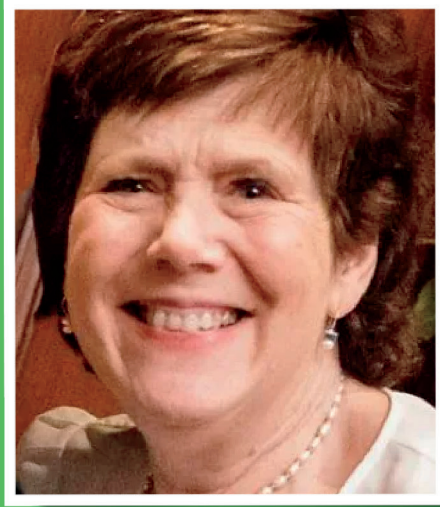




**RODEF SHALOM
CONGREGATION**

Celebrate Mimsie!



Mimsie Leyton

***Director, Berkman Family Center
Rodef Shalom Congregation***

June 11, 2023



Celebrate Mimsie!

Mimsie Leyton

Director, Berkman Family Center

Sunday, June 11, 2023

Deaktor Terrace



RODEF SHALOM CONGREGATION

4905 Fifth Avenue | Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

412.621.6566 | www.rodefshalom.org



**RODEF SHALOM
BIBLICAL
BOTANICAL GARDEN**

June 4 – September 14
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June 2023

Dear Friends,

I've been thinking a lot about the passage of time, and how my birthday seems to come around at break neck speed! How can it be that I am retiring!?! After 26 years at Rodef Shalom and 25 years elsewhere in the early childhood education community (please don't do the math!), the time has come for me to start the next chapter of my journey.

My years working at Rodef Shalom have been extraordinary. The chance to start a preschool that enabled me to create a program that was play-based, focused on the whole child within the context of their family, and informed by Jewish values was a dream come true. And the opportunity to collaborate with gifted colleagues has been the icing on the cake. How lucky I have been, and how thankful I am to have been able to learn and grow professionally and personally.

None of this would have been possible without the help of the entire Rodef Shalom community. I am most appreciative of the Temple leadership, congregants, staff and clergy, my advisory committees and chairs, and all the other volunteers who gave so generously of their time and talents. Without question, I am beyond grateful to the dedicated teachers who became my work family, the parents who entrusted us with the care and education of their most prized possessions, and the hundreds of children whose laughter and excitement for learning filled our classrooms. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for being part of this. In the end, it's the relationships that I will cherish most.

I never would have reached this milestone without the love and encouragement of my family and my family of choice, all of whom are here today in person or in spirit. Thank you for believing in me and for being there to share in the good times and hold my hand when the waters got a little rough. I love you all!

While I won't be in the building every day, I will certainly maintain my affiliation with Rodef Shalom. I am a life long member of the Congregation, and it will always be my spiritual home. I live just a few short blocks down Morewood Avenue. I'm counting on you staying in touch.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

With love,

Mimsie



June 11, 2023

Dear Mimsie,

As an educator and Elementary Principal, I know first-hand how critical early education is to the emotional, physical, and academic development of a child. There can be no understating the importance of quality, early education.

You have been the rock of our Berkman Family Center since becoming its first Director in 1997. You launched a pre-school that was unlike any other in the community. Your philosophy of teaching young children through play-based education rapidly became well-known and recognized. It is a testament to you and your vision that whenever I speak with a parent whose child has gone through your program, they get an enormous smile on their face and simply say, "Mimsie."

Thousands of families owe you their gratitude for the foundation of learning you provided their children. We know that what you do takes incredible patience. You must be flexible, calm, kind, understanding, compassionate, and loving. That's a tall order to follow day after day, week after week, month after month, for years.

Marion Wright Edelman, who helped establish the Head Start Program, wrote that "Education is for improving the lives of others, and for leaving your community and world better than you found it." You have done that. Your lifetime dedication to nurturing and educating young children is an inspiration to anyone who wants to make a difference in our world.

Thank you for all that you have done for Rodef Shalom Congregation. You have our sincere gratitude.

