HILLEL CELEBRATES 60 YEARS
BELTER TOGETHER
STEVE FREEDMAN, HEAD OF SCHOOL

At Hillel, we continually work on our excellent educational program to ensure that our students are ready for the world they will inherit. Some call us innovative; we prefer to state that we are simply doing our job and what is right for our children. We are confident, and our alumni confirm, the skills our children will possess upon graduation will enable them to be flexible and adaptive learners, no matter the environment. Most importantly, in this ever-changing world, the gift of a Jewish education will help them to navigate the complexities of a 21st-century global society through the moral lens of our Jewish tradition, while ensuring the vibrancy of the Jewish community.

As Hillel’s first sixty years come to an end, we invite you to enjoy articles that highlight our school’s achievements as an anchor Jewish institution in Detroit, and a leading day school nationally. You will also read stories that reflect the kind of school that puts student learning first. Take note of the authentic educational opportunities our teachers provide as you gain a glimpse into how exciting it is to be a learner at Hillel. And while our students are proficient readers, writers, and mathematicians, they must also be competent in skills that extend beyond the “3 Rs,” such as critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration.

Our tireless commitment to continue to progress as a 21st-century school is motivated by our deep desire to provide students with the best educational experience possible. More than this, we feel a sense of urgency to create a school so outstanding that Jewish families will view Hillel as the top choice for their children. The more Jewish children we can educate, the better the prospects for a world-class Detroit Jewish community for generations to come. Thankfully, we boast an impressive enrollment; however, we have room to welcome even more students, so please spread the word about our school to all who will listen!

Steve Freedman, Head of School

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SAVE THE DATE

**WELCOME BACK FAMILY SHABBAT DINNER**
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2018 AT 5:00 P.M.

**SCOTCH IN THE SUKKAH FOR DADS**
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2018 AT 7:00 P.M.

**DAYTIME OPEN HOUSE**
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2018 AT 9:30 A.M.

**MOVIES AND MUNCHIES**
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2018 AT 10:00 A.M.

**HANUKKAH SHOPPING SHUK**
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2018 FROM 8:00 A.M.-3:00 P.M.

**FAMILY OPEN HOUSE**
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2019 AT 5:30 P.M.

**ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY CARNIVAL AND KOSHER RIB BURN-OFF**
THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2019 AT 3:30 P.M.

**ANNUAL GALA**
SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 2019 AT 5:30 P.M.

**ABOUT THE COVER:** A DRONE OVERHEAD CAPTURED THE ENTIRE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ON THE FIELD FOR OUR 60TH YEAR PHOTO!

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ECC BREAKING NEWS!

For the past three years Hillel’s Early Childhood Center has been full with a waiting list. We are excited to announce that thanks to two significant gifts, Hillel will begin an ECC expansion this fall. The expanded ECC will be ready for the fall of 2019.

One of the major gifts includes a match. We encourage you to help us make the match. If we can fully attain the match we will have enough funding to also redo and expand the parking lot next summer!

Show our donors that our community appreciates their commitment, and believes in our ECC and our mission. Please contact Amy Schlussel, Director of Advancement, at (248) 539-1484 to confirm your gift.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENTS DESIGN ISRAEL@70 LOGO</th>
<th>PG. 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE POWER OF PERSUASION</td>
<td>PG. 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW TECH AWARD NAMES WINNER</td>
<td>PG. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS</td>
<td>PG. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISRAEL IS IN OUR DNA</td>
<td>PG. 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIQUE USES OF OUR MAKERSPACE</td>
<td>PG. 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HILLEL’S GOT TALENT</td>
<td>PG. 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAREWELLS</td>
<td>PG. 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CELEBRATING 60 YEARS</td>
<td>PG. 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALUMNI CLASS NOTES</td>
<td>PG. 52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EDITOR:** GABRIELLA BURMAN
**ART DIRECTOR:** MELANIE WEBER
**COPY EDITOR:** CATHY FRIDSON

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At Hillel, project-based learning gives students the opportunity to demonstrate creativity and other essential skills. One of our favorite examples comes from the eighth grade geometry class where students worked as graphic designers to create original logos for clients in the community.

Our very own Advancement Office came first, asking students to create the school’s 60th anniversary logo last year. Teams of students became well-versed in Hillel’s history and mission. They then presented several iterations of designs before voting as a class to turn the 0 in 60 into a Star of David with the dates of the school between the pillars that make up the H in Hillel (these pillars represent the foundation of our dual curriculum). The logo appeared on all print and digital materials throughout the commemorative school year.

This year, the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit asked our class of 2018 geometry students to design a logo celebrating Israel’s 70th anniversary. Students worked in groups to create inspired visual representations of the close relationship between Detroit and Israel, including turning 7 into a map of Israel and 0 into a tire representing the Motor City. Students presented their top three designs to Federation staff, and received feedback on the favored design so that they could complete it to client satisfaction.

The chosen logo (bottom right) depicts both the Detroit and Jerusalem skylines, representing the close ties between the two communities, and is dotted with fireworks in celebration. Federation has used the logo to publicize all community events surrounding the State of Israel’s milestone, and was seen by thousands at the Israel@70 celebration at the Detroit River in June.

While protective of their design elements, such as the font, which Federation altered, the students were happy to see their learning applied to “real life” graphic design. “It shows that what we learn inside the building has use in the real world!” student Maya Weisberger said.
ECC4 AND KINDERGARTEN BUDDIES ARE BETTER TOGETHER

ECC4 students and their Kindergarten buddies teamed throughout the year for activities that foster friendship, and, for the preschoolers, familiarity with teachers and the kindergarten learning community before transitioning “up.”

As spring warmed the air, students took their activities outdoors to collaborate on a “not-a-box” project under the shady trees behind our school building. Together, they transformed simple cardboard boxes into bodies, houses “where people read Torah,” said one student, and more, using their imagination as they collaborated on design and decorations.

The launch for the activity was the children’s book Not A Box, and culminated in this STEAM activity that encompassed the skills these young students will continue to hone throughout their years at Hillel, including creativity, communication, and critical thinking.

Equally important are the personal connections the students have made by spending time together over the year. Not only do they become familiar with the kindergarten community, they become comfortable with the kindergarten teachers, and that’s vital, so that moving up to kindergarten isn’t “scary,” but something wonderful to look forward to.
ECC NEWS

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IS GATEWAY TO JOYFUL LIVING

Our values-driven, play-based Early Childhood Center continues to be a serious draw for young Jewish families in metro Detroit. With 140 students currently enrolled, the ECC is full for the third year in a row, with plans underway to expand in the fall. It is beautiful to watch these students who come through our doors as youngsters graduate 12 years later as eighth graders!

It is easy to see why our preschool is so successful. On any given day, you will find students discovering the world through games and outdoor play, dancing to music, listening to stories, learning Hebrew vocabulary, and mastering gross motor skills in gym class with “Coach Floyd.”

Most importantly, they are learning to be part of a community that engages in acts of kindness for others. Examples include caring for caterpillars that turn into butterflies, learning to protect life in all its forms, and giving tzedakah on their birthdays in lieu of or in addition to receiving gifts. Additionally, through the act of forming friendships, they internalize the concept of “Shalom Bayit,” to create a peaceful home.

Due to the strength of our ECC, we are the only local Jewish preschool that is both accredited by The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and which has received 4-stars from Great Schools.

“Research shows that early childhood experiences have a profound effect on later growth and development, thus Jewish preschool can be the gateway to a meaningful Jewish life!” Robin Pappas, Director of Early Education, said. “At Hillel, we are proud to get that ball rolling early.”

See inside cover for breaking ECC news!
STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL WALKOUT FOR PARKLAND VICTIMS

Hillel students were well aware of the many horrific school shootings that tragically occurred this year across the U.S.

As part of a national event to memorialize the 17 victims of the February 14 school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, a majority of students in sixth through eighth grades walked out of school for 17 minutes on March 14 at 10:00 a.m.

The walkout, organized by students with the support of Hillel staff, was somber and respectful in tone. Eighth graders read the names of and made a brief statement about each victim, and observed a moment of silence for each individual. Kel Maleh Rabamim, the prayer for the soul of the departed, was recited for the four Jewish students and one Jewish teacher before students returned to the building.

“I am proud of all of our sixth through eighth grade students who all made informed and respectful decisions for themselves to either participate in the walkout or stay inside,” said Steve Freedman, Head of School.

