

# 'The Art of Prayer' celebrated in new siddur

By POLINA OLSEN

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"This weekend is known as the Sabbath of Song," Eddy Shuldman said as she welcomed residents and guests to the Cedar Sinai Park Shabbat service on January 29. "This marks the time when we beat it out of Egypt, we left bondage and slavery and got walking into the desert."

And what a perfect time to also mark the first use of the Cedar Sinai Park *Siddur* (prayerbook), "The Art of Prayer." Funded by the Robison Foundation for Jewish Elders, the new Friday-night siddur illustrates prayers with CSP residents' own artwork.

Shuldman and The DownStairs Band have been among the rotating musicians leading services at CSP for years. Prayer books had been falling apart and, as Shuldman said, "never had anything beautiful about them." Shuldman asked ORA members Diane and Daniel Fredgant, Laura Fendel, Cassandra Sagan and Linda Zahavi to help CSP artists select their pieces. Then, she went through the siddur and paired submitted work with specific prayers.

"We thought bringing art



From left, Sheryl Horowitz and Eddy Shuldman perform with The DownStairs Band at the Friday, Jan. 29 release of Cedar Sinai Park's new Friday-night siddur, "The Art of Prayer," at Zidell Hall on the CSP campus. (Polina Olsen/Special to The Jewish Review)

into the prayer book would offer many ways to pray," Shuldman said. "To meditate on a beautiful piece of art and get a sense of creation, get a sense of meaning ... maybe words don't hold, but images do."

Tonight, the team was ready to celebrate with the DownStairs Band, a chocolate-cake oneg and a sanctuary filled with residents, family and friends.

The siddur opens to a miniature Erev Shabbat scene by glass artist Emily Brock. While Shuldman has long

admired Brock's work, she had no idea Brock lived at CSP. In fact, Brock and her poodle, Arlo, have been residents for two years, and although she doesn't work with glass here - "the kilns are a fire hazard" - she displays glass miniature rooms in her apartment, including a replica of the home library her father loved.

Brock's interest started 40 years ago when her husband took a stained-glass class. Finding glass sheets unwieldy, she turned to miniatures. "I did a lot of commis-

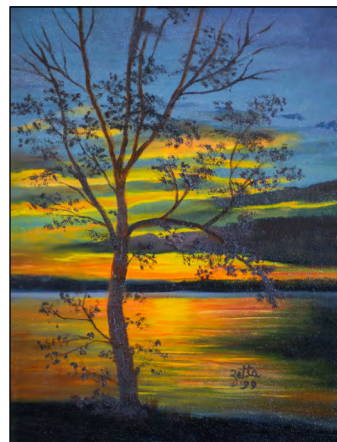
sion work," she said. "Every piece has a story."

After Shuldman led singing and clapping to Shalom Aleichem and Mah To-vu, published poet Caren Masem stood to read her poem, "Shabbat Sail." Masem describes her work as ekphrastic, or painting with words. "I feel spiritual in the outdoors, closeness to G-d," she said, "and I make that clear through poetry."

Pages turned to more artwork. Jeanine Semon's Night Walk is paired with Lecha Dodi, a prayer that welcomes the Sabbath Bride. "I do art that has a healing effect," Semon said. "When you see it, you feel better. Before every new painting, I pray for spiritual support. I ask my angels and guides to be with me."

Zetta Ash's Sunset illustrates the Barchu, a call to prayer, while ORA member Laura Fendel and resident Julie Anne Feinstein worked together on a quilted fabric featuring the Hebrew letter shin. Retired school superintendent Paul Masem received Kennedy Center recognition for promoting the arts in public schools. "Paul's imagery of dancing

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From left, some of the works included in "The Art of Prayer": "Shin" by Julie Anne Feinstein and Laura Fendel (Courtesy photo); "Blue Gate Door" by Zetta Ash (Edis Jurcys); "Sunset" by Zetta Ash, (Edis Jurcys); "The Plants Come Forth" by Jeanine Semon. (Courtesy photo)