DIVREI Hillel
summer 2019 | 5779

A look at the 2018-2019 school year

Onwards and upwards: Hillel moves confidently into the future

Early childhood center expands

Alumni in Hollywood
Sixteen years have gone by quickly. I can remember, as if it were yesterday, beginning my journey as Head of School of Hillel back in August 2003. I remember the warm welcome by so many people. I remember with humility and admiration the collegiality and passion of the teachers; it was quite impressive to observe how incredibly committed they were to the children. I remember being moved by the happy sights and sounds of joyful children, and I felt the support and cooperation of the Board of Trustees and the parent community.

Sixteen years later, much has changed, but the devotion and passion of the professional staff, the support of parents and the Board, and the warm and inviting community have not. Hillel is still a warm, supportive, and happy community, and committed today as ever to its essential purpose: educating children to be inspired by and devoted to Jewish living.

Much at Hillel has changed. The school is not the same educational institution that it was in 2003, and that is a good thing. Education has evolved. We know a lot more about how children learn, and what motivates learning. Technology and access to information have also caused a seismic shift in what children need to learn, and what skills are essential for the world they will inherit. Our approaches to teaching and learning have shifted - we are rich in resources to support varied learners, and we have created a physical learning environment that is second to none in the metropolitan area. We all should feel confident that Hillel, by leading the way, has become a school of this century, putting children first, and ensuring that they will be prepared for high school, and their future — cognitively, emotionally, and spiritually.

Finally, having begun my service to Hillel confronting a debt in excess of one million dollars, I leave Hillel fiscally sound and secure so that the school can move confidently into the future. There is still much work to be done, and I know under the leadership of an amazing professional staff, supported by a forward-thinking Board, Hillel will go from strength to strength.

Thank you and L’hitraot,
Steve
HILLEL BIDS L’HITRAOT TO HEAD OF SCHOOL STEVE FREEDMAN

BY GABRIELLA BURMAN, EDITOR

Two books on education design that prominently feature Hillel Day School were published recently. Building A K-12 STEM Lab is a guide to producing STEAM education opportunities in schools, beginning with adopting a persevering mindset to establish the hallmark of his tenure at Hillel, one that is steeped in research and best practices that show learning becomes meaningful and authentic when driven by student-led inquiry, passion, and perseverance.

While at Hillel, Mr. Freedman, a self-proclaimed “education wonk,” has emphasized the dexterity children require in order to succeed “in the world they will inherit,” one in which agile problem-solvers with skills in collaboration, communication, creativity and empathy can adapt to an ever-changing economy. The school’s curriculum and facility have shifted to reflect this philosophy, with project-based learning, design thinking, and STEAM activities proceeding in flexible, engaging environments such as our MakerSpace and greenhouse. Educators worldwide have visited to see what learning can look like “if you envision it,” Mr. Freedman said.

Concurrently, Mr. Freedman has remained laser-focused on the school’s mission to inspire devotion to Jewish living in all its expressions. He is famous for saying, “whether you are B’nai Israel, Young Israel, or Temple Israel,” we are all unified by our common language, tradition, history and land, and he led Hillel, once a Solomon Schechter school affiliated with the Conservative movement, to become a community day school in 2008. An ardent Zionist, he established the school’s eighth grade Israel trip, and opened Hillel’s doors to the community as the school marked Yom Hashoah, Yom Hazikaron, and Yom Ha-atzma’ut.

As he emptied his windowed office with many books on leadership and Judaism, including those by Heschel, Sacks, and Infeld, he took time to reflect on Hillel.

Q. What is your proudest moment?

A. There is no single proudest moment; it has all been a significant privilege and honor for me. My sense of fulfillment comes when I see children learn and thrive at Hillel and can express their love and commitment to Judaism and the Jewish people. I feel a sense of accomplishment when I hear parents acknowledge that children need the type of education Hillel is providing and when they agree that the emotional health of their children is the prerequisite for everything else.

I feel satisfaction when I observe teachers working together, challenging themselves, and providing rich learning opportunities for our students. I hope I have helped to create a dynamic Jewish day school that serves our students, families and community well. I feel most blessed that I was lucky to develop such wonderful relationships with students, staff, many parents and all those who served on the Board.

Q. What is your advice for the next head of school?

A. I would suggest the next Head of School first take time to enjoy the strengths of Hillel through observation and conversation, and then thoughtfully and strategically work in collaboration with the professional staff and Board to prioritize the areas that need to be addressed, and to develop a new strategic plan that will move Hillel to its next level of excellence.

I hope that the next Head quickly recognizes that this is a very special community that will continue to grow and flourish as long as the teachers are supported, treated fairly and provided the professional development necessary to ensure continued excellence at Hillel (see p. 38). The work is never finished, and the next Head will have many challenges and exciting opportunities.

Q. Why should new families choose Hillel?

A. Hillel is providing the learning opportunities children need for the world they will inherit. We not only know that every child will be ready for high school, our graduates will be ready for life. The world is changing rapidly and Hillel has its finger on that pulse. Students are acquiring the skills that they must have and more. Most of all, children who attend Hillel leave knowing who they are. That gift comes from the Judaic Studies program, and that is priceless.

In a world where social media and algorithms attempt to tell people who they are and what they should want, our Jewish tradition teaches them to think and care beyond themselves, to embody values that are sacred and meaningful, and to think independently and critically. Our traditions and sacred texts provide our children with a stable and meaningful foundation to live a purposeful life, with an understanding that we all have responsibilities to fulfill to ourselves, our families and the community, and that there are times to celebrate and to express gratitude for the lives that we have. Nothing is more important than this. This is what makes us human and sacred and this should be more than enough reason for every Jewish child to attend Hillel Day School. It may be countercultural but it ensures our humanity — which seems to be at risk today.
WHAT'S NEW

AS A JEWISH DAY SCHOOL, WE CONTINUALLY CELEBRATE THAT WHICH IS NEW, FROM EACH NEW HEBREW MONTH, TO THE NEW YEAR, TO EACH NEW UNDERSTANDING OUR STUDENTS GAIN THROUGH THEIR HANDS-ON LEARNING. WE ALSO CELEBRATE NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR FACULTY, FACILITY, AND CURRICULUM. THIS YEAR WAS NO DIFFERENT. ALTHOUGH WE SAID GOODBYE TO SOME BELOVED STAFF, WE ALSO EMBRACE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES, TO START A NEW JOURNEY THAT PROPELS HILLEL TO EVEN HIGHER EXCELLENCE.

NATY KATZ

Hillel Day School welcomes Nathan A. Katz as our Interim Head of School for the 2019-2020 school year. Naty is an accomplished school, business and community leader. The Board of Trustees and school leadership share the belief that his passion for Jewish education, focus on a deeply engaged school community, and commitment to a high-standard General and Judaic studies curriculum, will help ensure continuity at Hillel while the Board takes the next steps to recruit the best candidate for the permanent Head of School position.

