

Menucha: Where Do We Go From Here?

**Session notes from discussions by Subud members
about the
Subud PNW Gathering at Menucha**

Saturday, November 8, 2014

Menucha Financial Assistance Discussion Report

Prepared by Paul Woodcock, with comment from Morris McClellan

From the inception of the Subud Pacific Northwest Menucha Retreat, there has been feedback from valued Subud sisters and brothers that the cost of attending the Menucha Retreat is not comfortably possible within their financial means. Some choose to forego the Menucha experience and have sometimes voiced the need for a Subud kedjiwaan gathering of lower cost. Also from the beginning, efforts have been made to provide financial assistance to those Subud members who wish to come but do not have the financial ability to attend.

Our committee of two started with the consensus that it is correct to continue using the Menucha Retreat Center for our PNW gathering and explored ways in which, moving ahead, we can find the funding to be sure that all who wish to attend are included and that the path to do so is stated clearly and inclusively so that those that might feel excluded will be moved to come. It is important that the path is offered sincerely without causing feelings of stigmatization. Beyond this, we spent some time brainstorming how funds could be raised for a standing Menucha Scholarship Fund to make this possible. The steps we discussed are outlined below. The proposed steps are:

- 1) Create a permanent Menucha Scholarship Fund and state its purpose with clarity and inclusiveness. Spread the word that the purpose of the fund is to raise money so that all who wish to share the Menucha experience can be included.
- 2) Raise funds year round by promoting donation on the website, regular solicitation and several annual fund-raising events. (I suggest that we should start raising money for next year at the end of each Menucha by “passing the hat” for next year’s scholarship funding, maybe a Menucha evaluation/feedback form each year with a solicitation at the end and inclusion of a fund-raising mention with all Menucha-related communications etc.? PW.)

- 3) Find a volunteer fund/funding program director under the Regional Committee to help oversee the fund and fundraising and not add these duties to an existing committee position?
- 4) Funds should be distributed by the method currently used. (?) The process needs to be kept simple (through a personal statement of need by each scholarship applicant?). If there are funding requests that cannot be met one year, those applicants should be moved to the top of next-year's list. (This important part we did not thoroughly discuss.)

Morris' comments, in addition to the above:

I suggested that we should have some full-ride scholarships that are awarded on a lottery basis. Application for these should be accepted on the basis of "Attending would be a financial hardship without a scholarship." Establishing a level of documentation would be difficult to design fairly and be a barrier of entry to applicants, so I am suggesting that we accept the applicants' statement of their situation. If one had received a scholarship one year, they couldn't apply again for some number of years. Not only would this provide an avenue of entry for some folks who may never have come to Menucha, it would also produce a list of others who are interested but are having difficulty with the finances. These people we could do outreach to and see if there might be a way we could help them attend. All in all, it would push the attendance numbers higher, and create a sense that the organization is trying to make this experience available to as many members as possible.

Menucha Affordability Discussion Report

Affordability (Efficiency)

Rearrange rooms to disassemble bunk beds to accommodate more people

Split the registration fees from the lodging/food

Charge less for top bunks

Need to fill buildings/rooms

Price by the room, like hotels do

Marketing

Use Survey Monkey

Barn – lack of meal plan is what made it affordable

Offer an early bird discount for the next Menucha to those who register on the last day of the current year's event

Offer sliding scale scholarships for the entire event

Menucha Age-Related Issues Discussion Report

Older folks may have difficulty with walking far, over difficult terrain, climbing stairs, using top bunks and the like. Menucha has made some accommodations already in the form of wheel chair ramps. A couple of ideas for addressing these difficulties at Menucha could include - 1) renting/borrowing a golf cart to get people from building to building; 2) have younger folks help carry luggage, guide them to right place etc (buddy system).

Could we incorporate families with children into Menucha? Many people feel that children would change the feeling and tone if allowed at Menucha. Some liked the idea of children at Menucha. It could be a nice way to infuse new energy into Menucha. One idea is to use the barn for families and kids would stay at the barn or outside so as not to disturb the adult activities. The Albuquerque Congress opening circle could be a model for how to incorporate children. Barn would be place for child care and activities. Meals could be made there or not.

Need for "retreat" is not just for youth but for many people to have time out to rest, read, go for a walk, quiet talks with a few others. Ensuring space for this is important. Affordability? Has price gone up substantially over time or is it reasonably priced? As population ages affordability may become an issue as their needs are greater and cost more.

Why haven't young people come in the numbers they have in the past? May need to reach out and ask. Why do they need to have a separate place? That wasn't the case many years ago. How important is it that they have their own space? Is it an affordability issue? Are there some other needs that aren't being met?

Menucha Mission: What Makes It So Special? Discussion Report

Sebastian Tedrow: The original Mission:

Strengthen the Latihan

Build Community. Grass Roots. Bottom Up

The community was really in need. It was hurting. The helpers wanted a way to connect everyone, so they created this event.

Sebastian: This ground is a shared sacred space. It would be hard to replace

Effron Davidson: Connection between the latihan, Subud and this space. I can feel it as a member coming for the first time.

Luther Schutz: We have a lot of history here.

Haris Wolfgang:

What it's done for me. What's special for me.

1. This is a retreat. A time when we take care of ourselves. As a result, we've learned to create a safe space.
2. This is a circle event. Where people can step in and get support.
3. This place in the Columbia Gorge is a sacred space.
4. Wondering:
 - a. How many who could come, don't?
 - b. How many who want to come can't?

Alexandra: Making Menucha affordable is our highest priority

General Question: How do we handle the size of it (when there are a number of people?)?

General Conversation: We've worked out the details in the past.

Sebastian T: This isn't a PNW event. It's a worldwide Premier Kedjiwan Event.

Simon Whelan: He came from NYC because of the quality, which he hasn't experienced any place else.

Oswald: Is the Mission one we talk about in our groups? Is it something we care about enough to invest in the space? I mean invest in the property? How could we?

Simon: What about our being a part of a fundraising dinner.

Oswald: Read the Menucha newsletter in the lobby. They have an annual fund raiser. We could come. The organization has financial needs. The last annual fund raiser

raised \$18,000. What can we do to help them financially? (click here to view the newsletter)

Melanie: What if we give them \$10/month or some other monthly contribution?

Alexandra: What about a mini retreat that was less time, that was 1/2 way through the year?

Michael A: That way people could retreat for a shorter period of time. Friday to Saturday evening for example. Something that would be less expensive.

General discussion about the past and when people were able to only participate in workshops if they came for the whole weekend and other limitations that were applied.

Alexandra: If we're to have a mini retreat, we could have it somewhere else, so that Menucha retreat is a separate retreat from that. It could be in the spring in another place.

General agreement that people didn't want to water down the Menucha experience.

Bhakti Watts: Have a place where others in the region could participate.

Paul: What if we have a wider Bio-Regional website where we talked about these things? It would allow all of these people in the bio region to know what their opportunities are. (Ed: and sign up for them?)

Leana McClellan: The thing about this space is that I remember those who've been here before, who aren't here now. It reminds me of their presence.

H. Wolfgang: Who's willing to step up and help the committee with this work?

Michael A: We need a debrief after this to decide.

Sebastian T: To have an event that's a second even in the spring in coordination with the national and regional events..