THE POWER OF PERSUASION

BY: SHELBY WALLACH, LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER

Seventh graders spent much of the year studying the intricacies of society-building as part of social studies. They created their own society, “Spartagania,” complete with its own set of laws and criminal justice system. They also contrasted the “many” with a study of the “individual,” particularly the power of one person to effect positive or negative change in the world. Students read about Helen Keller and Anne Frank, and they fine-tuned their writing, synthesizing information into their own working definition of the power of one. They also studied the power of words themselves, crafting persuasive pieces to use in a debate unit that tested their public speaking skills.

After vigorous research, well-constructed written arguments, and hours of practice to polish their oratory skills, students debated the merits of social media, the right of ex-felons to vote, the death penalty, and physician-assisted suicide.

“I was shaking, I was so nervous,” said Adin Victor, who fiercely argued for the death penalty, despite possessing contrary personal feelings.

Throughout the debate unit, students learned the protocols of a public forum debate, the importance of reliable sources, how to write persuasive speeches, and how to think quickly on their feet. These skills will serve them well in high school and beyond.

To see students’ hard work come to life was truly special. All of the students worked tirelessly to cohesively integrate their reading, writing, and public speaking skills. I am always proud of them, but this final learning experience exemplified their growth academically and personally. May they always use these foundational skills in their future educational endeavors.
LET THE (MATH) GAMES BEGIN!

As Olympic athletes worldwide arrived in South Korea for the Winter Games, our third graders participated in an Olympics of their own: solving number stories and multiplying two-digit by one-digit factors. Students earned medals not when they “won,” but when they exhibited the Olympic traits of “perseverance, honesty, and strength,” said teachers Jodi Tepper and Lauren Partovich.

This is one example of how students adopt a growth mindset in math; no longer is the goal to “perform,” but to learn from mistakes, and from one another, discerning patterns and connections rather than answers. Another example comes from first grade, where students used dynamic manipulatives such as geoboards to make shapes as part of their introduction to early geometric concepts. By visually exploring lines and angles, they began to see math as creative. This concept is further honed through the use of Shape Monsters in a third grade assignment that assessed the children’s understanding of angles and parallel and intersecting lines. Using shapes with a personal connection to each child, such as a hexagon for someone whose first name starts with six letters, students created fantastical creatures out of paper, and introduced them to the public through written stories that brought them to life, integrating language arts into the unit, as well.

Technology is a “cool tool” our eighth graders used to demonstrate their project-based learning in math. Using their editing skills, students produced videos to show how quickly zombies could take over the world utilizing exponential growth, or how rapidly an antidote could defeat them using exponential decay. Their understanding of the concepts of dependent and independent variables, and growth and decay factors, soared while they created exponential tables and graphs.

According to eighth grader Ava Farber, the zombie project “was enjoyable because I was doing something fun while learning. I learned better this way.”

“The hands-on approach to math allows all students to be active and engaged in their learning,” said Elizabeth Canvasser, K-4 Math Coordinator. “The different manipulatives and tools that are used in various grades helps students create their own understanding of a math concept through exploration.”
MATH PENTATHLON
2018 – GAME ON!

BY GEOFF LINDEN, MATH PENTATHLON COACH

Having coached over 50 kids the past two years in Math Pentathlon, I thought I’d heard every math question possible. Curious inquiries relating to rules about the games, purpose for participating, locations of snacks, and an incredulous kindergartner wondering if I was a dad or someone’s older brother. You name it, I’d heard it. But on my first day coaching Math Pentathlon at Hillel, one of the students asked me, “Why do they call it Math Pentathlon? There’s not really any math. They’re really just games.” He was spot on, and yet I’d never been asked that before, let alone considered it myself. That’s when I realized Hillel was going to be different.

Math Pentathlon isn’t math at all, really. Other than basic adding and subtracting, the games are designed to make kids think strategically – like one or two steps ahead rather than just focusing on the turn at hand. The games are intended to create both offensive and defensive mind-sets, pondering your own moves while considering what your opponent may do next. The games are relatively simple and easy to learn. But mastering them to the point where you’re thinking strategically takes weeks of practice.

In this inaugural year we had teams for kindergartener through 3rd grade. In total, we had approximately 40 students participate. The growth and the progress the Hillel kids showed was amazing, especially since the first two weeks looked more like Lord of the Flies than Math Pentathlon. By the end, the kids were all playing one-on-one games, having mastered all the rules and employing different strategies against different opponents. Our in-school tournaments provided a lot of drama and excitement, with winners and runners-up crowned in each grade. But everyone who made it through all 10 weeks was rewarded for their hard work – this was more than a participation award, these medals were earned by hours of hard work, focus and good sportsmanship.

I am immensely proud of all the participants. And a HUGE thank you goes out to Julie Potocsky, Julie Feinberg and all the other parent volunteers who helped each and every week.

Geoff Linden, principal and founding partner of Vault Equity Partners, is the proud Hillel parent of Cody, Jessa, and Shaun Linden.

NEW FAMILY PROFILE
THE LINDEN FAMILY

At first, Hillel Day School wasn’t in the plan for Casey and Geoff Linden. Although Casey (class of 1993) is a Hillel alumna, she and Geoff thought their local public school was “good enough,” and that they would supplement Jewish education on their own. Over time, however, they saw that their eldest son Shaun, a bright and curious student, wasn’t being sufficiently challenged. “It was becoming obvious to us that we needed to make a change,” Geoff said.

Friends had been telling them “how wonderful Hillel is,” but Casey, an allergist, needed to see the evidence for herself. So the couple scheduled a tour. They observed immediately confident students and enthusiastic teachers “who love what they do,” Geoff, principal and founding partner of Vault Equity Partners, said. Moreover, they learned about bilingual education and the positive affect it has on brain, developing executive functioning skills such as time management and paying attention.

The benefits of specifically learning Hebrew quickly emerged, as Shaun began Hillel as a second grader, along with his brother Cody, a kindergartner, and sister Jessa, an ECC3 student. “Judaic studies make them think,” Geoff said. “They ask thoughtful questions, they’re mensches. I hear Shaun muttering around the house in Hebrew, and we’re getting an earful about the holidays. It’s been the most pleasant surprise!”

Other benefits abound, Geoff added. “Being in a single school through eighth grade helps our kids feel safe. They see one another during the day. They won’t go through any awkward middle school transitions. Shaun sees the eighth grade boys playing basketball, and says he wants to be like them.”

The Lindens marvel at the way their kids have jumped into Hillel life, developing relationships with teachers, and bringing home what they learn. The parents have jumped in, too. Geoff coaches Math Pentathlon (see previous page), an after-school activity that culminates in a tournament involving the problem-solving skills critical today.

Having been in both public school and at Hillel, the Lindens feel authoritative when it comes to speaking about the benefits of Hillel’s mission and program. And as far as tuition, which can be perceived as a barrier to entry, Geoff, the co-founder of Vault Equity Partners, says to other prospective families, “talk to the school. I was starting my own company. They worked with us.

“It’s been so good to be here,” Geoff said, reflecting on the school year. “Our kids are learning life skills, and getting everything they need.”
THE YEAR IN TECH

BY: MARNIE DIEM, COORDINATOR OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVENTURES

At Hillel, we do not simply use technology for its own sake — it must enhance the learning experience. This premise is at the heart of how we incorporate devices into the curriculum.

For example, kindergarten through fourth graders choose what learning they want to share, whether it is Hebrew dialogue or a reflection on a book they’ve read — and then they record it independently on an iPad or Chromebook using a digital portfolio platform called Seesaw. Parents receive instant notification, and can view and comment on what they’re seeing.

Today’s kids also need to learn coding the way their parents needed to master typing. So our first and second graders piloted a new coding curriculum this year, and learned to solve a problem by breaking it into smaller chunks. The curriculum was the vehicle through which they learned universal skills in collaboration, which involved listening, and they learned to fail forward, trying out multiple solutions to a problem until they solved it. These are the goals we want to achieve when we bring technology into our learning!

In fifth through eighth grade, students and teachers alike explored a variety of new tools, including WeVideo, Go Animate, and Adobe Spark. While many older kids are fluent in iMovie, we aim to expose kids to tools they might not otherwise try. This helps students step out of their comfort zone, and open themselves up to see what else they can do. Adding new seeds to the garden will eventually prove fruitful, even if those seeds are not cultivated right away!