Naty earned his BA in English from Yeshiva University, and an MBA from Boston University. Following a successful career as an entrepreneur, Naty served as the Executive Director and Head of School from 2008 to 2018 at Maimonides School in Brookline, Mass., a preschool through 12th grade Jewish day school with 500 students. Among his many achievements at Maimonides, Naty implemented systems for continuous improvement toward academic excellence, innovative literacy programs, and a student-centered approach to learning. He is also a skilled fundraiser who tripled Maimonides’ endowment, and designed an effective financial assistance program.

A Maimonides alumnus himself, as well as the father of five Maimonides alumni with his wife Amy, Naty will impart his contagious enthusiasm for the lasting impact of a Jewish education on our children. With his great warmth and passion, we are certain he will be committed to help advance Hillel’s mission.

We invite you to reach out and warmly welcome Naty to the Detroit community.

NEW MEMBERS

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

We are excited to announce new members of our Educational Leadership Team for the 2019-2020 school year. They are Andrea Jenkins, Director of 1-4 Communities; and Amira Soleimani, Director of Judaic Studies Curriculum and Instruction. Barbara Applebaum, who serves currently on the leadership team, will assume a new role next year as Director of Gesher/Yachad (5-8 Communities). Kimberly Love, school social worker, assumes a new role as Director of Student Services. They all join Melissa Michaelson, Principal, along with Robin Pappas, Director of Early Education, and Rabbi David Fain, Rav Beit Hasefer, on the educational leadership team.

BARBARA APPLEBAUM

Barbara Applebaum graduated from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor’s Degree in Art History and Women’s Studies and a Master’s Degree in Secondary Education. Barbara taught fifth and seventh grades for ten years in Chicago at Bernard Zell Jewish Day School where she also coached sixth through eighth grades girls’ volleyball and softball. Barbara led Bernard Zell’s initiative in Design Thinking and has presented twice on the topic at the ISACS annual conference. Barbara is a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certified teacher, the highest professional distinction available in education, and credits that rigorous program as pivotal in shifting her from being a teacher to an educator.

Barbara’s passion for social-emotional learning makes sure that every child feels valued at school. She is excited to focus on the Gesher and Yachad communities and appreciates adolescents. Outside of school, Barbara loves spending time outdoors with her husband, their 15-month-old daughter, and yellow lab.

^ ANDREA JENKINS

Andrea Jenkins has 17 years of experience teaching and leading in independent schools within the United States. Throughout her career, she has taught second through fourth grades, led a school’s self-study and accreditation process, and served as a member of leadership teams. Andrea is passionate about building classroom communities and designing authentic learning experiences for students. She has a Bachelor’s Degree in Literary Studies from the University of Texas, Dallas, and a Master’s Degree in Education from Manhattanville College. Andrea’s most recent position was Director of Curriculum at Good Shepherd Episcopal School in Dallas, Texas. She has presented at numerous workshops, including the Independent School Leadership Institute at Peabody College, Vanderbilt University. Andrea, her husband, and their son live in Beverly Hills. She is a proud hockey mom and passionate Nashville Predators fan.
AMIRA >

SOLEIMANI

Amira Soleimani will join our Leadership Team as the Director of Judaic Studies Curriculum and Instruction. A graduate of Hillel Day School, Amira is passionate about Jewish education and our school’s Core Jewish Values. Amira believes that the soul of a student is best nourished when our Core Jewish Values are taught through Judaic skills, such as the Hebrew language, benchmark-based text study, and the Jewish calendar. She looks forward to aligning the curriculum to our values and influencing our students’ overall connection to Judaism.

Amira earned her Bachelor’s Degree from the University of Michigan with a triple major in Judaic Studies, Hebrew and Jewish Cultural Studies, and Ancient Civilizations and Biblical Studies; her Master’s Degree in Talmud from Tel Aviv University, and she studied Education at the Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. This is Amira’s fourth year at Hillel Day School where she has taught sixth through eighth grade Tanach, Rabbinics, Dibyun, and Sibyum courses, and served as the Judaic Studies curriculum coordinator. Prior to joining Hillel, Amira was a teacher at the Frankel Jewish Academy and served as the head of the Bible Department. Outside of school, Amira enjoys spending time with her two daughters, Alma (ECC4) and Michal (ECCPP).

Read more about Morah Soleimani on p. 20.
PROJECT-BASED LEARNING (PBL)

Project-based learning (PBL) continues to be a galvanizing vehicle for education at Hillel. Through investigation and exploration of questions and processes, students mindfully develop skills in creativity and critical thinking, applying knowledge to real-world situations that are authentic and personally meaningful to them. Here are just a few exciting examples from this school year!

FIFTH GRADE COOKIE BAKE-OFF

Volume and chemistry are better together! This was the hypothesis of a PBL unit in which fifth grade students explored math and science in engaging ways. In the fall, they met a Kellogg’s package engineer to gain understanding of volume as it applies to packaging and marketing. Then teams of bakers concocted delicious treats for an official Bake-Off, employing their knowledge of scales and measurements in the Hillel kitchen, and prototyping and creating their own packaging for 12 cookies of a specific size.

Finally, in December, the smell of marshmallows, graham crackers, and chocolate filled the air in our miznon as teams tempted judges with their cookies. Students were judged not only on taste but on the appeal of their packaging, and their sales pitch, which they had developed in language arts as part of the PBL.

First prize went to the enthusiastic team of Ezra Shere, Robbie Feldman, Dane Zeff, and Jonah Zekman, whose s’mores cookies had judges coming back for more.

Not only did the cookies taste delicious, but making them also taught students about chemistry, mass and volume, and illustrated the real-life application and integration of these concepts “in a fun and creative way,” said Joan Freedman, Director of Curriculum, one of the judges.

Upon hearing his name called as a winner, Robbie Feldman said, “I feel great!” Then, like a true Hillel mensch, he shook hands with classmates from competing teams.

SOMETHING FISHY IS HAPPENING AT HILLEL

The next time you’re in the building, come meet our fish! Following completion of the fourth grade Math Trailblazers project-based unit in which they applied their knowledge of area, perimeter, volume, multiplication, and division, a beautiful tank was installed in the library this spring with support from parents Jeffrey and Dr. Leemor Rotberg. The project involved not only mathematics as students determined an appropriate tank size for school based on the needs of certain fish, but also design thinking, and public speaking skills, as they presented prototypes to our leadership team earlier this year.

“I was really excited that we finished this project and that we have a fish tank in school,” student Jillian Schiffer said.

“I’m so proud of all they accomplished,” teacher Michelle Wolfe said. “And now they are eager to take responsibility by feeding the fish and teaching others about how to care for an aquarium.”

“I’M THRILLED THAT THEY HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY”

Michelle Wolfe, Science Teacher
MIND AND SOUL. BETTER TOGETHER.
Academics

THE GREAT SUKKAH DESIGN CHALLENGE

Smooth wood or plastic? Paint, nails, or bamboo? Seventh graders pondered these questions as they embarked upon the Sukkah Design Project to envision a sukkah that can be built at school, and potentially replicated in the community to celebrate the holiday. All sukkot had to be kosher according to Jewish law, whether or not their walls were atypically made to resemble a computer screen, made of silk or ropes.

In May, students presented their proposals to an authentic audience of judges from FNI, the educational architecture firm that transformed Hillel’s campus over the last five years. In brief five-minute presentations, students presented the costs and labor associated with constructing their designs, and were judged on their vision, creativity, confidence, and whether or not their prototyped structure could be realistically scaled.

