

Beth Am Event Publicity Manual and Publishing Guidelines

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Publicity Frequently Asked Questions

The following Frequently Asked Questions will help you get your event publicized through all of the available media outlets at Beth Am.

Events must be on the master calendar to receive publicity.

Once your organization or group has sketched out your plans for an event, get your event scheduled on the master calendar at Beth Am (an electronic database maintained in the office). This ensures that you are able to get the date, time and place you want and it also ensures that we do not publicize “phantom” events. The editors of the various media outlets at Beth Am will not publish your announcement if it is not on the master calendar.

What is the procedure for getting an event on the calendar at Beth Am?

Schedule events with the Fran Cohen in the office. You can reach her at 650-493-4661 x202. Better yet, you can schedule an event electronically through our web site at www.betham.org/spacerequest.html.

What publicity channels are available at Beth Am?

Beth Am Builder – This is a monthly printed publication sent to all Beth Am members once each month at the beginning of the month. The Builder publishes information about upcoming events at Beth Am as well as articles about Beth Am organizations and community activities of interest to Beth Am members.

MenschLink – This is a weekly electronic newsletter sent to all Beth Am members who request a copy. Currently, about 60% of the congregation receives this publication. MenschLink publishes event notices for events at Beth Am and the wider Jewish community.

Web Site – The Web Site houses information about Beth Am and its organizations. The front page displays a calendar of activities, which is updated weekly from information provided to the Builder and MenschLink. The Web Site also carries stories about events, which are published in the Builder. Organizations desiring to provide more information about an event may publish additional information on the web site.

Shavat v'Yinafash – This is a weekly publication distributed at Friday and Saturday prayer services. A short list of 2 or 3 key events are gleaned from MenschLink and re-published in the “Upcoming events” column.

Office Staff (Phone Questions) – Office staff receive phone calls on a regular basis asking about events at the synagogue. The staff use information listed in the “official” electronic calendar to respond. The staff also refers the caller to MenschLink and the Web Site.

Who is responsible for publicity?

The program or event sponsor is responsible for event publicity. The sponsor must submit information to publicity@betham.org. From there a check is made that your event has been

properly calendared, and if not you will be contacted. Then the information will be shared with the editors of the Builder, MenschLink, Shavat v'Yinafash, and the webmaster, as appropriate and/or as you request.

How far in advance of the event should publicity be planned?

Publicity planning should begin at least 3 months in advance of the event. Events requiring RSVPs may need more advance work (a Save the Date, an Article, and a Reminder in three consecutive Builders). Here is a typical timeline.

Three months before the event

- Ensure that you know the correct dates, times and places.
- Know who is to be invited to the event. Is there a charge? Is registration required? Will auxiliary services, such as childcare or meal services be provided?
- Write a publicity statement and make sure to review it with those in charge of the event so that all the details are accurate. *See Publicity Statement below for more details.*
- Submit your Publicity Statement to publicity@betham.org, so that space may be reserved and plans made for publicizing your event in the Builder, MenschLink, Shavat v'Yinafash, and the web site. Your event will also be placed on the master calendar.

Two months before the event

- Submit your publicity (article, announcement or web pages) to publicity@betham.org. This information will be forwarded on to the Builder, MenschLink, Shavat v'Yinafash and web as appropriate.
- Ensure that your event information is accurate on the official synagogue calendar (which gets posted to the web and is printed in the Builder). If you see a discrepancy, phone Fran in the office at 650-493-4661 x 202 or write to her at fran_cohen@betham.org.

What information goes in a publicity statement?

Here are the key pieces of information needed by the various forms of media at Beth Am to properly publicize your event. Please make sure that all of these are included in your publicity statement sent to publicity@betham.org.

Event Name: A short 3 to 5 word name

Event Sponsor: Your organization or group name

Event Date(s): Day of the week and date

Times: Start time, expected end time.

Location(s): The room where the event begins, where participants should come

Audience: Who is the primary audience for this event and thus this announcement?

Price: If there is price or fee for attending, what is it?

Head Line for Builder Article and MenschLink Announcement: Write a 5 to 8 word, benefit oriented headline for your event –“Celebrate Chanukah with Young Families”, “Stanford Professor Explains Why the Genome is Jewish”

Invitation (Description): Write a 20 word or so invitation to the event describing what will go on and why people should come.

How to register: If pre-registration is required, what is the procedure. Who do you contact, and when?

If a tear-off RSVP is needed: If you require a tear-off in the Builder for registration, include all the information that needs to be collected and to whom and by when the completed form should be sent.

Attach article for Builder: If you are asking that this event be publicized in the Builder, please write a 50 to 100 word description of the event including the background of key speakers or presenters.

If your event is cancelled ...

If you decide to cancel your event, please notify Fran immediately. Knowing an event is not going to happen is extremely important. Fran will notify our internal media editors to get the word out.