Sixth graders had lessons in basic graphic design. This included creating logos for “Shark Tank,” and learning to make appealing visual presentations. Third and fourth grade students experienced a Google “boot camp” where they worked through a self-guided course to become Google “experts.”

Our staff, too, embraced new tools this year, streamlining the process of room scheduling and of document and picture sharing. Many dabbled in BreakoutEDU, an escape room concept designed to reinforce critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. This digital platform allows students to work independently as an assessment, to work collaboratively, and even adds a layer of competitiveness, which can further increase engagement. We are looking forward to more BreakoutEDU, and more evolutions in technology next year!

SEVENTH GRADER WINS NEW TECH AWARD

Seventh grader Celia Levy was chosen by the STEAM team as the first recipient of the Jason P. Zaks z’l Innovation & Technology Award established by the Zaks Family and the class of 1988, in memory of classmate Jason, who died in 2016. The award recognizes an innovative, hardworking student in grades five through eight who exhibits mensch-like qualities and creative problem solving skills.

“Jason was passionate about technology, and he would have loved the MakerSpace,” recalled his sister, Hillel parent Lisa Klein (class of 1990).

Celia is unendingly curious about how things are made, and spends most of her free time working on projects in the MakerSpace. This year alone, she designed and created a hinged wooden box, an entire line of fruit-based Perler Bead jewelry, and mastered the art of 3D printing.

“Celia is always willing to lend a hand, whether it is teaching others or by helping clean up a mess,” said Dawn Straith, Innovation Coordinator. “She is a mensch, a natural collaborator, and an outstanding role model of derekh eretz,” Mrs. Straith said. “She is an inspiration to makers of all ages.”
JEWISH IDENTITY: A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

BY: AMIRA SOLEIMANI, JUDAIC STUDIES TEACHER

Imagine someone asked you to identify and rank the aspects of Judaism that you value the most. As adults, many of us could simply pluck our answers from the lives that we live. For one, we all view Jewish education with great importance. Now, imagine attempting to answer this same question as a seventh grader, a time when you are developmentally on the verge of creating your own identity, caught somewhere between your childhood and your teenage years. Would you be able to articulate with reasoning how to prioritize your Jewish identity and find a meaningful balance within American culture?

Seventh grade students were challenged with this very question in Diyyun, their thematic Jewish studies course. Propelled by the driving question of “How can we, as Jewish teens, create a ‘recipe for success’ for the Detroit Jewish community to resist assimilation and retain our Jewish identity?”, students were asked to draft “recipes” that demonstrated the breakdown of their own Jewish identities. The goal for this unit was not only to make students more self-aware, but to also help them proactively problem-solve the assimilation trends their generation of American Jews will face.

Equipped with an in-depth exploration of Jewish reactions to the Hellenistic period as well as a thorough analysis of the Pew Research Center’s 2013 “Portrait of Jewish Americans,” students rose to the task. Our classroom quickly transformed into a forum for intense debate relating to topics such as Jewish marriage, denominational affiliation, ideal strategies for raising Jewish children, and the role of Israel.

“One thing that really surprised me,” reflected student Erin Starr, “was the difference between our answers. One of my friends said that learning Jewish history is the key to Jewish engagement, while I thought that synagogue attendance is the most important aspect of leading a Jewish life.”

Throughout the unit, students used their critical thinking and creativity to transform their ideal recipes for sustained Jewish engagement into symbolic food recipes. “The cooking was very interesting and completely different from any other project we have done in school. The food was an analogy for describing the different ‘ingredients’ of our Jewish identity,” shared Ryan Sparago. Jacob Goodman added, “This task was difficult because I don’t stop to focus on which part of my Jewish identity is more important. The food piece helped the class find similarities that united our different individual identities and brought us together.”

Self-awareness is often formed in hindsight, as accidental outgrowths of routine behaviors. In Diyyun, students become equipped to handle problems head on, enabling them to lead a more informed and mindful Jewish life.

ON THE VERGE OF ADULTHOOD, STUDENTS CREATE A RECIPE FOR AN INFORMED JEWISH LIFE.
TEACHERS ENCOUNTER PAST TO RESTORE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

By Renee Liberman and Nicole Troiano, General Studies Teachers

Horror and hope. Remembrance and reconciliation. These juxtapositions are part of the ebb and flow that we felt on our trip to Berlin, Germany in February. We participated in “Germany Close Up: American Jews Meet Modern Germany” in affiliation with The Well Detroit. We were among 29 young professionals selected to attend. This once-in-a-lifetime experience was subsidized by the German government to encourage dialogue between American Jews and Germans.

All of the beautiful and modern buildings, parks, and neighborhoods in Berlin have a haunting story behind them. The city is scattered with reminders that it was once the location of a genocide. One of the most prevalent reminders we encountered were the Stumbling Stones, or “Stolpersteine.” These small square brass stones, inscribed with the names of those persecuted by the Nazis, are placed in the sidewalk in front of homes that once belonged to Jews. You literally stumble over them, and find yourself remembering lives lost. (Hillel’s Class of 2017 made concrete stones inspired by the stumbling stones as part of their study of the Shoah; they are in the garden outside the MakerSpace.)

Subtly lying in the grass of the park behind our hotel, we made out the remnants of a stone wall that once made up the walls of Synagogue Heidereutergasse, or the “Old Synagogue.” This synagogue was built in 1714 and remarkably survived Kristallnacht. In fact, it held services for the local Jewish community until November, 1942. Its demise came during an air raid in 1943. We used this darkness to create our Shabbat light.

Heartache and gratitude accompanied us on our visit to Sachsenhausen as we learned of the tactics used there to inflict emotional and physical pain, ultimately leading to the death of over 70,000 people. We searched for a way to look towards the future with optimism, thanking God for our freedom to move about as Jews.

Returning to Detroit, we felt drained from our week walking in the footsteps of our Jewish ancestors. We struggled to settle back into everyday life. How do we share our experiences? As Holocaust survivors pass on, how do we make sure that we never forget?

Editor’s Note: Immersive Jewish experiences such as these for our faculty connect them to our mission, and inspire them to teach the next generation of Jews in a day school.

BETTER CHEMISTRY THROUGH COOKING

Chemistry and cooking have a lot in common - both involve physical and chemical changes, various states of matter, and combining different substances. While performing experiments in class, third grade scientists had an “a-ha” moment: To write and sell a cookbook as a class fundraiser. The result was the Class of 2023 Chemistry Cookbook, filled with recipes that “take a few ingredients and make something remarkable,” said teacher Aaron Newman. The book, organized by the Jewish holidays, features vegetarian, vegan, and allergen-free recipes. This authentic learning example showed that students can always hone math and language arts skills, no matter what subject they are focused on.

Students offered the cookbook to the public in a digital format, and for free, asking only for a suggested donation towards the purchase of materials with which to conduct their next scientific investigations. Their goal was to purchase vats (and vats!) of cornstarch to make non-newtonian fluids such as oobleck, which changes its viscosity depending on how much force is applied to it.

And make it, they did! At the end of the year, they threw themselves an oobleck pool party to celebrate their growth as scientific investigators. “They had a blast experimenting with their pools – no floaties necessary!”

For your copy of the cookbook, email gburman@hillelday.org.
Our students value giving tzedakah as it demonstrates our mission to be “responsible to community.” Here are examples of some big figures – and big gestures – that came from the heart this year across all grades as students integrated learning and giving:

- Fourth grade raised $3,910 for Jewish Family Services as part of March is Reading Month activities.
- Through a fitness challenge, seventh grade raised $3,243 for JARC.
- Eighth grade raised more than $1,000 for Detroit Street Medicine during their Campaign for A Cause.
- Through the sale of chametz, students collected $600 for a tzedakah fund that responds to our families’ basic needs.
- Second grade donated $450 in profits from a bake sale to the Hadassah Primary School in Uganda.
- Kindergarten collected gently used toys to donate to Humble Design.
- ECC students collected candy for United States Army troops and their families as part of learning about being a good neighbor.

Individual students of all ages also donated funds to causes near and far, and we salute all of you! These efforts demonstrate our values of K’lal Yisrael and Tikkun Olam, and we couldn’t be prouder of our community! Kol hakavod!

HOW MUCH HAVE WE GIVEN?

As part of their yearlong study of the Shoah, eighth graders compiled evidence that crimes against humanity were committed by the Nazis in the concentration camps. They researched what life was like in over 20 different camps, working exclusively with primary sources – interviews, maps, photos, films, documents, and letters – to determine that atrocities were committed at death camps, holding centers, and work camps.

