

Interfaith crowd celebrates Bnai Zion gala



Zionists from throughout the Dallas area and as far as Houston; Washington, D.C.; and New York came together at the Bnai Zion Foundation Texas Region annual gala Nov. 18 to help fund construction of the Bnai Zion Medical Center's protected emergency room and to support the foundation and the evening's honorees.

Those honorees were:

- Butch and Julieann Hartman. Butch is an animator whose work includes Nickelodeon's "The Fairly OddParents" and "Danny Phantom," while Julieann founded Hartman House, which supports people living in poverty worldwide.

- Pastors Ricky and Cyd Texada, of Covenant Church's Colleyville campus, which has a long history of supporting Bnai Zion.

- Anita Weinstein, a former Bnai Zion employee who is known throughout the Dallas Jewish community for her involvement in local Jewish and pro-Israel organizations.

Diane Benjamin was presented with a token of appreciation for her

service as Texas Region president, as her term is now up. CEO Cheryl Bier and national president Stephen Savitsky also thanked David Eisenberg, past president of both the national and Texas Region boards, for his years of dedication to Bnai Zion.

Savitsky addressed the close to 230 in attendance, stressing the importance of unity between all who love Israel — Jews and Christians alike.

"The event was electric, and I feel honored to have attended," Savitsky said. "The bonding between the guests was so beautiful to experience."

Afterward, medical center CEO Dr. Amnon Rofe, who will retire from the post in July 2019, presented updates from the center, along with a video summarizing his 18 years as CEO.

Ricky Texada conveyed a message of gratitude and giving. He noted that the Hebrew root for giving, *natan*, reads the same backward and forward, signifying that those who give generously always receive

an abundance in return.

Larry Strauss, past Texas Region president and national board member, then conducted a live auction to purchase medical equipment for Bnai Zion Medical Center.

The Hartmans gave a meaningful keynote address, after which Butch generously drew cartoons for three raffle winners in the audience and presented Dr. Rofe with a special painting he created for the pediatric section of the hospital.

Event chairs were Summer Paillet and Barry Wernick. Honorary chairs Tim and Virginia Shepherd brought pastors from several area churches with them to become more acquainted with Bnai Zion's work. Covenant Church founding Pastor Mike Hayes and his wife, Kathy, attended in support of the Texas and Rofe, whom they presented with a gift.

"This year's event was incredible," Bier said. "What a beautiful way to say goodbye to Dr. Rofe and honor his 18 years of service at the Bnai Zion Medical Center."

1. Retiring Bnai Zion CEO Dr. Amnon Rofe, third from left, greets Bnai Zion Texas Region gala honorees Butch and Julieann Hartman, Anita Weinstein and Pastors Cyd and Ricky Texada.
2. Members of Bnai Zion staff and the Texas Region board were out in force at the Texas Region gala Nov. 18.
3. Bnai Zion CEO Cheryl Bier
4. Attendees enjoy the Bnai Zion Texas Region gala.
5. Barry Wernick, Bnai Zion Texas Region board member; Diane Benjamin, Bnai Zion Texas Region president; Debbie Tobias, Bnai Zion Texas director of development; Bnai Zion CEO Cheryl Bier; and honoree Anita Weinstein
6. Diane Benjamin, Bnai Zion Texas Region president; honoree Butch Hartman; Barry Wernick, Texas Region board member; honoree Julieann Hartman; Debbie Tobias, Bnai Zion Texas director of development; and Bnai Zion CEO Cheryl Bier
7. Barry Wernick, Texas Region board member; Debbie Tobias, director of development, Texas; Cheryl Bier, CEO; Diane Benjamin, Texas Region president; and Stephen Savitsky, national president, were among the dignitaries at the Bnai Zion Texas Region's annual gala Nov. 18.
8. Barry Wernick, Bnai Zion Texas Region board member; honorees Pastors Ricky and Cyd Texada; Debbie Tobias, Bnai Zion Texas director of development; and Bnai Zion CEO Cheryl Bier
9. Bnai Zion gala honoree Butch Hartman, creator of Nickelodeon's "The Fairly OddParents" and "Danny Phantom," with Bnai Zion Medical Center CEO Dr. Amnon Rofe
10. Bnai Zion National President Stephen Savitsky

Photos: Lara Bierner