Samantha Caminker, whose sukkah walls were made of CDs on which students can write personal reflections on what the holiday means to them, was declared the winner of the challenge along with Rosie Aronov and Lilah Glazer, whose sukkah’s walls form the shape of a hexagon. A sukkah combined of these elements will be erected by the class in the fall.

When asked how the project impacted their learning, students had various answers, from the technical to the spiritual. “I really learned how to use blueprints and graphs as part of this process,” Naomi Bernard said.

“I got to see how my sukkah stands out from others, and how I was able to use my creativity, and incorporate many Jewish aspects to create a vibrant holiday environment,” Andrew Eisenshadt said.

“The Sukkah project offered students the opportunity to learn about the holiday while creating their own authentic sukkot. We look forward to building the winning Sukkah for the holiday next year,” Rabbi David Fain, Rav Beit Hasefer, said.

Samantha’s mother, Stacey Lee, said she was impressed by the skills her daughter had learned, and “and we love the idea of using a special Jewish symbol for multiple learning avenues.”

HILLEL + MALCOLM X ACADEMY: BETTER TOGETHER AT THE FREEDOM SEDER

Everyone should be familiar with the classic toy, Legos. They have been around since the 1930s, and ever since, children (and possibly some adults) have played with them. It is a simple toy; Legos come in all different shapes and sizes, and you build until you have accomplished what you wanted to create.

Something similar happened in April at Hillel when our eighth grade invited students from Malcolm X Academy, an Afrocentric school, to our community to participate in a mock Freedom Seder, where both schools connected by sharing their stories about escaping from slavery and rejoicing in freedom together. We had initially met one another at A Day of Racial Healing at Cass Technical High School, following Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The sounds of song and chatter filled the room as we began our morning together; we enjoyed delicious food, and we got to know one another better. What was once just a normal cafeteria turned into something much more, a place for two different races to connect and learn about one another’s beliefs. How wonderful it is that we have the privilege to encounter other races in an educational setting. I am proud that the event definitely felt like a mitzvah. I met some new friends, and we exchanged numbers so that we can stay in touch.

This thought-provoking program touched all our minds and will stay with us forever. Everyone is a Lego, and connecting with our fellow Legos creates a new way of life. Individual Legos have different colors, just like different races, but once all connected together, we can strive to be family.

Thank you to Malcolm X Academy, Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist, David Kurzmann and the JCRC/AJC, Rabbi Asher Lopatin, and all the other dignitaries who joined us and helped make this event a reality.

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Thank you to Malcolm X Academy, Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist, David Kurzmann and the JCRC/AJC, Rabbi
WHO KNOWS PESACH? THE TWOS DO!

By Heather Moss, ECC 2 Teacher

Our approach to teaching Pesach in the Early Childhood Center is through songs, stories, and reenacting the dramatic saving of the Jewish people from Pharaoh. In this way, children feel they are part of the story and love the hands-on activities associated with it. We crafted our own singable Haggadah that each student took home to use at the seders. On each page is a song and a project to go along with it. Their knowledge of the story of Moses is amazing!

Slavery is not an easy concept for a two-year-old to grasp, but our children worked hard all day and all night, hammering golf tees into Styrofoam and building with blocks. They also put “baby Moses” in a basket and floated him down the Nile River. Lastly, one of their favorites games was tossing stuffed frogs, and having them “jump here, there, and everywhere.”

At school before Pesach, our learning culminated in a Parent Passover program where we showed our guests how much we knew!

NEW MATH CURRICULUM

As teachers, we reflect continually on the trajectory of our students’ learning. In the case of second grade math, instead of teaching sequentially, we have seized upon the most important “big ideas” from our math curriculum; most significantly, that math has application outside the classroom, and applies to daily life.

We have chosen lessons that help students discover that math is not isolated to school, but that it surrounds their everyday world. At Hillel, we also enjoy the freedom to pull in higher-level math concepts from a variety of well-known curricula, online resources, and brainstorming sessions, to make math a deeper, more meaningful subject of inquiry.

For example, multiplication is generally introduced in the third grade. However, as teachers in an independent school setting who can truly teach to individual student needs, we provide opportunities to introduce and advance new skills. After teaching addition and subtraction strategies at the beginning of the year, the second grade team saw that their students were ready for multiplication.

We created our own unit of study that enabled students to see and understand the relationship between addition and multiplication. “Since our curriculum is student-driven, we felt students were ready to take the next step. They were excited and motivated by the idea of learning multiplication,” said second grade teacher Randi Cooperman.

The teachers employed different modalities to teach multiplication based on the individual needs and interests of learners in their classrooms. Through discussion, array models, drawings, games, and written responses, students learned “the why” behind multiplication rather than just memorizing their math facts.

“We learned a lot of different ways to help us multiply numbers. My favorite was using our skip counting chart that we made. It is so colorful,” said second grader Avery Schwartz.

Ultimately, these experiences laid the groundwork for a formal change to our curriculum. After much research, a committee of math teachers selected a new math curriculum for the fall that inspires a passion for math. Bridges is a research-based program that is engaging and accessible to all learners, and it will be implemented for kindergarten through fifth grade.

Bridges focuses on developing concepts, fluency, and problem-solving skills through direct instruction, investigations, and exploration. It ensures that mathematics is engaging, meaningful, transferable, and encourages a growth mindset.

Varied opportunities to practice multiplication skills allow teachers to resolve any misconceptions students have about multiplication. We are excited for the increased curiosity Bridges engenders, leading to student pride and success!

STEAM MATH NIGHT

It may have been cold outside, but our families enjoyed a STEAM-y night of fun, food, and friends at STEAMath Night in February! Stations were arranged throughout the mercaz,ixon, and Innovation Hub for hands-on engagement with a variety of puzzle-related activities. Parents and students built towers out of base ten blocks, transformed sponges into bird houses, tossed beanbags, and even created musical instruments out of straws! Each station had a learning target posted, pointing out the specific skills the station addressed.

By Elizabeth Canvasser and Nancy Cohen, 1-2 General Studies Teachers

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As our core Jewish values state, Israel and the Hebrew language are integral to our learning at Hillel, and our connection to the land and to the people forms at an early age. Our ECC students are sponges, learning Hebrew vocabulary that relates to the seasons, holidays, and all of their learning, and our kindergarten students are immersed in our dual K-8 curriculum, spending a significant part of their day connecting to Israel through Judaic Studies. Tradition, rituals, and customs are learned in the context of how they are celebrated in – and out of – Israel by teachers who share their love of the Jewish homeland with students.

"We want Israel to feel like it belongs to them," said kindergarten teacher Ronit Marom. "To feel like it’s part of their everyday lives, and not just a faraway place to visit."

To help establish that connection, kindergarten teachers Morah Ronit and Morah Adina Levin reached out to a class from Gan Oranim in Maaleh Shomron, where Morah Ronit’s relative teaches. Throughout the year, the students exchanged photos, songs, and video clips, wishing one another greetings on the holidays and on Rosh Chodesh, and teaching one another about the way the seasons contrast.