The students explored the Nuremberg Trials by reading transcripts, learning legal terms, and using the persuasive rhetorical strategies of ethos, pathos, and logos. Brimming with rich evidence and the skills to sway any judge, groups of students were assigned the task of creating a mock case to present before the International Tribunal in Nuremberg.

The students learned to nuance their arguments so as not to diminish the memory of the victims by minimizing their lives into neatly organized evidence. It is a difficult line to negotiate; how does one obtain justice while preserving a victim’s dignity?

This project was an appropriate way to end the year. As they look to the future, students know where they came from. I can think of no better tribute to the more than six million Jews who needlessly lost their lives under the Nazi regime than to have our eighth graders remember that it is their duty going forward to speak up against injustice and persecution.

As for whether any remaining Nazis can be brought to justice today, student Andy Tukel stated, “I believe it is possible. The way victims can receive justice is by sentencing living Nazis who murdered Jews, and Nazis who assisted indirectly, to jail time. This is one way those who perished and those who survived the Holocaust can receive the justice they deserve.”

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AT HILLEL, “ISRAEL IS IN YOUR DNA”

BY: SAUL A. RUBE, DEAN OF JUDAIC STUDIES

Yom Hazikaron was a powerful day at Hillel Day School. Students led two memorial ceremonies for grades four and five and six and seven, and the whole school stood in respectful silence for the siren at 11:00 a.m. 150 students committed to performing acts of hesed, tzedakah, and/or Torah study to perpetuate the memories of specific fallen soldiers.

Fifth and seventh graders were privileged to hear personally from Adili and Nurit Dagan, sister and mother of Elai Dagan, z”l. They shared their searing story of how they lost Elai 24 years ago, at age 18, just two months after he began his IDF service, when despite warnings he risked his own life to save others from attack. Both women, as well as our Detroit Community Shliḥah (Israel Emissary) Nina Yahalomi, were profoundly impressed with the manifest commitment to Israel and Zionism they felt at Hillel. Ms. Yahalomi stated, “At the many other schools I’ve visited, Israel is a subject or an activity. At Hillel Day School, it is in your DNA.”

As they do in Israel, the somber tones of Yom Hazikaron gave way to the exhilaration of Yom Ha-atzma’ut! On Israel Independence Day, the entire Hillel community celebrated Israel’s 70th anniversary with amazing spirit at a schoolwide Zimriyah, followed by a short set by the Holy Band that had everyone on their feet, before the community-wide concert that evening. In between, students enjoyed carnival games and the Kosher Rib Burn-Off (mazal tov to two-time winner Congregation B’nai Moshe!), and our annual cupcake cake in the shape of the Israeli flag.
Hillel Students Give Divrei Torah

In Tanakh recently, we learned about the famous story of the meraglim, the spies. It is interesting to see how similar people who were on the same mission to the same place came up with totally different reports and reactions. Ten of the spies reported on how awful everything was in Israel, and how the natives were so big and strong that the Israelites would for sure be destroyed if they tried to enter the land. Joshua and Kalev reported on how amazing the land was, and that Bnai Yisrael could beat anyone, with God’s help. What accounts for these huge differences?

We learn here about the importance of perspective. If you are already scared or insecure, you are going to see things in a way that matches your outlook. If you feel secure and strong, you will see things in a way that matches that perspective. As leaders of our school, just like the leaders of B’nai Yisrael that we learned about in Tanakh, we also need to think about the perspectives we have and how they affect our decisions.

Standing Room Only at Parshah Club

One of the hallmarks of a Hillel education is the close relationship a teacher and student develop as they study together not only in class but in informal environments, too, such as our many clubs and afterschool activities. For 10 years, Saul A. Rube, Dean of Judaic Studies, has invited students in grades three through eight to join him for Parshah Club on Erev Shabbat (Fridays) during their designated lunch period. This way, students can learn more Torah and life lessons that would not necessarily find their way into the formal curriculum. Our students give you a glimpse into what happens:

“We learn about the weekly parshah collaboratively, and we discover ‘Secrets of Hebrew Letters’ (a weekly gematria). We also tell jokes and watch related videos that are sometimes humorous. We have many ‘Parshah mascots;’ one is Wonder Woman, because she is always wondering which parshah it is. We also listen to awesome Jewish music! Students get to take leadership roles, too, setting and cleaning up, staffing the computer, and being the chief distributor of Parshah Treats.

“Even though it’s optional, Parshah Club attracts a lot of kids (over sixty each week!), because we like to learn Torah and enjoy each other’s company. We are excited to continue and strengthen the tradition of this weekly club!”

We would like to tell you about unique perspectives that we bring to our learning at Hillel Day School, and why Hillel’s special curriculum is so important to us. Our parents come from the former communist Soviet Union. While living there, they were forbidden to practice Judaism, and would be beaten, and maybe even executed, if they did. Our parents have told us about their friends who were daring enough to practice their religion, who lived in constant fear of being caught. It’s been a while since then, but as we wake up in the morning, and go on our way to school, we thank God and our parents for working hard and getting us to a place where we know we are safe to do what God has intended. We are proud of our Judaism and would never pass it up. This perspective helps us to make the most of our time at school. By attending Hillel, we are able to explore the path of Jewish living that was taken away from our parents.

By: Eugenia Aronov and Abigail Gelfand, Sixth Grade Students

By: Zeev Maine, Jordan Elberg, Brandon Levine, and Aaron Schuchman, Fourth Grade Students

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MICRO GREENS AND OTHER GREENHOUSE MIRACLES

Our school greenhouse “Green Team,” gardening groups, and clubs were busy this year feeding hungry students homegrown lettuce, spinach, and sprouts, planting parsley for Pesah, and marigolds for Mother’s Day. They also propagated plants, made fertilizer, and created special projects to share with our school community, including designing mixed flower hanging baskets to sell at our Spring Shuk.

We grow from seed all our vegetables and flowers with the use of our indoor lighting shelves. We have created a multitude of opportunities for all of our students, from the very youngest two-year olds to our graduating eighth graders, to be involved in growing and learning about the miraculous process of gardening.

The greenhouse also boasts an Israel corner devoted to plants that grow in Israel, including lemons, figs, and oranges, and six small etrog saplings.

“I’ve always liked getting my hands dirty,” said eighth grader Maya Weisberger. “Here I’ve been able to get into a routine, and from only knowing how to pot a plant, I’ve learned to grow arugula, tomatoes, mesclun, and microgreens that add nutrients and flavor to our foods.”

“WE WENT FROM ONLY KNOWING HOW TO POT A PLANT TO MAKING FERTILIZER AND GROWING HIGH-END HERBS.”

BY: PHYLLIS MEYERS, JUDAIC STUDIES TEACHER
THE UNIQUE USES OF OUR MAKERSPACE

Our Innovation Hub has certainly lived up to its name this year, with students making use of the space, materials, and technologies available to them on a number of projects that brought authentic learning to life. From 3D-printed dreidels to innovative products peddled before the judges at our sixth grade “Shark Tank,” students spent meaningful class — and recess! — time in the MakerSpace, designing, prototyping, and persevering through challenges, learning skills that will serve them well in an innovation-driven world.

“It was very difficult to make the dreidel,” said fourth grader Shoshanna Harz. “The first printout was hollow, two of the letters were mixed up, and one was backwards, so I needed to edit the design. Through hard work and learning from my mistakes, I finally finished editing and made a dreidel I could play with on Hanukkah.”

Other projects included a space craft complete with wearable spaceship costumes, laser-cut Purim figures, a chair designed using mathematics, phone cases, mezuzot crafted as part of our 60th anniversary mezuzah campaign (see pg. 55), and goods made for our Spring Shuk, such as earrings, push pins and magnets.

Parents, too, enjoyed the MakerSpace at our “Exodus to Freedom” event in advance of Pesah. Together with the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum, Hillel staff engaged families in a variety of activities, including building boats to hold Baby Moses, making lava lamps whose water turns to blood, and magically parting the Red Sea. They even dissected those pesky frogs!

The activities “integrated science and Jewish content in the unique way that only Hillel can,” said Joan Freedman, Director of Curriculum.

