of the Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Project (RSIP), a collaboration between Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP), Boston's Jewish Federation, and the Ruderman Family Foundation. Together, they are working to create communities where people of all abilities are welcomed and participate fully. The nine synagogues will be recognized at a community event that will highlight the work of RSIP on May 23 at Temple Emanuel in Newton. Tom Fields-Meyer, a renowned author whose work includes his memoir, *Following Ezra: What One Father Learned About Gumby, Otters, Autism, and Love from His Extraordinary Son*, will deliver the keynote speech at *Celebrating Inclusion: Opening the Doors to Community*.

The Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Project provides partner synagogues with funding and other resources to support innovative programs, improvements or training to become more welcoming and inclusive. Last year, the Project added eight synagogues to the original three from the launch two years ago. All of these synagogues already had strong inclusion efforts underway. The Project helped them expand and strengthen programs and inspire other synagogues to become more inclusive by sharing their experiences and best practices with the wider community.

"I kept hearing from many people over the years who did not feel welcome at their synagogue," said Sharon Shapiro, Trustee and Director of the Ruderman Family Foundation Boston Office. "When these families felt turned away, they left their synagogue and often the Jewish community altogether. We wanted to do something about this and in partnership with CJP, we created the Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Project. We are thrilled with the Project's success and are so happy to welcome nine new partners. Our goal is to engage every synagogue in the Greater Boston community in this essential movement."

"To ensure the prophetic injunction that our house shall be a house (of prayer) for all people demands sacred intention and constant and relentless effort to enact the inclusion and deep



welcome of every person in our physical, spiritual, psychological, and intellectual spaces,” said Rabbi Elaine Zecher of Temple Israel of Boston.

With RSIP congregations gaining access to local and national inclusion experts, as well as events and opportunities for congregational communities to teach, network and share best practices, they’re taking strides that benefit everyone.

Additional partners include: Kehillath Israel, Maimonides Kehillah, and Temple Beth Zion, all of Brookline, Temple Emeth of Chestnut Hill, Congregation Kerem Shalom of Concord, Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley, Congregation Shirat Hayam of Swampscott, and Temple Sinai of Swampscott and Marblehead. Six congregations who are in various stages of their inclusion efforts will join the project as affiliates. They include: Chabad Center of Natick, Temple Emmanuel of Wakefield, Temple Israel of Natick, Congregation Sha’aray Shalom, Young Israel of Brookline, and The Vilna Shul. Affiliates are added to the program on a rolling basis.

**Who:**

Keynote speaker: Tom Fields-Meyer whose talk, *Following Ezra: We Didn’t Know Where Our Son Would Fit into Our Community*, will create perspectives on the power of inclusive synagogues to transform lives and strengthen and uplift the community. We’ll also hear from Barry Shrage, President of Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Jay Ruderman, President of Ruderman Family Foundation, and RSIP congregations.

**When:**

Tuesday, May 23, 2017  
Cocktail reception 6:30 p.m.  
Program 7:30 p.m.

**Where:**

Temple Emanuel  
385 Ward Street, Newton

**Additional Event Information:**

There is no charge to attend this event and walk-ins are welcome. For more information, visit [www.cjp.org/celebratinginclusion](http://www.cjp.org/celebratinginclusion).

**About The Ruderman Family Foundation**

The Ruderman Family Foundation believes that inclusion and understanding of each other is essential to a fair and flourishing community. Guided by our Jewish values, we support



effective programs, innovative partnerships and a dynamic approach to philanthropy. Our core areas of interest: advocating for and advancing the inclusion of people with disabilities; fostering a more nuanced understanding of the American Jewish community among Israeli leaders; and modeling the practice of strategic philanthropy worldwide. The Foundation provides funding, leadership and expertise in both the U.S. and Israel, with offices in both countries, while it engages a global dialogue on its blog at [zehlezehe.wordpress.com](http://zehlezehe.wordpress.com). For more information about our programs, partners and grantees, please visit [RudermanFoundation.org](http://RudermanFoundation.org).

### **About CJP**

CJP, Greater Boston's Jewish Federation, brings together the people, partners and resources to fulfill the most important needs and aspirations of our community. Rooted in compassion and justice and driven by innovation, we care for the vulnerable, forge strong connections with Israel and above all, inspire the next generation to embrace Jewish life and learning. For more information please visit [www.cjp.org](http://www.cjp.org).

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