

Shana Tova. I don't really like it when people come up on the bima and say "for those of you who don't know me" and then follow that with their life story. The truth is, I have a special connection with each and every one of you because I look at all of you every year during High Holidays. I have been singing with the KT Choral for 11 years, since I was in 9th grade and you have all watched me grow up. I know it may seem odd for you to see me with a wheelchair and a walker. I am here to share with you what happened to me, and how your life can change in just a few seconds.

In June I was driving home, in my VW Beetle, going the speed limit, doing everything right, when a driver coming the opposite direction had a medical emergency, slumped over the wheel, drove into oncoming traffic and hit me head on. I never lost consciousness, the jaws of life didn't work on the car, and they had to get me out through the passenger side door. I was in a mediated coma for three days. I broke my right wrist, my pelvis in 3 places, dislocated my hip, had a right foot fracture, had a laceration to my left leg which went down to the bone but no break. My family was a wreck, especially my husband, Joe. I suffered major damage to the sciatic nerve in my left leg, and because of that I cannot walk correctly. It's possible that the nerve will take up to two years to heal, if it heals at all. For the 8 weeks following my surgery I was on complete and total bed rest. My parents had to rip up the carpeting in their living room to accommodate all of the specialized equipment I needed. Don't tell my Dad this, but I think my Mom secretly wanted this so she could get new carpeting. But I digress. Joe and I lived in their living room while I healed, for 8 weeks. After the 8 weeks were up I went to in-patient rehab for one month. (Pause)

You can only imagine what the last 3 months have been like for my family. Long days at the hospital, not eating for days, nights without sleeping, keeping up with all of our loved ones and well wishers who inquired about me, making all of my meals, taking care of my every need such as helping me go to the bathroom on a bed pan, tolerate me when I had a bad day, and for my Mom and Joe being a punching bag. When you go through something such as we have, you need your family to support you, and I don't just mean your family by blood. I mean the hundreds of people who care about you who are your back bone and really carry you through hard times. And in this case, for my family, it meant having friends and leaders from our temple's community to fall back on during these trying times. I have also come to realize that without paying membership dues, such a community wouldn't be possible.

During these hard economic times, membership dues are not a high priority in most of our budgets. However without the monetary support the temple receives from collecting dues the temple would be unable to survive. I can tell you for a fact that you make sure to pay your insurance bill so that when you get into an accident like mine, you have a safety net to fall back into. Having the support from the temple community has been a tremendous help for both myself and my family. Rabbi Offel and Cantor Glasser followed me to three different hospitals eight times within the first three weeks of my accident. The Chief of Medicine at Kaiser, a former member of Temple Kol Tikvah, came to my hospital room just to say hello. He knew who I was because 6 years ago, during High Holidays my father held up a cell phone during services just so I could listen to them while I was in college. It left such an impression on him that he stopped by my room just to see how I was doing. Whether we know it or not we are all part of a family. We are closely knit together

because of our affiliation with our place of worship, our home, where our families have grown for years... Temple Kol Tikvah.

I am sure many of us have heard the saying, You don't know what you have until you don't have it anymore. And I know we have been scolded or have scolded that money does not grow on trees. The temple is our home that we need to provide for year after year. The only way that the temple can afford things that it needs to function is if all of the members of our family contribute to the family. We have all heard Jonathan stand here and make jokes during his pitch to get you to pay your membership dues. I am up here to make the point that you never know when your life is going to be radically altered, and that when a life altering event happens you want a community like Kol Tikvah there to help you in that time of need. Let me tell you that there is no way this experience would have been as positive for my immediate family as it has been if we didn't have our temple family to fall back on.

The only way to keep our temple community running is if our members pay their dues. I know and understand that in this difficult economy we have tough choices to make as we must decide what we live without due to our shrinking budgets. I am here to ask you not to make paying temple dues one of those cuts. You never know when life is going to just happen to you. While I hope none of you go through what I did, I can tell you that without the love and support of these people around me here in this room it would have been a much more horrible experience. I hope that you think of this, and of me when deciding whether or not to make you pledges to the temple this year. Thank you. Shana Tova.