More broadly, the Innovation Hub appeals to a variety of interests, developing student creativity in a supportive environment. Parents say it means a lot that Hillel offers the experiences the hub affords, and similarly, the sheer number of projects going on at any one time “makes everyone on Hillel’s Maker Team feel proud,” said Dawn Straith, Innovation Coordinator.
INTERVIEW WITH JOAN FREEDMAN, DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM

"WE SEE OURSELVES AS FACILITATORS TO HELP STUDENTS FIND THEIR WORLDS OF POSSIBILITIES"

Describe what is innovative at Hillel. With a transformative philanthropic gift, we have, over the last few years, created our ideal space, one that is collaborative, offers freedom of movement, and allows kids to learn in their own ways. The space helps us realize our vision of integrated learning, flexible grouping, and more personalized education.

What is most exciting for you about Hillel’s innovative work? We’re seeing better engagement with students as we’ve shifted to more project-based learning. As we use the greenhouse and MakerSpace, and other spaces to explore and make connections, we see abstract ideas come to life. Our Jewish and general studies are more integrated. Learning looks different. We are using rubrics and self-reflection as opposed to only tests. We’re making school a place to focus on learning, not teaching.

What challenging for you? Time to truly meet the individual needs of students. Each year we reimagine what the schedule should look like. This year we incorporated WIN (What I Need) time to make sure every child receives what they specifically need.

What do you need to be successful as an innovator? Excellence requires taking risks. We try things. We work on seeing ourselves as facilitators of learning. It’s about helping students find their worlds of possibilities.

How do you continue learning? I read books by great thought leaders in education like Sir Ken Robinson and Tony Wagner. I follow the Buck Institute. I attend national conferences to learn the latest in curriculum and learning. Most of our professional development supports teacher visits to schools to look at other models of scheduling, learning, assessments, and integration. This year’s team visited Bank Street, Avenues, Fieldston, and Heschel schools, in New York.

This interview first appeared on prizmah.org.

REFLECTIVE LEARNING: A WIN-WIN FOR STUDENTS

As we continue to examine the best use of school day hours, we have adjusted student schedules to incorporate time for them to enrich their learning, seek extra help, and reflect on their learning as they progress through units of study.

FLEX time gives students a block of time each week for uninterrupted, deeper learning. The concepts, projects, and/or activities explored are all an extension of learning from class, not new or isolated material.

“We have found this time to be useful, especially in the depths of a project-based learning unit such as Rube Goldberg, Campaign for a Cause, Self-Portrait of Jewish Identity, and the Pythagorean Theorem,” Principal Melissa Michaelson said.

“We also believe it is critical for students to understand themselves as learners, and for them to take responsibility for their own learning,” she continued. That is what WIN (What I Need) is for, giving each student time with a teacher once per week to work on skills that need reinforcement or enrichment.

During WIN, students decide what they need to maximize skill development. “It has been gratifying to see how many of our students, in all grades, have learned to take this opportunity seriously, and are using it to grow their skills and competencies,” Mrs. Michaelson said.

"WE SEE OURSELVES AS FACILITATORS TO HELP STUDENTS FIND THEIR WORLDS OF POSSIBILITIES"
Just as timing is everything in volleyball, a sport she enjoys, so, too, was the timing perfect for Barbara Applebaum to join Hillel this past year as our new assistant principal.

“The school’s student-centered, innovative philosophy is in line with my own; it felt like a great fit,” she said. Ms. Applebaum focuses on social-emotional learning and behavior to better our community. When a student can manage emotions, set goals, show empathy, and foster positive relationships with teachers and peers, there is no limit to what they can achieve. “This is the environment Hillel is creating, and this is the environment in which a child can grow.”

To that end, one of her goals is to strengthen the fifth through eighth grade advisory program, wherein small groups of students meet with a teacher once a week throughout the school year. “Feeling like you’re part of a micro-community within the larger grade community, with a small group of peers who know you, and who are on your side, gives you a sense of belonging,” Ms. Applebaum said. This sense of “home” filters into “other parts of your life,” she added, “and it can help a student concentrate.”

Prior to joining Hillel, Ms. Applebaum worked for 10 years as a middle school teacher at Bernard Zell Anshe Emeth Day School in Chicago, where she led design thinking, coached volleyball, and had mentors who viewed emotional well-being as important as instruction of content. “In light of all that’s happening in today’s schools, it has to be,” Ms. Applebaum said. “We have to address mental health – we see firsthand that children do better when they trust the community they’re in.”

Fortunately, she has found that Hillel students do feel “at home,” and thus they are “serious learners who collaborate well with adults.” Within the larger community, she has found her own community on the leadership team. “Being on the administrative side, you don’t have that classroom community, but leadership is my community now. I feel I am growing professionally, and I have found new mentors.”

Outside of school, the Michigan native has found a sense of community, too, in Huntington Woods, where she resides with her husband Luke Rygh, and with the newest member of her own micro-community, baby daughter June Inez.

“I never thought I’d come home to Detroit, but Michigan – and Hillel – is where we want to be,” Ms. Applebaum said. “I’ve fit in really quickly, and I love it.”

Hillel, along with three other national Jewish day schools, was chosen to participate in the first cohort of schools that will implement Ayeka’s Soulful Education program for Judaic Studies teachers. Ayeka’s methodology seeks to “breathe new life” into Jewish text study to make it personally meaningful and potentially transformative for today’s students.

“We have been incorporating mindfully the best aspects of modern educational thought and practice,” said Saul A. Rube, Dean of Judaic Studies. “Immersing ourselves in Soulful Education is the best possible next step in our evolution. We need knowledge and tools to touch our children’s souls. Ayeka will enable us to help our children internalize the latent potential of our classical tradition to make a positive and personal difference in their lives.”

In tandem with strengthening our study of texts through Ayeka, our school is also participating in a visioning process to further incorporate the vibrant Israeli spirit into our learning in a meaningful way. The iNfuse Israel initiative helps schools to better integrate Israel across the curriculum, and is helping our staff to create our vision for Israel education at Hillel, as Tzionut is one of our core Jewish values, and knowledge and advocacy of Israel is more important than ever.

“Both programs have the capacity to help our children deeply internalize and be transformed by their Jewish learning and experiences,” Mr. Rube said.
We raised the red top at Hillel for Purim this year when Cirque Amongus came to town for a carnival to increase our joy during the hag. All students and staff were in costume and children spent the morning learning a variety of circus skills such as tightrope walking before enjoying a hilarious show in the afternoon.

"On Purim we celebrate a great and unexpected redemption from disaster, at a very precarious time in our history as a Jewish People," said Saul A. Rube, Dean of Judaic Studies. "What better way to ramp up the joy than to enjoy a circus!" he said.

Students performed Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory as this year’s spring musical, and delighted audiences of all ages with show-stopping numbers. Next year’s show, Annie, will be directed by none other than our Head of School, Steve Freedman, who returns to the theater after a long hiatus, along with music teacher Misty Sharp.

"Theater has so many benefits for those onstage and those working behind the scenes. It creates a great sense of community. I encourage our students and parents to get involved!" Mr. Freedman said.

From ECC students singing in Hebrew to a sixth grade Ivrit fashion show, students use Hebrew daily. Immersive activities included house “tours” of model apartments rebuilt in the MakerSpace for victims of Hurricane Maria, thus relating vocabulary to current events, and a Festivale Milim that had students wearing inventive costumes that brought to life words such as semel (symbol) and shavim (equal) to life.

Achieving Hebrew fluency accelerates brain development while giving students access to our sacred texts. It also applies in the work world, eighth grader Naomi Lupovitch said at graduation. Relaying the story of a graduate who used Hebrew at work, she said, “knowing another language is an incredibly special tool.”

"As an educator, I know that teaching is much more than just studying text together; it is about connecting deeply to people’s lives, touching their neshama, and building a relationship for a lifetime," Rabbi Fain said.

We are very much looking forward to their arrival.

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HILLEL’S GOT TALENT!

A full house enjoyed an uplifting evening of arts and music at Hillel’s Sights & Sounds event featuring the Stephen Gottlieb CityJam. Students showed off the depth of their learning in the arts, and took pride in walking their parents around the exhibition. Later, they displayed their musical talents at a concert that took the audience through six decades of music in honor of our 60th year.

“It’s really special for students to be able to share their work with the community, and for the school to show how the training in the arts progresses from year to year,” said art teacher Lauren Cohen.

All of the hard work on the part of our arts team paid off, said music teacher Misty Sharp. After months of planning and rehearsals, “it all came to life, and it was magical.”