Best Wishes,

Bill Battistone
President of the Board of Trustees



June 11, 2023

Dear Mimsie,

You may already know about a new profession in which people make a living being *influencers*. In social media, influencers create a reputation based on their knowledge and expertise on a specific topic. They make regular posts about that topic on their preferred social media channels in an attempt to generate large followings of enthusiastic, engaged people who pay close attention to their views. Product and service brands love social media influencers because they encourage their followers to buy products they promote. My understanding is that trends often emerge this way.

Mimsie, you are an influencer. You are actually an *OG*--a highly respected and regarded *original*. And for 26 years, as the Berkman Family Center Director, you have been *OUR* influencer. With wisdom and good humor, you have made the lives of hundreds of children and their families better. The children blessed enough to have attended the Berkman Family Center learned that adults care about their interests and their personalities, that their opinions matter. We have surely learned that toddlers and preschoolers certainly do have their opinions and that they are precious and unique and absolutely loved!

You have earned the confidence of parents and the affection of children by being, above all else, kind and caring. You are among the smartest and most optimistic people any of us know. You remember every detail about everyone: birthdays, milestones, accomplishments, family members, and challenges. You will tell us what we said ten years ago, or what someone's child said, and when people finish talking to you, they know you have heard them.

As a colleague you are instinctively supportive, encouraging, and understanding. You are a dear and precious soul.

And now, in retirement, I know that you will be able to fully enjoy your family--daughter Betsy and son-in-law Ben, and their children Sophia, Elliot, Micah, and Natalie and son Andy and daughter-in-law Allison, and their children Amelia and Jacob. Along with our Board of Trustees and our staff, I wish you health, adventure, and much joy even as I will miss you every day.

With affection,



Rabbi Sharyn H. Henry

June 11, 2023

That name! That smile! She was made to work with children and she knew it.

Miriam "Mimsie" Leyton has spent her entire career teaching Pittsburgh youngsters their colors and shapes, their letters and manners, to laugh and to take pride in who they are. She has taught two generations of parents that play is education; that a little crying is okay and will pass; that a pandemic can't stop love and commitment.

The leaders of Rodef Shalom Congregation-- way back then -- knew a jewel when they saw it. We are grateful for their foresight. We are ever so grateful to Mimsie for making her professional home with us. I think she knew a jewel when she saw it too. Her spiritual home became her professional home.

We take great pride in the program Mimsie established and promise to honor her legacy as we face this once-in-generation transition.

We wish Mimsie all the best and only the best! We wish her peace and joy, rest and safe journeys, laughter and love.

With appreciation and admiration,



Barb Feige
The Murray Klein Executive Director

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



The House of Representatives

Citation


Whereas, The House of Representatives of Pennsylvania is always proud to acknowledge those individuals who, through professional excellence, bring great credit to themselves and this Commonwealth; and

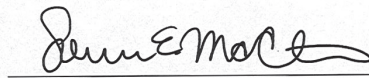
Whereas, Miriam Leyton is being honored upon her June 2023 retirement from the Berkman Family Center of Rodef Shalom Congregation after twenty-six years of dedicated service; and

Whereas, Formerly employed as Head Teacher at McKeesport Day Care, Ms. Leyton continued her service with Louise Child Care Centers following its acquisition of the day care. During her nearly two-decade tenure, she helped establish multiple new centers, and she served as a Supervisor, as which she recruited and enrolled families, trained staff and regularly consulted facilities throughout Allegheny County. A lifelong member of the Rodef Shalom Congregation, Ms. Leyton taught at the congregation's Sunday School before restarting the preschool program at its Berkman Family Center in 1997. To her great credit, she is retiring as the program's Director. Throughout her career, Ms. Leyton demonstrated remarkable knowledge, ability and integrity in carrying out her many responsibilities, thus earning the respect and gratitude of all those who received the benefit of her tireless devotion to duty.

Now therefore, the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania congratulates Miriam Leyton upon her richly deserved retirement; commends her exemplary record of service and lasting contributions to the lives of the students, faculty and staff of the Berkman Family Center of Rodef Shalom Congregation; offers best wishes for a most happy and rewarding future;

And directs that a copy of this citation, sponsored by the Honorable Dan Frankel on May 9, 2023, be transmitted to Miriam Leyton.