"We sent them a video of snow, and they sent us a picture of an almond tree blooming in February," Morah Levin said. "The children are fascinated by the comparisons and the contrasts between the two countries," she said.

At the end of the year, our students mailed their Israeli friends an illustrated book summarizing the many ways they celebrated Yom Ha-atzma’ut at Hillel, “visiting” Machane Yehudah, the Kotel, a Bedouin tent, and the Dead Sea, thanks to green screen technology.

The pen pal program goes a long way towards achieving the goal of instilling Zionism in students, the teachers say. "When they finally get to Israel as eighth graders, we want them to feel so connected – and maybe to even meet their pen pals!"
At the Lincoln Memorial, I read the speeches on the wall beside his great seated figure. His proud leadership can be read on his face as he gazes upon the city. We learned interesting facts including that the architect who designed Lincoln had a son who was deaf, and Lincoln’s hands are signing the letters A and L. In front of the Korean War Memorial, my somber mood continued as we learned about this particular war. Throughout our time in D.C., thought-provoking sights and realistic facts brought information to life. Our guide exemplified the meaning of Limud (learning).

At the end of the trip, we thanked our amazing bus driver who had shown us tremendous kindness, always greeting us with high-fives and fist-bumps. For many, his personal handshakes were a highlight of their day, and he always asked what we had learned at every destination. The chosen he showed us made our trip, which included some long rides, better.

As I reflect on our trip, I have learned that facts and information alone are not the foundation for success; community, learning, unity of the Jewish nation, and kindness are equally important. The trip has made an impact on me and my classmates. I am so thankful for the opportunity to visit our nation’s capital.
**FACULTY PROFILE**

**AMIRA SOLEIMANI**

If we painted our Portrait of A Graduate, chances are it would look a lot like Amira Soleimani (class of 2000), Director of Judaic Studies Curriculum and Instruction, and a 7-8 Judaic Studies teacher, mentor to student teachers, and the daughter of veteran Judaic Studies teacher Clara Gabai. Amira possesses a confident Jewish identity, is an ardant Zionist, a lifelong learner devoted to Jewish text study, and a critical thinker who energetically shares her passion for cultivating the Jewish soul every day with her students, who call her a role model they wish they could take with them to high school.

She is also modest, and would shy away from all these accolades. When not caring for her two young daughters, Alma, who is entering kindergarten, and Michal, who is in the Early Childhood Center, Amira spends her time thinking about the “big issues” facing Jewish education.

“Universalism, this feeling that we can be loyal to all things equally, is pervasive in society today, and has moved us away from particularism, in our case, Judaism, as the unique guide to bring us back to a place where our case, Judaism, as the unique guide to bring out our inner compass of values, blessings, and to wrestle, and to gain some satisfaction, students about God that allows them to reconnect with as adults, “she said.

Another aim is to help students develop a lifelong relationship with God that they won’t “broadly dismiss in their teenage years, only to struggle to reconnect with as adults,” she said. “We have to find ways to talk to students about God that allows them to wrestle, and to gain some satisfaction, so that they are always guided by the inner compass of values, blessings, and community that Hilbel establishes.”

**HANOC H PIVEN BRINGS WHIMSICAL ART TO HILLEL**

In March, our fourth and eighth graders enjoyed a rare opportunity to work with well-known Israeli artist Hanoch Piven to create self-portraits, using everyday objects from home - buttons, straws, soda cans, etc. - that reflected their character. Piven’s witty, and inspired, collages of famous personalities including Albert Einstein, Steve Jobs, Jerry Garcia, and Barack Obama have graced the cover of leading publications for years.

At first, students were befuddled as to how miscellaneous items could cohere into a version of themselves, but as they worked, their images began to emerge.

“It was fascinating. Usually you’d use paint, or pencils, but I now understand that there is more than one way to be creative,” said Noam Kantor, a fourth grader who used crushed dried flowers to approximate his wavy hair.

The big picture life lesson? Piven put it succinctly. “Don’t be afraid of confusion. The knowing comes from the not knowing.”

**INSIDE THE ART STUDIO**

Hillel’s art studio is a paradise of paint, perspectives, paper, and pigments, all in service to a program that encourages students to create, innovate, respond to, and interact with the visual arts.

Cross-curricular, Judaic, and multicultural connections enhance the K-4 art curriculum, and intensify authentic learning and essential life skills. “Our hope is that the students develop these skills through the elements of art, and principles of design, using traditional materials and tools as well as the latest technological resources,” teacher Lauren Cohen said.

Through the arts, students develop fine motor, creative problem-solving, higher-order thinking, and art appreciation skills, and also sensitivity to others. Students create and interact with objects, ideas, places, and design that define, shape, enhance, and empower their lives.

A recent second grade project illustrates the seamless integration of disciplines that enriches the art curriculum. In advance of Pesach, Ms. Cohen read to students the classic book Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak. They were then asked to use their imaginations to sketch a wild beast, bringing to life the fourth plague that preceded the Exodus from Egypt. They added a background to the sketch, and finally painted it with florescent tempera paint.

Then students moved on to use clay as part of a challenge to make a “wild beast bowl” for use at the seder, to hold charoset, maror, or even salt water.

The lesson involved language arts, Judaic Studies, and art, and also helped students to attain national standards for second grade arts including experimentation with a variety of materials, creating works about events that are relevant to home or community life, and using learned vocabulary.
**STEAM**

Our K-4 students enjoy weekly art classes. Once our students reach the Gesher Division for grades 5-6, the arts weave seamlessly into their STEAM rotations, mini-classes that expose them to art, gaming, reporting, nature, and entrepreneurship.

This year, students in our 5-6 entrepreneurship class tapped into their creativity to pursue a business goal of selling travel kits to students at our Spring Shuk, and possibly, in a vending machine to be installed on campus at a later date.

Students in the first rotation generated ideas and conducted market research, including surveys, to analyze which products would be desirable to our student population. 3-D printed puzzles and travel size games won out, and students enrolled in the second rotation created the products, and determined pricing based on the cost of supplies.

The students raised $107 at the Spring Shuk, money that will be set aside for the eventual acquisition of a STEAM vending machine where students can purchase these items “for the trips they take,” said sixth grader Meir Shomer.

“The goal of selling their creations is borne out of a desire to take what we learn in class one step further, to actually create a business,” Dawn Straith, Innovation Hub Coordinator & Educator, said.

The entrepreneurship class is ideally suited to fifth and sixth graders because sixth graders learn economics, and “bring to market” inventive prototypes through our sixth grade version of Shark Tank. “As such they can mentor the fifth graders,” Mrs. Straith said, “and also see how they can advance what they’ve learned through Shark Tank – that they can literally take products to the bank!”

**THE YEAR IN TECH**

Technology is the double-edged sword of the education world. Students must become fluent in computer-based skills while at the same time retain the face-to-face communication, collaboration, and other life skills that technology will never replace, even as society and our economy grow increasingly automated.

We strive for balance at Hillel. Balance is the key to becoming a well-rounded, literate citizen in our ever-evolving world. While there are endless ways to use technology to enhance learning, we walk a thoughtful, intentional fine line in the quest to amplify our curriculum with the use of technology while keeping it in check.