BETTER TOGETHER: PARENTS & PROGRAMS THAT STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY

Two members of Hillel’s Board of Trustees, parents Amy Gottlieb and Ilana Liss, are participating in OnBoard, a program of the Legacy Heritage Fund. This leadership development program for committed lay leaders involves Jewish study, seminars, working on board governance, and a culminating trip to Israel. Parents Dan Cherrin and Lilly Jacobson are also participants in the OnBoard program.

“It’s an incredible opportunity to be cultivated as a leader,” Amy Gottlieb said. “Participating in this program will enhance our board’s functioning.”

Three Hillel parents, Ilana Stern, and Board of Trustees’ members Josh Levine and Sheri Shapiro, have completed the first year of the Wexner Heritage Program, a two-year commitment that immerses current and future leaders of the Jewish community in the history, thoughts, texts, and contemporary leadership challenges of the Jewish people. The program involves learning and visioning for continued growth and vibrancy in Detroit.

“The Wexner program has been engaging in several ways so far,” Sheri Shapiro said. “It’s provided deep education on Jewish history from biblical to modern times; connected a group of fascinating leaders throughout the community so we can amplify our work going forward; and empowered us with knowledge to contribute to our community at Hillel and across the metro area.”

JEWSIH FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

A strong Jewish family ensures the continuity of the Jewish people, and we want to play our part! Hillel parents launched a new Jewish family engagement initiatives committee this year. The first program, Let’s Get Cooking, brought together parents with culinary arts therapist Julie Ohana, a Hillel alumna (class of 1993) and parent, and Hillel staff for a meaningful discussion about Shabbat. As they prepared a tasty meal together, parents learned how to enrich Shabbat by introducing or increasing rituals. Participants also shared their personal traditions, everyone enjoyed kosher wine and food tastings, and all went home with new friends!
IN THEIR OWN WORDS:
STUDENTS REFLECT ON TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

BY: RACHEL FREEDLAND AND CAMERON KLEIN, SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS

Being in the heart of our country, the U.S. Capitol building, touched my heart. It gave me a rush to step inside a place that conducts what can sometimes seem like all the functions of America. After exploring the artwork, sculptures, and other artifacts of the beloved building, we ate lunch next to the Washington Monument! In Michigan, it is common to have a picnic under a tree, but here we were eating by one of America’s most iconic structures. Only in D.C., I thought repeatedly.

The trip also proved to be a great bonding experience. I have been asked by students, parents, teachers, and peers at various times if I would take this trip again. I reply without hesitation that I would, so that I could strengthen the new friendships that I discovered in those few days even more! — Rachel Freedland

Washington D.C. was an amazing experience. My favorite part was going to the Spy Museum where we memorized facts about someone, then submitted all of the information on an iPad to test our recall skills. My other favorite stop was the Lincoln Memorial. It reminded me of all that we had learned in social studies. The election of Lincoln, the time he decided to fight back against the Southerners after they attacked Fort Sumter, and his death. Overall, I loved this trip so much! I would do it again in a heartbeat. — Cameron Klein

“Seeing these sights brings great meaning to a year’s worth of study. Our students experience firsthand that sacrifices have been made for liberty, and that freedom must be protected.”

— Josh Cutler, Seventh Grade Social Studies Teacher
FAREWELLS

TAMI BROWN (CLASS OF 1980), GENERAL STUDIES TEACHER

Some of my fondest memories as a student are my ninth grade trip to Washington, D.C., our basketball marathon, our musical, Bye Bye Birdie, hot dog lunches, Zimriyah, model seders, minyan in the gym, Purim carnival, field day. The best part of being here is that it was like having an extended family who shared common ideas and values. This was the reason I wanted my own children to attend Hillel and why I wanted to return as a teacher. I believe in Hillel’s mission and have been honored to be able to carry it forward for my children and students. After spending over thirty years connected to Hillel, 22 of them as a teacher, the school is truly a part of who I am and what I believe in.

MALKA LITTMAN, JUDAIC STUDIES TEACHER

Every teacher at Hillel Day School brings commitment and passion to the job, as we go far beyond teaching – we educate! And this education means we take the hand of each child, both literally and figuratively, and guide their intellectual, moral and mental development. For thirty years I have been blessed with the opportunity, as has each one of us, to be a part of Hillel’s mission – to make a difference in the lives of multitudes of children and their families. With the awesome responsibility of this position has come the honor of being entrusted with the lives of children, to observe and, more importantly, to play an integral role in the process of planting and watering seeds, of molding and shaping their present and their future. It has allowed me to take my love of Israel, my strong connection to the Jewish people, my passion for the Hebrew language and culture, and bring these into the lives of all our students in the hope that they, too, will embrace these with knowledge, love and commitment.

Although Hillel has been a huge part of our lives, and we will truly miss our students, colleagues, and the camaraderie of working with people who are like family to us, we are ready for the next chapter, challenge and adventure. Hillel has taught us to push ourselves and take risks. Change is good, and although we’re not sure where this next phase will take us, we know we are well prepared, and Hillel will continue to grow, change and carry on the mission started so long ago. We might not be in the game any longer but we will certainly be on the sidelines cheering every step of the way!

VIVA LA VOLUNTEERING!

The annual Volunteer Appreciation Minyan and Breakfast recognized parent Melissa Feldman as our Volunteer of the Year for her longtime tireless dedication to our school. From sweeping the greenhouse to setting up model seders to utilizing her expert planning skills to make our Annual Gala a success, she has helped Hillel in countless ways, and “never says no,” said David Feber, president of the Board of Trustees.

The program also thanked our many volunteers, and our outgoing PTO president Michele Weitzman. For years she has selflessly given her time to school, often coming early and staying late to coordinate book fairs, holiday programs, staff appreciation, and more.

“You are an Eshet Hayil,” Steve Freedman, Head of School, told Mrs. Weitzman. “A woman of valour who never lets her hands be idle. You are a role model, always working to take care of your family, and to better our community. Thank you for your leadership.”

We are excited for parent Amy Sapeika to be our incoming PTO president in the fall of 2018, and we welcome all parent engagement.
ATHLETIC PROGRAM
RECOGNIZES WHAT
MATTERS MOST

BY: NICOLE MILLER, ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

Some students bring natural talent to sports, and some rely on their passion and hard work just to participate. At Hillel we believe that no matter what skills an athlete brings with them to the game, it is what they do during the game that matters most. We value integrity, honor and respect for teammates and opponents, a positive attitude, and an optimistic outlook. These standards are core to our athletic program, which includes all who wish to play while they learn to balance school and participation, competition and mensch-like behavior. We are lucky to have the opportunity to have such a program because our school values an inclusive setting that meets the needs of our student body, and because we have a fabulous coaching staff that adds a great deal to every experience we offer our student-athletes.

Furthermore, we receive enthusiastic support from the Kaufman Family Athletic and Enrichment Fund, which provides scholarship assistance to athletes for intramurals for the younger athletic enthusiasts, or interscholastic competition for our older student-athletes. The fund supports equipment and uniform needs, and allows us to recognize all our participants at our culminating athletic minyan and breakfast program.

This year’s program included a dynamic guest speaker, Ronald Bellamy, current staff member and coach at West Bloomfield High School, and former University of Michigan and NFL player. Mr. Bellamy highlighted character, goal setting, sacrifices, and encouraging others to do their best as he relayed stories from his career. Hearing his journey was an amazing way for us to begin celebrating ours!

While we recognize all student-athletes at our sports program, we do honor many individuals for their skills, improvement, and for being an outstanding mensch. This year award winners included Merrick Michaelson, Elyssa Biederman, Erin Grey, Brandon Rones, Henry Ellenbogen, Harrison Feber, Benjamin Schmeltz, Aaron Zekman, Darin Levine, Seth Goldstein, Joseph Goldman, Max Friedman, Ryan Schmeltz, Jadyn Kaufman, Alexa Cutler, Rebecca Bernard, Maya Weisberger, Naomi Lupovitch, Emily Daich, Bella Gottlieb, Erica Fischman, Nicolette Handler, Ava Farber, Rebecca Chynoweth, Emma Cutler and Eli Gordon.

Annually, two eighth graders are recognized as our Kaufman Scholar/Athlete award winners. Recipients are selected by staff members based on skill, leadership, academics, and a written application. This year’s recipients were Seth Goldstein and Maya Weisberger.

Mazel Tov to all our student-athletes on a wonderful year!
HILLEL CELEBRATES “60” WITH AN ALUMNI BREAKFAST

More than 500 past students, teachers and their families descended upon Hillel Day School on Friday, November 24, 2017, for the school’s 60th Anniversary Reunion Brunch, representing nearly every graduating class and teachers from all six decades of the school’s existence.