Dan Frankel, Sponsor


Joanna E. McClinton, Speaker of the House

Attest:


Brooke Wheeler, Chief Clerk of the House



COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

RICH FITZGERALD
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Proclamation

WHEREAS, Miriam "Mimsie" Leyton is being honored for serving as the Director of the preschool at the Berkman Family Center of Rodef Shalom Congregation upon the occasion of her June 2023 retirement; and

WHEREAS, in 1997, Mimsie restarted the congregation's preschool program and has grown it to be one of the most respected preschools in the community; for the past 26 years, she has been director, teacher, colleague, and friend to thousands of families whose children have benefitted from her expertise in teaching young children through play-based education; and

WHEREAS, Mimsie's love of children and teaching goes back even further; after college, she worked as a head teacher at McKeesport Day Care, a federally-funding program providing early childhood education and services to low-income families for their children; and

WHEREAS, when the day care program was absorbed by Louise Child Care Centers, Mimsie continued her career there helping to establish multiple new centers; in her role as a supervisor, she recruited and enrolled families, trained staff, and consulted among 11 facilities in the county; and

WHEREAS, a lifelong member of Rodef Shalom Congregation, Mimsie also taught in the Sunday School and has educated thousands of children for nearly half a century, reflecting not just her love for the work, but her passion; and

WHEREAS, the importance of quality child care cannot be overstated; we know that early language and literacy development begins in the first three years of life and is closely linked to a child's earliest experiences with books, stories, and play; we are grateful to have people like Mimsie Leyton in our community who engage and celebrate children, and instill their love of learning through their work.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, by virtue of the authority vested in me, do hereby congratulate Miriam "Mimsie" Leyton on her retirement from the Berkman Family Center of Rodef Shalom Congregation, and thank her for her decades of commitment to the children of our community. We wish her all the best in her retirement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the County of Allegheny to be affixed this 11th day of June, 2023.


RICH FITZGERALD



*Honoring the Extraordinary Life of
Mimsie Leyton*

Sunday, June Eleventh Two Thousand & Twenty-Three

WHEREAS, Mimsie Leyton is being honored for serving as the director of the preschool at the Berkman Family Center of Rodef Shalom Congregation upon her retirement in June 2023; and

WHEREAS, For the past twenty-six years, she has been director, teacher, colleague, and friend to thousands of families whose children have benefitted from her expertise in teaching young children through play-based education; and

WHEREAS, After college, she worked as a Head Teacher at McKeesport Daycare, a federally funded program providing early childhood education and services to low-income families for their children; and

WHEREAS, When Louise Childcare Centers absorbed the McKeesport Daycare, she continued her career there for nearly two decades, where she helped establish multiple new centers. In her role as Supervisor, she recruited and enrolled families, trained staff, and regularly consulted among their eleven facilities throughout Allegheny Count; and

WHEREAS, A lifelong member of Rodef Shalom Congregation, she taught Sunday School and restarted the congregation's preschool program in 1997. The program has grown to be one of the most respected preschools in the community; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Leyton has educated thousands of children for nearly half a century and our children are the better for it.

THEREFORE, I, Ed Gainey, Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh, do hereby proclaim **June 11, 2023**, as **Mimsie Leyton Day** in the City of Pittsburgh. May her inspired giving live on in the City of Pittsburgh and beyond.



Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the City of Pittsburgh at the City County Building in the Frist Ward of the City of Pittsburgh 414 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA. 15219 on this Eleventh day of June in the year Two Thousand & Twenty-Three

Ed Gainey
MAYOR OF PITTSBURGH

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Rodef Shalom Brotherhood
Women of Rodef Shalom

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Melissa and Larry Jacobson
Amy Langham and Christine Ranasinghe
Sabina and Peter Rosenfeld
Sally and Lanny Seed
Trust Franklin

*Thank you to everyone for honoring Mimsie Leyton
for her dedication and love of the children and families
of the Berkman Family Center and to Rodef Shalom Congregation.*

*Mazel tov, Mimsie.
Wishing you a future filled
with joy and adventure.*

*With our love,
Margie Shaffel and
Jane Pace*

**THANK YOU
MIMSIE!**

*With love and gratitude
from the Bass/Roths*

Thank you for sharing smiles, serving lunch,
changing diapers, giggling, doing laundry,
wiping tears, substituting, high-fiving, writing
announcements, being just ducky, reading
stories, coloring, getting down on the floor
and getting back up again, being innovative,
looking for new ways of doing old things and
forever being Mimsie.