And this year, as the following pages show, we have much to be proud of!
SEESAW, a digital portfolio platform, was increasingly used as a tool for students to upload recorded and written examples of their work to share with parents. The user-friendly platform invites parents to comment, and over time, shows the arc of a student’s growth as he or she adds to the portfolio.

First and second graders used coding activities to develop problem-solving skills, and explored a variety of apps to boost learning. While many tools require the use of a screen, first graders also began using a new screen-free tool called Matatalab. Second graders were introduced to Scratch Jr., a gateway app to coding, drawing, language, and math skills. Our sixth graders even created the first ever Hebrew language biographies for their Wax Museum.

Fourth and fifth graders were exposed to 3D design using Tinkercad. They learned how to manipulate layers in an effort to design artifacts printable on the 3D print server in our MakerSpace. Sixth graders sharpened their skills with Google Slides. During seventh grade STEAM rotations, our middle schoolers in our MakerSpace. Sixth graders developed their typing ability, enabling them to more easily and quickly access the websites and apps that enhance their learning throughout the year. They used Google Slide to create presentations, typed stories for their Fairy Tale Ball, and researched biographies for their Wax Museum.

Fourth graders deepened their technology skills, creating BrainPop video essays on Westward expansion as part of their social studies. They also learned to code video games using Scratch, and created some spectacular games to share their learning of our great state of Michigan.

FlipGrid fever infected Hillel with contagious enthusiasm. Our third through sixth graders used this online tool to reflect, share, and communicate their learning with teachers and peers. Third graders warmed up their snow days with FlipGrid challenges, and sixth graders used it to reflect on their Shark Tank experience, which has them prototyping innovative products, and pitching them to judges to “land a deal.”

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We look forward to further mastering the use of these tools as students progress through their Hillel education, and to introducing the beat the market has to offer as new educational technology rolls out!

Freckle is a new customizable tool that was introduced to our third through sixth graders to supplement basic skills that can always use reinforcement. Freckle self-adjusts to meet the individual needs of the learner in real time; it has measurably enhanced independent learning time.

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LIFELONG READING AND LIBRARY RESOURCES.

BETTER TOGETHER.
Three days a week before school starts, I arrive by 7:30 a.m. to plant seeds in the greenhouse, talk to science teacher Michelle Wolfe about what’s growing, water the plants, and compost food waste.

Then on Sundays, I do it again at Yad Ezra, Michigan’s only kosher food pantry, where I volunteer in the greenhouse, too, having taken what I’ve learned at school into the community.

I feel happy and safe inside greenhouses. With every seed I plant, I sense I am creating new life. Watching the plants grow makes me feel that life is progressing and getting better.

I like learning with Mrs. Wolfe at Hillel, and from Carly Sugar at Yad Ezra. Mrs. Wolfe teaches me how to plant, and about the properties of each plant. She respects my opinion, and takes into account my suggestions to better the Hillel greenhouse. For example, I and fellow student Aryeh Gamer built a bench for the younger students so they can see over tables and reach the plants in the raised beds. We spent a few weeks working on the bench in the school MakerSpace, and now we enjoy seeing the younger kids use it.

At Yad Ezra, Carly knows a lot about agriculture, and teaches volunteers how to deal with bugs when we find them. And when I received a lemon tree as a Chanukah gift, I gave it to Carly to look after.

One neat connection between the two greenhouses is that we planted kale seeds at Hillel, and they grew so much that we brought some seeds to Yad Ezra. A few weeks later, Carly asked me to plant the Hillel kale in the Yad Ezra greenhouse. It was amazing to be part of the journey from seed to harvest because I volunteer in both greenhouses.

Now I’m using what I’ve learned at home in my own mini greenhouse, where I grow strawberries, watermelon, and goji berries. I love watching them grow, and also planting with my mom in our community garden in Huntington Woods. I want to thank Mrs. Wolfe and Carly Sugar for being such amazing teachers, and sharing with me their passion for gardening.

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RAIN OR SHINE, OUR STUDENTS PLAY HARD ON THE FIELD AND ON THE COURT. OVER THE COURSE OF THREE SEASONS OF SPORTS, OUR TEAMS SHOW SPIRIT, SPORTSMANSHIP, AND DERECH ERETZ, WORKING TOGETHER TOWARD THEIR GOALS. GO HAWKS!

BY CALEB ROBBINS, EIGHTH GRADE

Our eighth grade boys’ basketball team competed in a Jewish day school tournament at the end of February in Chicago. It was an unforgettable experience. We fought hard and never gave up; although we did not achieve the outcome we wanted, the tournament was fun, intense, and exhilarating.

Over Shabbat at a hotel, we hung out with a Dallas team. We had a great Shabbat dinner together, and shared a lot of laughs. On Shabbat morning, we walked in the freezing cold to shul, where we were warmly welcomed. We spent Shabbat afternoon with our new friends, and then had Havdalah with them as well.

At our Saturday night game, we were tired and lost by 20, but we had our eyes set on the playoffs on Sunday. We were pumped, and that excitement showed during a game against a team from Milwaukee. We were ready to face anyone, even the top team from the first part of the tournament. Unfortunately, we lost, but we did not go down without a fight. We were playing together hard and determined, and most of all, we were having tons of fun.

Hillel is fortunate to offer a wonderful athletic program supported by the entire community, and which continues to grow in large part due to the Kaufman Family Athletic Fund. Our three interscholastic athletic seasons, intramural sports program, equipment, uniforms, financial assistance for participants, and a spring recognition event are all a result of donor generosity.

Our concept of “team” holds the program together. In our parlance, it stands for Together Everyone Achieves More. Together everyone achieves more is when an athlete trusts teammates to bump, set or spike, when it may seem easier to just get in there and do it oneself. It is observed when a golfer makes time to teach a teammate the proper stroke, helping to improve a teammate’s game. It is seen in the selflessness of a teammate who passes a ball to allow them the opportunity to score their first basket or goal of the game or season.

An athletic program such as ours builds wiser, more aware individuals who care for others. It supports our core value of Derech Eretz and embodies the Hillel motto Better Together. Our program is further made possible by dedicated, hardworking coaches who are committed to our philosophy.

This year at our annual culminating program, we recognized tenacious athletes who developed sports and time management skills, and also achieved a healthy balance between school and sport. Merrick Michaelson, Aryeh Gamer, Jonah Owen, Darin Lavine, Ryan Schmelz, Spencer Chemin, AJ Goodman, Aaron Zelman, Luke Zeff, Chase Kukes, Ethan Rothenberg, Alexa Cutler, Joely Gottlieb, Jadyn Kaufman, Alexa Hernandez, Francesca Weisberg, Ava Aisner, Nicolette Handler, Erica Fischman, Naomi Kahan, Maxwell Hortick, and Caleb Robbins all received awards.

In addition, the Kaufman family has a special award honoring Herbert W. Kaufman z”l to recognize an outstanding male and female student athlete from the eighth grade. Athletes are selected based on a written application, teacher recommendations, and scholarly and mensch-like efforts. This year’s recipients were Jadyn Kaufman and Merrick Michaelson.

