

2015-J2373

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending the East Midwood Jewish Center upon the occasion of hosting its 91st Annual Journal Dinner Dance on June 14, 2015

WHEREAS, Religious institutions, and the many spiritual, social and educational benefits they confer, play a vital role in the development of the moral fabric of a responsible citizenry; and

WHEREAS, It is the tradition of this State and this Nation to pay tribute to those institutions and individuals who have contributed to the ethical and spiritual values of their communities; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend the East Midwood Jewish Center upon the occasion of hosting its 91st Annual Journal Dinner Dance on Sunday, June 14, 2015; and

WHEREAS, For over nine decades, the East Midwood Jewish Center has been a house of worship, a place for Judaic discovery and action, and a haven for learners, seekers, and questioners; and

WHEREAS, East Midwood Jewish Center was founded in 1924, when its section of Flatbush was largely an area of widely spaced one-family homes and extensive stretches of open fields; Jewish families who began to settle there were deeply concerned that there was no Hebrew school nearby; and

WHEREAS, This vital organization was created out of the commitment of a small group of individuals who came together to establish an institution to provide for the Jewish educational, spiritual, and social needs of the area in which they lived; and

WHEREAS, On June 13, 1926, the cornerstone of the building was laid; a few months later, the building was fully enclosed, and High Holy Day services were held within the building, officiated by Rabbi Reuben Kaufman, the Center's First Rabbi, and Cantor Jacob Schraeter; and

WHEREAS, The building was completed in 1929, and Rabbi Harry Halpern accepted the call to serve as our Rabbi in February of 1929, a position he held for many fruitful years; and

WHEREAS, During the Great Depression, financial trouble assailed the

growing East Midwood Jewish Center; as the economy improved, membership began to slowly climb; in 1934, there were 300 members, and 10 years later, the membership had risen to 1100 individuals; and

WHEREAS, Adult classes became part of the East Midwood Jewish Center's educational program, with courses offered in Hebrew, religious customs and ceremonies, the Bible and Zionism; and

WHEREAS, During World War II, the men and women of the East Midwood Jewish Center participated actively in war efforts and drives, including the sale of War Bonds; many members contributed to the Blood Banks, and women volunteered to serve with the Jewish Welfare Board, Red Cross and U.S.O., and the boys served in all branches of the country's military forces; and

WHEREAS, In November 1950, the new school building was dedicated for the use of the Talmud Torah and Youth Activities; enrollment reached a peak of close to 1000 students; and

WHEREAS, The East Midwood Hebrew Day School was established in accordance with conservative ideology, and was comprised of only three grades; currently, it includes a full eight year program where both Hebrew and secular subjects are taught; and

WHEREAS, The East Midwood Jewish Center also manages Room J, a place for children to develop their connections to Judaism by fusing ancient traditions with contemporary learning and openness; youth and family programs provide a stimulating foundation for discovering and interpret-

ing Jewish ideas, nurturing Jewish identity, acting compassionately, and encouraging spiritual discovery; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Room J offers Hebrew school, bar/bat mitzvah preparation, Shabbat gatherings for prayer and learning, holiday celebrations, new-learners opportunities, social events, and community service/social action activities, as well as a gym and pool; and

WHEREAS, Under the luminous leadership of Rabbi Matt Carl, East Midwood Jewish Center's task today, as it was in 1924, is to transmit to new generations and the public at large the relevance and beauty of our religious traditions, and the Jewish emphasis on education, social justice, and our mutual responsibilities to each other; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to take note of enduring religious institutions and to bring such institutions to the attention of the people of this Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend the East Midwood Jewish Center upon the occasion of hosting its 91st Annual Journal Dinner Dance, fully confident that this commemoration reflects the belief in those values which enhance the dignity and purpose of life; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Rabbi Matt Carl, East Midwood Jewish Center.