<Insert Synagogue Letterhead>

To My Synagogue Family:

I have recently become aware that Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is at epidemic levels in our society and is especially problematic for our Jewish youth.

**What is Noise-induced hearing loss?**

This is a type of hearing damage that is caused by exposure to loud sound. It is progressive, typically painless, and permanent. It is also the only kind of hearing loss that is 100% preventable.

Currently, one in five U.S. teens suffers permanent hearing loss from noise by the age of 19. **Our Jewish youth are particularly vulnerable to this type of hearing damage.**Jewish children, like their peers, are immersed in a culture rich with music, celebration, and communal gatherings—many of which, like b’nai mitzvah and wedding celebrations, include sound levels that exceed safe limits. From joyous simchas to youth camps and school dances, the volume levels at these events place our children at risk. This type of hearing damage is **permanent** – but **preventable.**

At our celebrations, the music played by DJs and bands is often 96 decibels or higher.  At 96 decibels, it’s impossible to hold a conversation, and permanent hearing loss can occur in less than four minutes.

This is a link to a [video from Josh Nelson](https://youtu.be/kFl7KrajaqE), a Jewish musician and educator, with an important message for you and your children about the danger of loud sound and the necessity of practicing hearing safety. We urge you to watch it as a family.

**Four Ways to Protect Hearing**

1. Pay attention to the sound around you

2. Move Away from the Sound Source

3. Lower the Volume on devices.

4. Wear protection in loud environments

In addition to practicing hearing safety in your everyday lives, I urge you to insist that music performed by bands and DJs at your celebrations is at a safe volume.

Please join me in protecting our children and families and save them from permanent hearing damage.

Thank you.

<Rabbi’s signature>

 For more information, visit [Ear Peace Foundation](http://www.earpeacefoundation.org/), a 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit.

The **Ozen Initiative** is a partnership between the Jewish community and **Ear Peace Save Your Hearing Foundation**, a 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit which provides educational hearing safety information and materials, free of cost, to prevent Noise-induced Hearing Loss.