“I’ve never seen so many happy people in one place!” said Steve Freedman, Head of School, as he greeted attendees. Alumni reconnecting with old friends and teachers beamed with warmth and nostalgia as they toured the transformed facility, introduced one another to their children, and reminisced over yearbooks. Rachel Teissler Lopatin (class of 1982), was able to reconnect with her own kindergarten teacher, Fran Fine. Students from the 1980s who learned Torah with Adina Tzeel when they were third and fifth graders flocked around her for hugs and kisses.

“This is truly remarkable,” said Michael Rubyan, class of 2001, who now lives in Ann Arbor. “I’m so glad to be here.” Barbara Eskin, who has taught at Hillel for more than 40 years, both as a permanent and guest teacher, was still reveling days later in the experience of having seen so many Hillel friends. “I loved every minute of the reunion,” she said. “Every minute!”

The reunion was part of a yearlong celebration of the school’s milestone. In the spring, the 60th Anniversary Gala (see pg. 48) honored six teachers who have each devoted more than 25 years of service to Hillel Day School: Clara Gaba; Adina Levin; Malka Littman; Ayala Perlistein; Rivka Schuchman; and Pam Smith; as well as Dream Maker Brian Hermelin, and featured a special performance by Israeli singer/songwriter Michael HarPaz (class of 1987).
HILLEL DAY SCHOOL’S 60TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

The realization of Rabbi Jacob E. Segal’s dream, in 1958, to found a Jewish day school was celebrated on Sunday, May 6, 2018, when Hillel held its 60th anniversary gala. More than 600 supporters representing six decades attended the event, which honored past student and staunch supporter and businessman Brian Hermelin with the Dream Maker Award, and the school’s six most veteran teachers, who have each dedicated more than 25 years to the school, with the Rabbi Jacob E. Segal z”l Award: Clara Gaba, Adina Levin, Malka Littman, Ayala Perlstein, Rivka Schuchman, and Pam Smith.

“It is because of your extraordinary service and devotion to Hillel Day School that we honor each of you,” said Steve Freedman, Head of School, to the honorees. The evening also recognized distinguished alumni award recipients businessman Mark Schostak (class of 1977), and retail entrepreneur Rachel Lutz (class of 1994), and featured a performance by Michael HarPaz (class of 1987).

“When we became teachers none of us could foresee standing here today,” said Adina Levin, who has taught Judaic Studies for 32 years. In accepting the Segal award on behalf of the group, she said, “We thank our students’ families for the choice, and sacrifice, they make to send their children to Jewish day school, for it is more important than ever to have a component of religious, ethical guidance. We teach our students to be thankful, and to appreciate, and today we thank our own families, this school, and the souls who enter its doors each day.”

The event, which included a silent auction benefiting tuition assistance, was sponsored by Pogoda Companies, Fischman Insurance Group, Telemus, Airig USA, Kaufman Insurance and Financial Group, and Level One Bank.
Hillel continued its evolution from its early formative state to becoming the modern, well-administered and sophisticated educational institution it is today. It obtained its first headmaster that was trained as an educator by the JTS, Rabbi Robert Abramson. A team of parents, knowledgeable and experienced in the world of business and the professions, served as his mentor to develop core administrative policies and practices. A team of parents developed and administered a tuition allowance program to provide the school’s limited scholarship funds in a fair and responsible manner to those families in need. Financial problems were serious but the “darkness at the end of the tunnel” had a glimmer of relief. In spite of the monetary needs the school managed to add on additional classrooms to accommodate its ever-increasing enrollment.

— Aaron Lupovitch, 1978–1980

Reflecting on our years at Hillel Day School and my own involvement takes me back to 1967 when we enrolled our first child, and the school was already growing beyond its initial premises occupying space at that time in the Oak Park Jewish Community Center and Congregation E’ni Moshe.

The wonder of that education still thrills me as we share Sedarim and yamim tovim and watch our children Ken, Greta, Betsy, and Miry and their spouses raise their own families in the same tradition. Furthermore, through Hillel, they and we have formed lasting friendships that have endured through the years.

There is no one moment that stands out for me so much as the annual First Grade Seder when the results of that year are evident as the children read from the Haggadah with ease and pride.

We shared a desire to see the school grow and succeed in its mission to educate Jewishly-literate young adults who would be leaders of the future in Jewish communities around the world. This was the vision of Rabbi Robert Abramson, Head of School for 13 years. He took over at a critical time in the school’s history and helped us work toward the goals of quality education, acceptance of diversity, teaching Jewish values, and the sacredness of the task.

— Anaruth Bernard, 1984–1986

I started kindergarten in 1959. I was a Jewish guinea pig as my parents took a chance on a start-up Jewish day school. The school was located in the Labor Zionist Building on Schaefer north of Seven Mile. I graduated in 1969 when the school was located at the JCC in Oak Park. Flash forward 28 years and in 1997 I became the second alumnus to be president of Hillel (Bobby Schostak — class of 1971– was the first).

What were the similarities and differences between the time I graduated and became president? First, the similarities: 1) A first-rate education with outstanding teachers who care about the students; 2) Gifted students — ask any Jewish mother and they will of course tell you that their children are gifted; 3) Caring parents who are interested in their children’s education, and who always have an opinion to share; 4) The challenge of how to make Hillel affordable to all who wish to enroll their children here. It’s something for which we’ve always tried to find a workable solution.

I remember two amusing conversations I had with parents during my presidency. A parent came up to me to say why is Mrs. ___ still teaching? Her best days are behind her. Five minutes later, another parent approached me to say that this same teacher was the best teacher at the school and why can’t all the teachers be like her? The second story involves a parent who complained to me about the new sensor flush valves on the toilets in the kindergarten wing. “How is my child going to learn to flush a manual toilet?”

The major difference between 1969 and 1999 is the physical structure of the school. In 1969, we were tenants in the JCC with no gym, no science labs. By 1999, we owned a state-of-the-art school, and we were in the early stages of providing computers to students.

I have always appreciated my Hillel education. It was truly an honor to be president, and a parent of three alumnae. I am hopeful that one day there will be a third generation of Margolins at the school.

— Steve Margolin, 1997–1999

What I remember most about my time as board president was working with an incredible group of volunteers, officers and our Head of School, Steve Freedman. Everyone gave their time and efforts happily on behalf of the kids. There were many long days and some long nights, and we had to deal with some large issues, but it was always a group effort. I know that Hillel will continue on its path of excellence, and will always be an important part of our Jewish community.


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We are proud of the achievements of all our students. Many receive special recognition as the year comes to a close, including eighth graders upon their graduation. This year, Seth Goldstein and Maya Weisberger received the Hebert W. Kaufman z”l Memorial Scholar/Athlete Award for outstanding leadership, citizenship, and performance through participation in Hillel sports. Skylar Elbinger and Seth Goldstein received the Bradley z”l and Saul z”l Bluestone Memorial Scholarship Award. Daniel Bernstein was the recipient of this year’s William Schumer Award for Excellence in Hebrew Language and Judaic Studies.

STUDENT AWARDS AND SHOUT-OUTS

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Farther afield, of the math awards given at Frankel Jewish Academy this year, seven of eight went to Hillel graduates. This was the same for science. All four members of the Hillel Class of 2017 that attend Berkley High School made highest Honor Roll in the fall, during their first semester as students.

50 percent of the Hillel class of 2014 will be attending a top 50 university, and the other half will be attending programs in Israel, small liberal arts colleges that suit their passions, and local institutions playing a big part in Detroit’s revival.
Rabbi Robert Abramson, who served Hillel Day School as headmaster from 1975-1988, was a kind and gentle individual, and his passion for Jewish children ran deep. Even though the school was relatively young at the time he assumed its leadership, Rabbi Abramson was the first long-serving Head of School. In fact, he once shared a story with me that after his first year, a young student came up to him and asked him if he would be back next year. He inquired why, and the child responded that everyone like him was gone after a year!

Rabbi Abramson made a powerful and positive impact on Hillel during his tenure. It was because of his leadership that Hillel went from a series of quick turnovers of Heads to a nearly 45-year period of stability. After Rabbi Abramson, Dr. Mark Smiley served for 14 years; I have now completed my fifteenth year. Stability like that enables schools like Hillel to succeed.