Our guest speaker, Jason Hillman, Chief of Basketball/Team Counsel for the Cleveland Cavaliers, shared the impact team sports have had on his life. He started announcing for local teams as a sportscaster on television and radio here in the Detroit area, and ultimately combined his passion for sports and law to land his dream job. Mr. Hillman highlighted having an open mind, being open to new opportunities, perseverance, and gratitude. Those in attendance listened enthusiastically—and enjoyed passing around his NBA championship ring!
EIGHTH GRADERS REFLECT ON HILLEL AS HOME

CHOOSING A JEWISH HIGH SCHOOL

BY ERIN GREY, EIGHTH GRADE

When I think of my Jewish education, I think of a big, beautiful tree. But I have to maintain the tree with further Jewish education to keep it growing. Initially, I planted the seeds in kindergarten when I learned the Hebrew alphabet. I learned the Hebrew language and customary prayers that are said every day. Ever since, I have been watering my tree and giving it sunshine. I watched the first few leaves grow. I discovered what made me a Jew, and how to observe the Jewish religion.

Unlike other schools in the metro Detroit area, Hillel gives students a Jewish education that they can take with them to high school and throughout their lives. I personally have learned a great deal about what it means to be a leader in the Jewish community. Hillel has given me the tools to explain and defend my religion, and to be a proud Jewish teenager. Not only has Hillel expanded my Jewish education, but it has also taught me how to be hungry for more ways to allow my tree to grow. I know that because of Hillel, I cannot stop here.

Hillel has laid the greatest foundation I could ask for, and has set me up to plant more seeds, and discover more about my Jewish identity. That is why I will attend the Frankel Jewish Academy, our community Jewish high school. I know that there I will be able to take advantage of both a strong Jewish and secular high school education. There are other ways to continue my Jewish education, but FJA is the most effective way. I know that I can let the little tree growing inside me grow just a little more every day.

ISRAEL TRIP 2019

Hillel’s sequence of Judaic studies leads eighth graders to a transformative Israel trip where their learning comes to life as they trace the footsteps of our ancestors and meet the modern-day heroes who protect and defend the State of Israel.

This year, again, students internalized that Israel is the true home of the Jewish people. They were moved by visits to the Kotel, Yad Vashem, Masada, and particularly by time spent with the many everyday Israelis who have lost loved ones who have made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the nation and our homeland.

“We stand on the shoulders of those who gave their lives so we could be here today,” students said. “Now it is our duty to pick up the torch and lead.”

Read the daily blog posts from this year’s trip at https://www.hillelday.org/academics/7-8-learning-community.
SAUL RUBE, DEAN OF JUDAIC STUDIES

It is indeed challenging to reflect on a quarter century of service at Hillel. I remember February, 1994, nearly having a panic attack at the thought of teaching a model lesson in Bible, conducted exclusively in Ivrit, for Riva Thatch z”l.

I remember supporting Mrs. Buckman and Mrs. Gaba as they facilitated meaning and joy at our first FIFTH Grade Shabbaton. Years of quirky Parshah Clubs, sharing stories at Kabbalat Shabbat, healthily competitive Brachah Bees; these were just a few of the ways our kids could engage with ruah in their Jewish life and learning.

I remember my au-rah, celebrating at our Hillel miyan under a chuppah held aloft by students and colleagues. Fun Shabbat dinners with whole classes of students, parents and teachers comforted us at the shivahs for my parents and father-in-law z”l. Hillel Day School has enabled the deep enrichment of the rhythms of Jewish life in our family.

I have had the great blessing of teaching and leading with extraordinary colleagues, fun Shabbat dinners with whole classes of students, parents and teachers comforting us at the shivahs for my parents and father-in-law z”l. Hillel Day School has enabled the deep enrichment of the rhythms of Jewish life in our family.

True Jewish learning is not education; it’s transformation. I am confident that the incredible Hillel Day School community will continue to be blessed with the best kind of transformation, one that shapes and responds to our modern world, rooted in the timelessess of our tradition.

JOAN FREEDMAN, DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM

Each morning, loving parents who value education and Judaism wake their sleepy children to get them off to Hillel, while dedicated teachers prepare for another day filled with students who bring their gifts and challenges with them. We are in the business of growing people by creating learning environments in which students learn how to work with one another, solve problems, think creatively, and communicate effectively. This translates into our teachers taking an active role in developing experiences that treat our children not only as scholars, but as human beings with strength of character. It has been an honor and privilege for me to work closely with the leadership team, our teachers and students over these past 14 years to assist in this important endeavor. We have worked tirelessly to identify qualities today’s children need in order to succeed and to offer experiences that encourage inquiry, curiosity, and kindness while respecting and celebrating each child. I leave a school that truly tries to keep the student front and center in each decision we make.

DR. JENNIFER FRIEDMAN, PHD, DEAN OF STUDENT LEARNING

Working at Hillel for the past six years has been a privilege, and I am ending my professional journey here with feelings of accomplishment and hope. I have enjoyed applying my skills in a Jewish day school that is so close to my heart, and it has been quite fulfilling being part of a team with the shared vision of a school with strong Jewish and secular priorities. I am grateful to have collaborated with highly dedicated educators on a variety of social-emotional and academic initiatives for our students that continue to prove valuable. We have successfully incorporated proactive social-emotional learning into the curriculum, as well as more parent education, and programs that help a wide range of ages learn about themselves and taking care of others with a growth mindset. We have also battled to take the stigma out of learning differences, and our teachers have a greater understanding of the student brain to help students make better connections in their learning. By addressing the needs of a wider range of learners, we have helped more students access a Jewish education. I am confident that the systems built in my tenure will sustain students’ learning needs into the future, and I am hopeful that Hillel Day School will continue to get stronger as the next chapter unfolds. I will miss my daily interactions with students, staff, and parents, but I will always be a proud member of the Hillel community.

Sarah Radner, General Studies Teacher

As I reflect upon the journey that I look at Hillel Day How I treasure all the memories I gathered on the way! I give kudos to my colleagues through this score of years and more Who shared knowledge, passion, drive with a unique spirit de corps.

Conscientious and hard-working, well aware of every need, Going far the extra mile to help each student here succeed;

How I laud each one I worked with, each contributing her best, Choosing from the New just Excellence, discarding all the rest.

For we teachers worked together so when all was said and done: We made learning meaningful, authentic, personal and fun.

Every student was important with potential to excel: Ours the vast responsibility to help each one do well.

We, the teachers, all provided, with the talents our unique Signposts on the paths for anything our students sought to seek.

We look back on years of effort that we gave with love unbound To equip our students with the very best that could be found.

We stand back, our task completed, all our efforts in the past Trusting that we gave our students a foundation that will last.

May our students go through Life trusting in the guidance that we have given each one do well.

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NEW FAMILY PROFILE
MEET THE GELL FAMILY

When your child would rather be at school than anywhere else, it’s a pretty solid indication that you’ve made the right choice for his education. So say Hillel parents Lauren and Jared Gell, whose son Teddy, a rising second grader, “cries if he has to miss a single day!” Lauren said.