We miss you already.

Dear Mimsie,
Congratulations
to my dear neighbor.

Angela Levy

*With enormous gratitude for
your service to our Congregation
and with much love*

*Susan and David Kalson and Family
Especially Rachel*

SPONSORS

MIDDLE SCHOOL
Susan and David Kalson


HIGH SCHOOL
Sally and Tim Litman

Mazel tov, Mimsie!

**Thank you for your kindness and
commitment to education.**

**David, Douglas and Jeffrey Spear
and families**

Mazel Tov Mimsie!
Thank you for all you have done.
Your friends at JJEP


**To our favorite school
director/teacher ever!**

We love you.
Meira, Rob and Zeva



Congratulations on a stellar
career by setting children
on a path of learning.

*Sharon, Joel, Sara, Michael,
Leah, Eliza and Ben*



Mimsie,
Congratulations on
your well-deserved
retirement. Wishing
you all the best in
your new adventures.

Rabbi Jessica Locketz



*Apples have long symbolized
education and were given
as gifts to teachers.
You deserve bushels!
Thank you for your
decades of teaching.*

Sally and Tim Litman

Dear Mimsie,
We wish you all the
best as you start the
next chapter. The last
chapter is a hard act
to follow, but we know
you will continue to
touch so many lives.

Fondest congratulations,
Karen and Richard Brean



*In honor of Mimsie
with love from
James, Rosie, and Elsa,
my Finegold grandchildren*

Marian

**Thank you, Mimsie,
for your exceptional dedication to
Rodef Shalom Congregation,
the Berkman Family Center, and
to teaching young children
by setting them on a
strong path to lifelong learning.**

*The Board of Trustees of
Rodef Shalom Congregation*

**Mazel tov Mimsie!
We wish you all the best.**

*Rabbi Sharyn Henry
and Dennis Grinberg
Asher and Avi*

Wonderful teacher to your students,
wonderful colleague to so many,
wonderful parent to us...
celebrating a whole lot of wonderful
as you retire!

*Love,
Betsy and Andy*



In the Torah, Miriam saves a child
and leads a community with
vision, wisdom, and joy.

Mimsie, our Miriam,
is worthy of the name.
Our Mimsie is a brilliant
reflection of Miriam's spirit
and leadership.

With much love and
good wishes,

Staff of
Rodef Shalom Congregation

Thank you, Mimsie, for your years of leading the Berkman Family Center of Rodef Shalom Congregation. Your love of young children and philosophy of teaching through play has made a difference in the lives of thousands of families.

*The Brotherhood of
Rodef Shalom Congregation*

**Dear Mimsie,
A HUGE mazal tov from your
WRS sisters. We are so proud
of your the work educating
young children throughout
your lifetime.**

**We wish you happiness, fun and
more learning on your path ahead.**

Women of Rodef Shalom



**We love you,
Mimsie!**

Iris and Phil Samson



To my fellow teacher, fellow Jewish professional, fellow team member, strategist and, most importantly, friend.

YOU ARE SIMPLY THE BEST!

Wishing you even more joy and happiness in your retirement.

Jacki and Jeff Herzog



**Wishing you all
the best in your
retirement, Mimsie!**

**Eva & Gary Friedman
and**



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plays a critical role in the
development of a child's
intellectual, social, and
emotional wellbeing.

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for more than 75 years*



**CONGRATULATIONS
MIMSIE**

**We are so proud of you!
We love you!!!**

*Your St. Louis and New Zealand Mishpacha,
Terri, Steve, Mollie, Jason, Emma, Travis,
Ethan and Henry*

**Community Day School
celebrates Mimsie Leyton for
giving of herself to generations of
children so that they could learn,
grow, shine, and feel loved.**



Learn about Pittsburgh's co-ed, independent Jewish day school at comday.org



**JEWISH
FEDERATION
GREATER PITTSBURGH**

**THANKS TO
MIMSIE LEYTON**

**for your dedication to
our Jewish community,
and congratulations
on your retirement.**

*Mazel Tov to Mimsie — an amazing leader
who always “plays well with others.”*



*Best wishes from the Family Center Committee
and the Outrageous Bingo Team*

You are the stitches that hold the pre-school together to form a patchwork of fun, learning and support. Thank you for your years of dedication and for being Nancy's life saver.