Builder Publication Guidelines

Builder content

- We want to use **activity announcements** rather than articles to better capture reader attention. Please submit activity announcements in this format.

As space provides, we will also run small blurbs as filler or in the margins. For example, "Beth Am Women gives \$XXXX each year to support educational programs at the synagogue. Contact xxx to join us and take part in our efforts." If you have a quick hit item like this, send it along to publicity@betham.org also.

- We encourage acknowledging significant **events that have recently taken place** by running a **photo** rather than an article. Plan to capture the essence of the event by taking a photo showing lots of people participating, the key speaker, kids painting pictures, a typical scene from the play, etc. Digital photos are acceptable. Send the photo by email, snail mail, or leave in the Builder box in the office. Write a short (25-50 words) caption describing the event (and picture if it needs it). Please double-check the spelling of people's names that are mentioned. Photos of children's faces need a signed release from each parent whose child is pictured.

We discourage "thank you" articles that have long lists of people's names and detailed comments on the activities of the event. If this is the custom for your organization, we encourage you to do this in a separate email or letter to your membership.

- A note to article authors: We are encouraging a **tighter writing style** with more information in fewer words.
 - Use the newspaper approach to writing: Theme and major conclusion first, followed by the most important supporting information, then next most important and so on. This way, if we need to cut copy, we know to cut from the bottom up.
 - Use short sentences (15 words or less). Edit out un-needed adjectives, adverbs and prepositional phrases. Go for a present tense, fast paced style.
 - Edit out details that don't support the theme of your article. Keep the reader in mind. Does he or she need to know "this thing" to get your message?
 - If you have an idea for an informative, benefit-driven headline, feel free to submit it.

Flyer information

1. Due to financial and timeliness concerns we no longer insert flyers into the Builder mailings.

Builder submission deadlines

Our objective is to send the Builder out by bulk mail (significantly less expensive than first class). To do this, we need to go to press by the third week of the month. Given our editorial review and the time needed to “produce” the newsletter, we need your content by the 1st of the month preceding its publication. In an effort to be fair to all and get the Builder delivered to our members on time there are no extensions given.

So, please consider these “fiscal and physical” realities in planning your communications. Plan ahead and have your copy to publicity@betham.org by the first of the month.

How Things Get on the Website

There are two ways that information gets on the website. First, event information is gleaned from the Builder and MenschLink each month and put into the front-page calendar and lead articles. The monthly calendar is also reproduced on the website.

To make sure that your events are listed on the website or that your article gets front-page attention, note this when you submit your items to publicity@betham.org. Please note, however, that space limitations and editorial policy (about what we will put on the web) may bump your item. For website use submissions should include a brief header, a brief description, and optionally a longer description to link to.

The website is updated once a week, generally on Monday morning. Items received by 9 AM on Friday are considered for update the following Monday.

Second, most major organizations at Beth Am have a page or more on the website. These pages are controlled by your organization. Here, you can publish all of your events and all of the information your members need. If your organization or committee does not yet have a web page and wants one, contact Debbie Coutant for details (execdir@betham.org).

The editorial limits for the web page are very similar to the MenschLink editorial policy. You can view this list at <http://www.betham.org/menschlink/policy.html>.

MenschLink Publication Guidelines

We publish news about Beth Am worship, learning, and social action opportunities, as well as other events and initiatives of interest to Beth Am members. MenschLink also includes a Tikkun Olam bulletin board with listings of volunteer activities and opportunities to do a mitzvah in the local community.

Any Beth Am member can submit an item for publication in MenschLink.

MenschLink does not publish commentary, commercial advertisements, information about partisan political events and other items that are restricted subjects for non-profit organizations.

News items are generally published no sooner than 3 weeks before the event date and may be run up to 3 times. You may request that a “save this date” news item be published well in advance of a significant event. Contact the Editor/Publisher for details.

News items and Tikkun Olam listings are published at the discretion of the MenschLink Editor and Publisher in accordance with the general guidelines outlined in this document.

How to submit a news item

MenschLink is published weekly on Tuesday evening. News items should be submitted to publicity@betham.org; they must be received by 1:00 p.m. Tuesday afternoon to be considered for publication in the next edition.

In general, a news item includes a brief description of the event or activity, the date, time and place of the activity and a contact email, phone number or web site for more information.

Items submitted for the Tikkun Olam bulletin board should include a short one to three sentence description of the request or opportunity, a deadline or preferred response date and an email address or web site for interested persons to contact you.

To submit a news item or a Tikkun Olam bulletin board listing to publicity@betham.org.

How to contact the editor/publisher

MenschLink is edited by David Saxe and published by Steve Lazarus. You can correspond with David and Steve by sending your question or comments to publicity@betham.org.