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# Energy Award

## Kol Ami honored by interfaith group for its major environmental efforts.



At the awards dinner: Frank Wilhelme, Michigan Interfaith Power and Light advisory board member; Kol Ami members David Henig, Rhonda Kotzen, Kineret Gable, Rabbi Ariana Silverman and Sara Kravitz; and Larry Kaufman, Michigan Interfaith Power & Light vice president.

*Ann Arbor*

**T**emple Kol Ami in West Bloomfield was honored March 7 for its outstanding leadership integrating sustainable practices into its house of worship and pursuing a LEED Silver Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. The temple is poised to be the first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified synagogue in Michigan.

Kol Ami was honored with the Outstanding Green Congregation award at the 10th anniversary celebration of Royal Oak-based Michigan Interfaith Power & Light, a nonprofit organization aimed at promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy in Michigan faith communities through education, advocacy and action.

"It is part of our sacred calling as Jews to be stewards of the Earth," said Rabbi Ariana Silverman of Kol Ami. "This is something that we teach our children, and we must do so not just with words, but with action.

"When our children walk into our religious school and see this certification, they will learn that we are committed to environmental sustainability, so that they, and their children, will have safe, healthy and sacred lives.

"I am honored that Temple Kol Ami was one of only three houses of worship in all of Michigan to receive this award," she said. "It is a tribute to the memory of our founding rabbi, the late Ernst Conrad, and to our senior rabbi, Norman Roman, that we were honored in the interfaith community for our dedication to social justice."

Lee Schottenfels, Kol Ami co-president, said, "This is a particularly meaningful award for us because both Temple Kol Ami and Michigan Interfaith Power & Light understand the need for real action in the drive for sustainable alternatives in energy usage. We are proud to serve as an example to the greater community that there are choices we all can make to operate our buildings in a much more energy-efficient manner."

Paul Gross, first vice president at Kol Ami, was on the original building committee that made decisions about construction of the new school wing.

"Environmental stewardship is part of Kol Ami's core identity," he said. "That did not end with completion of the project. We have a recycling collection system set up so that all glass, plastic, cardboard and paper that comes through our building and is no longer needed gets recycled. We also are purchasing renewable energy credits from DTE, which sends a strong signal to our community that we are serious about doing our part to help protect the environment."

Kol Ami members also are excited about working toward LEED certification, a voluntary multi-step process.

Silverman told those gathered at the anniversary dinner: "We will certainly keep you posted as we finally get to the LEED certification process. This has been a wonderful process, it's taken a very long time, but we're so close. It really means a lot to us that Michigan IPL has recognized us in this way. It's a labor of love and it's wonderful to know that we're part of a larger community that's committed to this work." □