



WESTCHESTER REFORM TEMPLE

MEDIA RELEASE

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CONTACT: FELICIA BLOCK

FELICIA.BLOCK@WRTEMPLE.ORG

WESTCHESTER REFORM TEMPLE DEDICATES NEW NATURE PLAY PLACE

Scarsdale, NY (October 18, 2013) – Clergy, staff and families from Westchester Reform Temple and the Early Childhood Center (ECC) gathered on Friday, October 11, 2013, to dedicate The Gan: A Nature Play Area for families with children ages one through five.

“The Gan (Hebrew for garden) inspires a child's sense of wonder to explore nature through both a scientific and Jewish lens,” said Sue Tolchin, Director of the Early Childhood Center. “This innovative space highlights WRT's commitment to the Jewish value of environmental sustainability and is an extension of the ECC's Learn through Play curriculum.”

Within the new play area, children will produce visual masterpieces, build with and climb on natural materials, and create in spaces designed for music and movement. Through hands-on exploration, children will establish early skills in science, math and engineering along with connections to nature and Jewish values.

“The Gan was developed with a team of clergy, ECC teachers and temple leadership to encourage children and families to connect more deeply with the world around them and, in turn, their own Jewish practices,” said Rabbi David Levy. “It is also an extension of our commitment to *Tikkun Olam* (Repairing the World) and the programmatic elements included in our building's certified LEED® (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Silver status awarded in 2011.”

The Gan was funded by anonymous congregant donors, The Rabbi Richard J. Jacobs and Susan K. Freedman Fund for Innovation in Jewish Life and the ECC Fund. It is available for the entire community to enjoy when on the Westchester Reform Temple campus. Westchester Reform Temple is located at 255 Mamaroneck Road, Scarsdale, NY. For more information about The Gan or the Early Childhood Center, call at 914-723-5493, visit www.wrtemple.org, or e-mail to ellen.rosenberg@wrtemple.org.

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