“He’s just so happy and comfortable here,” said Jared, a commercial real estate broker. “Teddy is inquisitive, and Hillel is a good place for that kind of child – he has resources, technology, and the arts; and Jewish culture and tradition are drilled into him; he’s a mensch, and it’s amazing that he’s reading and writing in Hebrew.”

Enrolling Teddy, and his younger sister, Frankie, at Hillel beyond the Early Childhood Center was not a foregone conclusion for the couple, who did not attend Jewish day schools themselves. But the longer they have stayed at Hillel, the more they internalize its value.

“At a time when so many families are drifting away from Judaism, we’re gaining more appreciation for our religion,” said Jared, the grandson of a Holocaust survivor who shared her story for the first time publicly, with our students this year on Yom Hashoah. “If you don’t teach the next generation,” Jared said, “this will all disappear.”

Hillel has had such a profound effect on the family that they have literally picked up and moved closer to Hillel. “We’re surrounded by families who are like-minded and share our values, people who care about Hillel’s dual curriculum, and Judaism,” Lauren said. “It’s really remarkable what can happen when your friends share your values. The kind of ‘stress’ our kids feel now – over which by families who are like-minded and share our values, people who care about Hillel’s dual curriculum, and Judaism,” Lauren said. “It’s really remarkable what can happen when your friends share your values. The kind of ‘stress’ our kids feel now – over which

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PARENTS ON THE GRADUATION CIRCUIT

Three Hillel parents have “graduated” from OnBoard, a program of the Legacy Heritage Fund that develops lay leaders through Jewish study, seminars on governance, and a culminating trip to Israel. They are Dan Cherin, who serves as Vice President of Yad Ezra, and Amy Gottlieb and Ilana Liss, who are members of the Hillel Day School Board of Trustees.

Speaking after the graduation in May, Amy Gottlieb, vice president of Hillel’s board, said, “it was an amazing opportunity to strengthen our school, enhance our board operations, and develop effective leadership. It was inspiring.”

MAZAL TOV TO HILLEL PARENTS AND BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEMBERS WHO HAVE COMPLETED ONBOARD

STRENGTHENING JEWISH FAMILY LIFE

The Jewish Engagement for Families Committee is a group of parents who have come together to strengthen our school community’s family-based Jewish programming and overall sense of community. One year ago, we identified three pillars through which our sense of Jewish engagement can be strengthened: social action and tikkun olam, cooking and food, and rituals. In each of these areas, parents and children together have developed a greater sense of their own Jewish identities, creating new practices and strengthening old ones within their families. We learn from each other, from our school educators, from our elders, and through our tight-knit school community.

Programs this past year have included participation in community-wide events like the JFS Fall Fix Up and AJC/JCRC/Michigan Muslim Council Mitzvah Day. Our Baking with Bubbie, Culinary Art Shabbat, Mystery Shabbat, Scotch in the Sukkah, and Challah Bake events brought our Hillel community together to celebrate our traditions. We developed informational resources for our community including online education about holiday practices and rituals.

In the next year, join us as we grow! We are hard at work planning new events with community partners like Brilliant Detroit, Yad Ezra, and Project Night Night, as well as holiday celebrations for our school community that will be infused with education.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said, “This is one of the goals of the Jewish way of living: to experience commonplace deeds as spiritual adventures, to feel the hidden love and wisdom in all things.” The simple act of connection builds community, and is the foundation of living Jewishly.

WE ❤ OUR HILLEL GRANDPARENTS

We love having Hillel grandparents in the building! They are mystery readers, volunteers, and special guests at a variety of programs throughout the year, spending quality time with their grandchildren and transmitting their wisdom, experiences, and love of Judaism to our students.
**ADVANCEMENT NEWS**

The Advancement Office advocates for the mission of Hillel by recruiting students, nurturing donor relationships, and communicating the value and benefit of a Hillel education to all of our constituents. From sponsored events that boost community to guiding prospective families on their journeys to enroll, the Advancement Office strategically supports the school to deliver an inspired Jewish day school education for generations to come.

**NEW ENDOWMENT HONORS OUTGOING HEAD OF SCHOOL**

The Steve Freedman Endowment for Professional Excellence has been established to honor our outgoing Head of School. The fund ensures that Hillel maintains the best teachers possible, and combats the teacher shortage in Judaic Studies and the looming teacher shortage in General Studies that is beginning to impact the entire country. Proceeds from this fund will be used to attract and retain quality teachers, and also provide essential resources for professional development, thereby ensuring that Hillel's teachers remain fluent with up-to-date curriculum.

Supporting the recruitment and retention of the highest caliber faculty in Steve’s honor is a most fitting tribute. For 16 years, Steve helped guide Hillel to constantly strive for excellence in providing the best educational experiences for children, ensuring they have the skills, tools and the Jewish values to thrive in the world they will inherit. He did not, and could not, do it alone.

Regardless of the latest educational innovation, Steve always believed that the essential ingredient to student success is outstanding teachers. Strip everything else away, and a teacher can still make an impact, for life, on a student. Steve is a huge advocate for teachers and their professional growth because he knows that teachers are the heart of the Hillel experience. Hillel teachers form relationships with students that are critical to each child’s success.

Please help Hillel to maintain the highest level of excellence, a hallmark of our school for 62 years.

We invite you to support Hillel’s teachers by making a gift of any amount to this fund. Contact the Advancement Office at 248-851-6950 to make your donation.

On behalf of Hillel’s wonderful teachers and students, we thank you for your continued support.

**DONOR PROFILE**

Amye and Lou Goldhaber

Amye and Lou Goldhaber’s fondness for Hillel originated when the couple moved to Detroit from Chicago. They were looking to put down roots, and they chose to send son Ray to the Early Childhood Center because “it was a good starting point” for his education. Additionally, the warm school community they found among other young parents quickly morphed into an extended family.

Then, in Ray, they saw a spark. Whereas Lou, who graduated from Pittsburgh public schools, had never loved going to school, Ray was passionate about learning. The devotion of his teachers “was incredible to see,” Lou, chief of staff for Sachse Construction and Broder & Sachse Real Estate, said. They enrolled Ray in kindergarten, and daughter Stevie soon followed to the ECC. “When your kids like to go to school,” Lou remarked, “you want to let that train run!”

Amye, who graduated from Cranbrook Schools and works as an interior designer, agreed. “Our children are supported by teachers who inspire us, and who partner with us to raise inquisitive children who are proud to be Jewish.” Furthermore, she added, “the school has given us a blueprint for what Judaism can look like for our family.”

With its innovative education, and a curriculum that has deepened the family’s devotion to Jewish living, the school’s mission increasingly resonated with the family. “It’s really started to feel like a second home, and it’s where I want to spend my time,” said Amye, who is an active parent ambassador and room parent who also sits on the Jewish Engagement for Families Committee.

When the family started to think about philanthropy, they decided to give a leadership level gift to Hillel. “At Hillel, you’re not dropping coins into a bucket,” Amye said. “You see the changes – in the educational tools, the facility, the two teachers in a classroom. The school has made a difference for our children, and it’s important for us to give so that other children, representing our community’s great diversity, can also come here.”

