

During these times, many of us are aching for good news. Like for so many of you, these last four months have been undeniably fraught and sad for my family as we witnessed the pandemic take root in our adopted home and across the globe. We are still trying to find the words to describe the paradigm shift we are experiencing and we are still processing our deep feelings of loss, mourning and worry as we face an uncertain future. As for so many young families, my children are craving other children to play with and are yearning for the simple joys of companionship and human interaction. Despite the challenges we face, we have so much to be grateful for. We are (still) healthy, all our material needs are being met, we share the strong bonds of people who love each other very much and I have the continued privilege of serving this congregation. And now, there is one more piece of happy news to add to this blessed list: as of now, my family and I are permanent residents and in the proud possession of a green

home here in Iowa City, and now our future has happily been secured. When we received the news, I turned to my six-year-old and told him. His eyes widened as he said, a smile spreading across his face, 'Mama, does that mean we can stay in America forever?' It was such a sweet and touching moment, simple yet profound in its ability to capture the uncertainty and anxiety we had faced for so long.

The relief we feel is palpable, and only outmatched by our gratitude and excitement. 'It takes a village', as they say, and we are so indebted to the community and your many kindnesses. Synagogue Presidents Michael Flaum, Kathy Jacobs and Sue Weinberg have stood with us every step of the way, and President-Elect Janice Weiner was instrumental in navigating the arcane immigration process with her years of foreign diplomacy experience. I also feel particularly indebted to my office partners, Karen Brady and John Wertz, who quietly took care of the many administrative components of this