Bob and Nancy Rosenthal

*Congratulations to the Queen of Bingo Concessions on your Retirement.
Well done, Mimsie!
Thanks for the memories - from your friends at OUTrageous Bingo.*



OUTrageous Bingo is a FUNdraiser benefiting the Pittsburgh Equality Center and the Shepherd Wellness Community!

*Thanks, Mimsie, for 26 years
of dedication and
for all the wonderful memories!*

The Marin-Kahn Family
*Jennifer, Jeremy,
Aaron and Sophie*

**CONGRATULATIONS,
MIMSIE!**

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Rodef Shalom has been so fortunate to have Mimsie as part of its “neighborhood” for all these years. She has touched countless lives along the way.

Wishing her a wonderful and well-deserved retirement.

Congratulations!

Janice and Marvin Dash

Poem for Mimsie

Abra Cadabra, ziggity, zaggity zoom,
Mimsie Leyton has entered the room.

As your creative teaching and laughter sparkles fell,
our treasures thrived under your positive influence spell.

Thank you for teleporting our children to a place
where kids could be kids in an inspirational space.

You made everyone comfortable and safe with your loving wand,
you cultivated friendships, community and a family-like bond.

Mimsie, you will always be our superhero with magical powers,
Thank you for years of teaching and rooting our blooming flowers.

We love you Mimsie! Thank you! Enjoy! Enjoy!

The Gusenoff Family

Dear Mimsie,

Wishing happy times ahead to a terrific colleague and a dear friend.

*Love,
Mayda and Barry*



As Fred Rogers said, “Often when you think you’re at the end of something, you’re at the beginning of something else.”

Congratulations Mimsie on your remarkable accomplishments over the past 26 years and best wishes for the future!

Eva and Ralph



*Mazel tov on your years
of devoted service
to the young families
in our Congregation.*

Lois Michaels

*Dear Mimsie,
We are grateful to you for
creating a solid learning
path for our daughters,
Maryn, Alexandra and
Kagan. More importantly,
we treasure your friendship.*

Mollie and Tom Lang



Congratulations on
your retirement.

Have a wonderful time
enjoying your family.

Jay Rogal

Mazel tov Mimsie!
Enjoy retirement with
your beautiful family!
And thanks for all you
have done for our
Rodef Shalom family.

*Anne Molloy and
Henry Posner*

We will miss a wonderful
educator and a gifted
human being.

Rabbi Burt Schuman

Dear Mimsie,
Good luck on your retirement.

*Carol Niren and
Ed Snyder*



*Dear Mimsie,
Time spent playing with children
is never time wasted.*

*All our Love,
Fio, Gio, and their
Grateful Parents*

—•••—
Thank you,
Mimsie

—•••—
*The Listons and
the Winikoffs*

*Mimsie,
we're so grateful for
the fantastic start
you gave our kids.*

*Jim and Maureen Busis
Ethan, Hannah '00, Abigail '04*

Dear Mimsie,
You're the best!
As a colleague and a long-time friend,
I wish you the very best.

Gwen Miller

*You are your mother's
daughter in
all her good ways.*

Marion Damick

*Congratulations, Mimsie!
We love you!*

Joey & Agnes

Mazel tov to Mimsie for
a job well done.

Carol and Richard Nathenson

Thank you and kudos
for serving our Congregation
for 26 years.

Susan and Eric Kruman

Dear Mimsie,
We'll miss you as a colleague,
but treasure your friendship.

– Amy, Christine and Sherry

Mazal Tov, Mimsie! We're grateful for
your thoughtfulness and dedication,
keeping everyone safe, and providing a
warm, happy space for our daughter to
start preschool.

Wishing you all the best in this next
chapter of your life!

–Danielle, Chris and Sydney Bond

Our dearest Mimsie,
How can we thank you enough for all that you
have done? We are so grateful our kids had
the gift of having you as their first teacher.
We love you and wish you all the best in the
next chapter of your amazing life.