I met Rabbi Abramson at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS). I was a student in the Principal’s program, and he was the primary instructor. At that time, he was still Headmaster of Hillel. One lesson in particular was branded in my mind. He was clear that the duty of a Headmaster was to be the steward of the school. He saw himself as a servant leader, an approach that has resonated with me to this day.

When speaking about Hillel, he would never say “my school,” or “my teachers.” He served the school and the teachers. Neither belonged to him. Rather, it was a privilege to lead the Hillel community. I took his message to heart.

Rabbi Abramson left Hillel to become the Director of the Solomon Schechter Day School Association. Our paths would cross on occasion, and in 2003, when I was asked to apply for the Head of School position at Hillel, I reached out to him. He gave me advice and suggestions. He also made it clear that should I obtain the position I could always call him for guidance. I was fortunate to have known him as a teacher, mentor, and colleague.

Rabbi Abramson and his wife Charlotte, who is an outstanding educator in her own right, made a lasting impact on Hillel Day School and the community. Although it has been many years since Rabbi Abramson served as Head, I still can feel his yiddishkeit, love of Torah and the Jewish people, and I feel his unyielding devotion to children and Jewish education. That is his legacy at Hillel Day School. May his memory be a source of blessing to his family, friends, and our Hillel community.

BY: STEVE FREEDMAN, HEAD OF SCHOOL

REMEMBERING RABBI ROBERT ABRAMSON, Z”L

This year, in honor of Hillel’s 60th Anniversary, we invited our community to fulfill an important mitzvah by dedicating new mezuzot throughout Hillel’s newly renovated spaces. The students learned about the importance of hiddur mitzvah, or the enhancement of a mitzvah, as well as why we hang mezuzot on our doorposts. This school-wide project resulted in a collection of beautiful mezuzot created by our students throughout the year in a variety of mediums under the expert guidance of our art teacher, Lauren Cohen. The mezuzot will be affixed to the specified doorposts this summer, and a special dedication ceremony will take place in August. There is still time to dedicate a mezuzah in honor or memory of a loved one, teacher, or friend, and participate in this beautiful mitzvah. To learn more, please call Amy Schlussel, Director of Advancement, at 248-538-1484. You may also visit our website at www.hillelday.org/page/mezuzahcampaign.

LEAVE A LASTING MARK BY HONORING OR MEMORIALIZING A LOVED ONE WITH A MEZUZAH AFFIXED TO ONE OF OUR NEW SPACES.

PARTICIPATE IN OUR MEZUZAH CAMPAIGN
DONOR PROFILE
THE FOLBE/GREY FAMILY

Parents Ellen Folbe and David Grey are worthy of honorary diplomas. They’re about to finish a 17-year run with the school as the parents of four children who have all attended Hillel Day School since kindergarten: Jonathan (class of 2012), Eli (class of 2016), and twins Ethan and Erin, who will graduate in 2019.

The investment in Jewish day school education has been entirely worthwhile, they say, resulting in children “who have a great sense of self, who are centered in a crazy world.” In their son Jonathan, a sophomore at University of Michigan, they see a young man in a diverse atmosphere who because of his education at Hillel, and then at Frankel Jewish Academy, “is able to stand up for Israel on campus. He represents a source of education for others – he has a perspective to share because he is educated.”

For several years, the family has given a leadership level gift to Hillel, and Ellen, a dentist, is the incoming president of the Board of Trustees, while David, an ophthalmologist, serves on the board of the Frankel Jewish Academy.

They call it an “honor and a privilege to be able to step up.” They lead by quiet example, and in so doing encourage others to donate to Hillel. “We don’t get up on a soapbox, but people see we’re not sitting around,” David said.

“We try to be walking examples of the mission,” Ellen added. “Hillel is important in our community, and people make sacrifices to send their children here. So there really is no better investment to make than to help Hillel provide assistance to those who want a Jewish day school experience.”

“we’re proud to be educating our children here, and to support the school,” said David. “Hillel, and giving, are a big part of our lives. Where else would we want to put our money?”

In all of their children, they see mensches who have thrived in Hillel’s “haimish” environment, children who know the liturgy, children who have “the foundation to go forward,” Ellen says. Because of these benefits,“Thank you to the Hillel Day School 2017-2018 Sponsors

To learn about our 2018-2019 sponsorship opportunities, please call our advancement office at 248-851-6950
CONGRATULATIONS
HILLEL DAY SCHOOL CLASS OF 2014 ALUMNI

Julia Abramson
West Bloomfield High School
University of Michigan

Madison Banon
Bowers Academy
Oakland Community College

Jacob Bean
Frankel Jewish Academy
Indiana University

Rachel Berg
Groves High School
Indiana University

Isabel Bradley
Harrison High School
Michigan State University

Jordan Brey
Walled Lake Central High School
Michigan State University

Samantha Chabon
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University

Joshua Chynoweth
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan

Michael Eichen
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan

Evan Eichen
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan

Samuel Forbes
Catalyst Prep Academy
University of Alabama

Ariel Golnick
Walled Lake Central High School
University of Michigan

Nosh Goodman
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan

Benjamin Gould
Groves High School
Undecided

Noam Haddad
Frankel Jewish Academy
Wayne State University

Michael Homer
Groves High School
Michigan State University

Rachel Israel
North Farmington High School
University of Michigan

Hannah Jacobs
Berkley High School
University of Michigan

Emma Jacobs
Frankel Jewish Academy
Northwestern University

Rohi Kahn
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan

Nico Kahn
Frankel Jewish Academy
Wayne State University

Jay Kahn
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan

Natalie Kinsman
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan

Josh Klein
Groves High School
University of Michigan

Ruby Kolender
Groves High School
Wayne State University

Micha Krakoff
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan

Alianna Lerner
Berkley High School
University of Michigan

Adam Liebman
West Bloomfield High School
Berklee College of Music

Dahvi Lupovitch
Groves High School
University of Michigan

Ani Mattler
Groves High School
Michigan State University

Jackson Parkhurst
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan

Samuel Peflick
Vincent Massey High School
Western University, London, ON

Daniel Partrich
Berkley High School
Wayne State University

Ruby Ruben
Frankel Jewish Academy
UCLA

Samuel Schreiber
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University

Rachel Schiff
North Farmington High School
Groves High School

Ari Mattler
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan

Danny Murphy
Michigan State University

Jared Murphy
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan

Noam Haddad
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University

Isaac Kahan
Michigan State University

Rachel Kahan
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan

Teres Sobo
North Farmington High School
Michigan State University

Seth Kahan
Wayne State University

Nicole Kahan
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University

Natalia Kaufman
North Farmington High School
Groves High School

Michael Homer
Northwestern University

Maya Skolnik
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University

Maya Skolnik
Michigan State University

Julia Abramson
West Bloomfield High School
University of Michigan

Dr. Dayna Fidler Wald
(class of 1998) graduated from Nova Southeastern University in June with a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and STEM for Elementary and Middle Grades.

Dr. Daniel Kohn
(class of 2003) is a General Surgery Resident at Flushing Hospital Medical Center.

Kimberly Lemkin
(class of 2003) will be chief resident at Tufts Medical Center in the Psychiatry department starting in July 2018. She graduated in the charter class of Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine in 2015. She received Excellence in Teaching in 2016-2017 from the medical students at Tufts.

Ashley Danto Silverman
(class of 2003) and her husband Nathan welcomed a baby girl, Eden Harlow Silverman, on May 17, 2018.

Michael Baum
(class of 2004) and his wife Traci welcomed a son, Parker Ian Baum (Tzvi Chaim), on December 21, 2017.

Emily Gorman
(class of 2014) graduated this spring with a dual degree in business and English from the University of Michigan and will be working as a Human Capital Consultant at Mercer, in Philadelphia.

Following the Parkland High School shooting in February, a poem by Lillian Kollin
(class of 2015), a student at North Farmington High School, was published in the Detroit Free Press.

Read it at https://on.freep.com/2HkTLRz

We want to hear from our alumni! Please visit https://www.hillelday.org/page/alumni/keep-in-touch

We want to hear from our alumni! Please visit https://on.freep.com/2HkTLRz

We want to hear from our alumni! Please visit https://www.hillelday.org/page/alumni/keep-in-touch
Celebrate Hillel’s 60th year by dedicating an area of the school with a mezuzah.

https://www.hillelday.org/page/mezuzahcampaign

VIEW 60 YEARS OF HILLEL’S ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN OUR 60TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE VIDEO ON OUR HILLEL DAY SCHOOL YOUTUBE CHANNEL