

BIO: RABBI AARON SCHONBRUN

Rabbi Aaron Schonbrun hails from San Diego, CA, where his family was very active in the local Jewish community and in their Conservative congregation. As a child and teen he was an active participant (and eventually a staff member) in both Camp Ramah and USY. Outside of the Jewish community he spent many years singing in his school choir and training in Tae Kwon Do.

Rabbi Schonbrun graduated from Washington University in St. Louis with degrees in Psychology and Jewish/Near Eastern Studies. In addition to his three years in St. Louis, he spent a wonderful junior year at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. At “Wash U” Aaron was a leader in the university’s Jewish community, and also enjoyed singing as a part of the campus a cappella group “The Amateurs.”

Rabbi Schonbrun was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary in May 2004, at which time he also received a Masters Degree from the William Davidson School of Education. His rabbinical school career was enhanced by experiences as a student rabbi in several congregations, as a religious school educator, as a hospital chaplain, and as the Jewish Life Director of a JTS/Columbia undergraduate residence hall.

Since August 2004 Rabbi Schonbrun has served as one of the rabbis of Congregation Beth David in Saratoga, CA. In this capacity he has worked in all areas of synagogue life, including: synagogue in-reach & leadership development; community outreach; formal teaching to students of all ages, from children to adults; informal education; pastoral care; ritual; lifecycle; and fundraising.

Some of Rabbi Schonbrun’s major accomplishments at Congregation Beth David include: the development and implementation of major synagogue outreach initiatives; the initiation and facilitation of Beth David’s award-winning Young Adult (20’s & 30’s) group; the creation and cultivation of many new programs, activities, and opportunities for families with young children; the restructuring and redesigning of the curricula of both the Religious School and the Hebrew High School in partnership with school directors; the initiation & implementation of the synagogue’s first ever daily minyan; and the revitalization of the synagogue’s social action committee.

In addition to his pulpit work, Rabbi Schonbrun is active in the greater San Jose community, including as the rabbinic advisor to the Yavneh Day School (local K-8 Schechter school) and as a member of the Saratoga Interfaith Ministerial Group. He is an alumnus of the PEER Executive Leadership Program, an initiative of STAR (Synagogues: Transformation and Renewal) and he serves as a member of the National Board of Professional Advisors to the Jewish Outreach Institute (JOI). Rabbi Schonbrun has also had the opportunity to serve as “Rabbi in Residence” at Camp Ramah California, and as “Scholar-in-Residence” for the local USY region.

Rabbi Schonbrun and his wife, Jane-Rachel, met in Jerusalem and were married in 2001. They have been blessed with three beautiful children: Aviva (born in June 2006), Gavriel & Leora (twins born in March 2008). Jane-Rachel is originally from Baltimore, MD and is a social worker & Jewish educator by training. She currently works as the Adult Program Manager at the Oshman Family JCC in Palo Alto.

“Outside of the Office” Rabbi Schonbrun enjoys playing with and reading to his children, doing family genealogical research, reading biographies and historical non-fiction, watching baseball, and going on “dates” with his wife.