Love,
Missy, Larry, Abby and Nora Jacobson

Loved working with you
these past 26 years

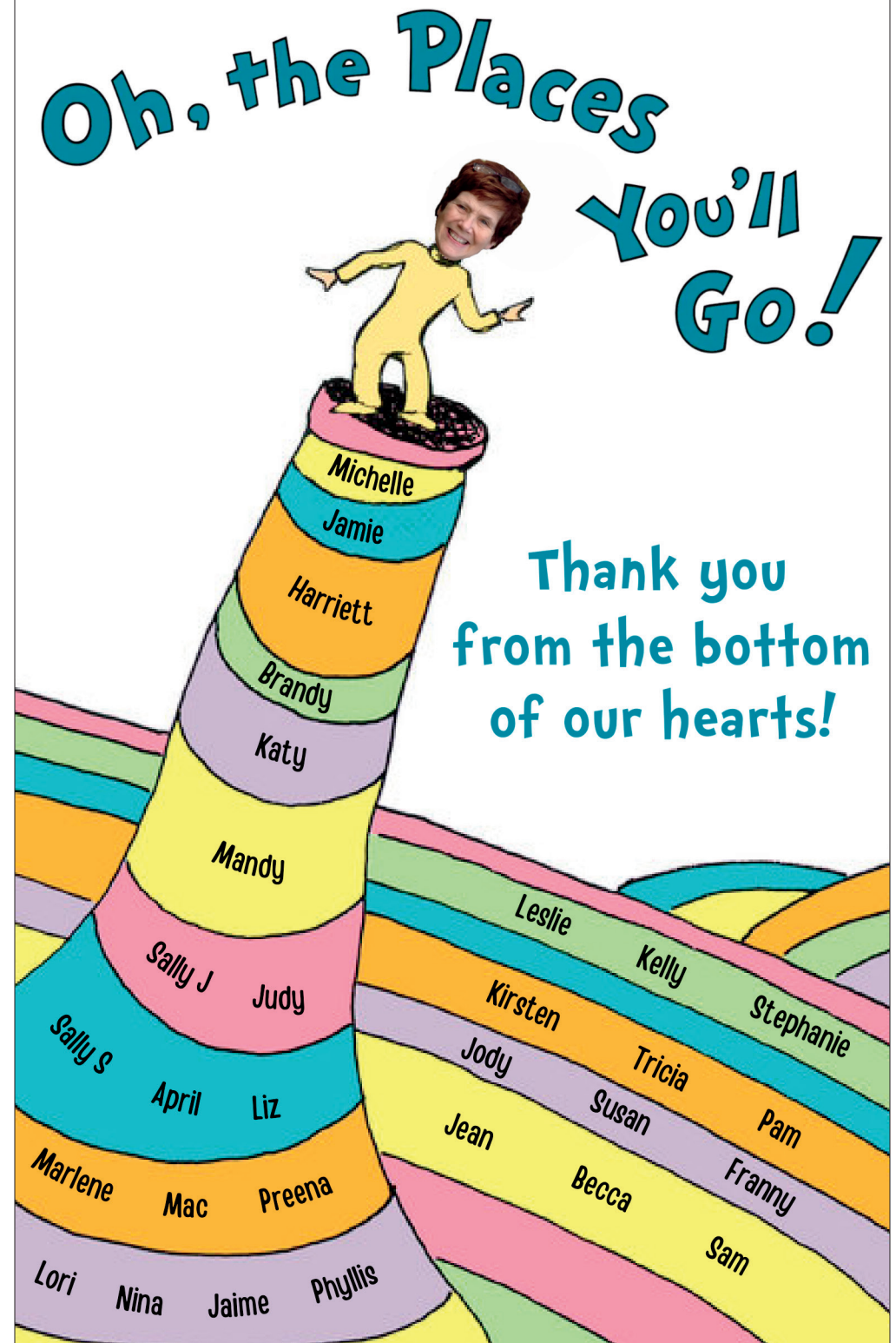
Sally and Lanny Seed

Dear Mimsie,
You are amazing at
everything you do and
you will be missed.

Love,
Margie M.

Thank You Mimsie!

Best wishes from
Sabina, Sophia and
Peter Rosenfeld





Shalom
Mazel Tov and Thank you
Mimsie Leyton
for the love & appreciate you!