“It’s one of those investments that creates infectious positive energy,” Lou added. “We’re investing in people, and it’s going to pay off decades from now, when these amazing little people become the future of our community.”
What's New

MILLENNIAL SETS SIGHTS ON HILLEL AFTER INTERNSHIP IMPRESSES WITH WARMTH OF COMMUNITY

By Emily Unger, Join Intern

When I began to tell people that I would be spending my summer interning at Hillel Day School they had many questions. “So you’re going to be a teacher?” “Aren’t the kids all gone for the summer?” “Did you even go to Hillel?” By the end of the summer I had become a professional at answering these questions. No, I was not going to be a teacher, I was working in the Advancement Office. Yes, the kids are gone for the summer, and no, I didn’t go to Hillel, but I learned very quickly that it didn’t matter. You always hear people talk about how strong the Hillel community is, and how it becomes your family, and I got to see first-hand just how true this is. I helped address post cards to students at different summer camps, each with personalized messages from different people in the office. Whenever I had a question about a student’s enrollment forms, everyone knew exactly who I was talking about.

Hillel really does create such a unique, tight-knit community, and as I spent my summer learning more about the school I couldn’t help but be a bit jealous that my own schooling experience hadn’t been the same. Despite this, I found that by the end of the summer I did feel like I had become a part of the Hillel family. I will always be thankful to everyone at Hillel for making me feel so welcome, and even though I didn’t go here, I now understand just how special a Hillel education really is, and I already know that when I have kids, this is where I want them to go.

HUNDREDS OF HILLEL FAMILIES PAST AND PRESENT PARTICIPATED IN OUR 60TH ANNIVERSARY MEZUZAH CAMPAIGN, AFFIXING BEAUTIFUL STUDENT-MADE MEZUZOT TO DOORPOSTS THROUGHOUT OUR SCHOOL. THERE IS STILL TIME TO DEDICATE A MEZUZAH IN HONOR OR IN MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE, TEACHER OR FRIEND, AND TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MITZVAH OF MEZUZAH. PLEASE VISIT WWW.HILLELDAY.ORG/PAGE/MEZUZAHCAMPAIGN

When our ECC opens in the fall, it will include beautiful outdoor spaces. We invite you to purchase a specially engraved brick honoring or memorializing a loved one to leave a lasting legacy. The initial installation will be unveiled August 27, 2019, at our ECC expansion dedication, and new bricks will be added in the future. Learn more and purchase your brick at https://www.hillelday.org/brickcampaign

1. Welcome Back Shabbat Dinner

At our Family Shabbat Dinner, the entire Hillel community, from our youngest two-year-old learners to our eighth graders, and their families, gathered to celebrate the joy of Shabbat.

330 people attended

2. Movies and Munchies

Movies and Munchies is an annual event open to all Hillel families who have contributed to the Annual Fund. Our supporters and their children enjoyed a family-friendly movie and delicious treats.

346 people attended

3. Havdalapalooza

Organizations throughout Metro Detroit gathered at Hillel for a community-wide Havdalah, and to kick off a new week with various musical acts and entertainment for all ages.

400 people attended

4. Israel Independence Day and Kosher Rib Burn-off

Hillel opened its doors to the community for our annual carnival and rib burn-off, marking the 71st anniversary of the State of Israel, our Jewish homeland.

Over 500 people attended

1. Welcome Back Shabbat Dinner

2. Movies and Munchies

3. Havdalapalooza

4. Israel Independence Day and Kosher Rib Burn-off
HILLEL CELEBRATES LONGSTANDING DONORS AT ANNUAL GALA

Nearly 500 supporters of Hillel Day School attended the school’s Annual Gala on Sunday, June 2, 2019. Honorees included Joy and Allan Nachman and Reneé and Craig Erlich for their enduring dedication to Hillel and to the Jewish community. Steve Freedman, outgoing head of school, was named an honorary alumnus for 16 years of service.

“It has always been my goal as a Jewish educator to help families discover meaning in living an active Jewish life,” Freedman said. “My work helps people realize we are the inheritors of a sacred gift, and it has been my privilege to serve Hillel.”

This lofty goal has certainly been realized for the Erlichs, whose three children are Hillel alumni. “Hillel triggered couch conversations about Zionism and Tikkun Olam. As our children learned, we learned alongside them. Hillel provided us a sense that we were part of something larger than ourselves, that we were part of a community.”

Adin Victor, a graduating eighth grader, offered thoughts on the gift of Hillel from the perspective of a student. “Hillel is a second home,” she said. “Like home, it teaches us the essentials: Derech Eretz, Torah, problem-solving, empathy. It’s a place I’ve always been happy to come back to at the end of each summer. Each day begins with an act of kindness, greeting me with Boker Tov, and it continues throughout the day. I can say that a Hillel education is like winning a lottery ticket. If you were educated at Hillel, you won.”

Her words were proof positive of the assertion made by Allan Nachman, whose children attended Hillel and whose grandchildren are current students, that Jewish continuity largely depends on a Jewish day school education. “The Jews have survived persecution for 5,000 years,” he noted. “Schools like Hillel ensure Judaism continues in each generation.”
Congratulations
Hillel Day School Class of 2015 Alumni

Yael Morais
North Farmington High School
Gap Year
Ezra Orel
West Bloomfield High School
University of Michigan
Sarah Phillips
Frankel Jewish Academy
Rochester Institute of Technology
Dylan Resnik
Groves High School
Grand Valley State University
Benjamin Rosenberg
West Bloomfield High School
Wayne State University
Ari Rubenstein
Groves High School
Michigan State University
Eben Safa
Crannbrook Kingswood
Wayne State University
Bebe Schaeffer
North Farmington High School
American University
Mani Schafer
Aim High School
Michigan State University
Sara Seid
Groves High School
Michigan State University
Thea Seid
Seabrook High School
Kalamazoo College
Paul Siegal Nadav
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Tampa
Adam Siegel
Farber Hebrew Day School
Yeshiva University
Bradley Simtob
West Bloomfield High School
University of Tampa
Joshua State
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University
Alexander Stiek
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan
Melanie Teper
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan
Steven Takal
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University
Allison VanDerAue
North Farmington High School
Undecided
Daniel Zivian
North Farmington High School
Michigan State University
Jonah Weinbaum
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan
Aviv Wolf
Elton Academy
Kansas University
Peter Yusoyev
Frankel Jewish Academy
Northwood University
Samuel Zack
Groves High School
Indiana University
Emma Zdrojewski
North Farmington High School
Undecided

Industries, they continue to be guided by their Hillel education, and the values instilled in them by their years at school. Catch up with them here, and stay in touch!

ALUMNI NEWS

Shoshana Applebaum
Farber Hebrew Day School
Brandeis University
Daniel Azariah
Frankel Jewish Academy
Gap year
Wayne State University
Gabriel Barish
Groves High School
Wayne State University
Nissim Behar
North Farmington High School
Undecided
Hannah Charlip
Bloomfield Hills High School
Michigan State University
Sarah Chynoweth
North Farmington High School
Michigan State University
Dresden Cogan
Frankel Jewish Academy
Indiana University
Julia Dinkin
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University
Joseph Gordon
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan
Jonah Greenblatt
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Kansas
Bennet Grossinger
Frankel Jewish Academy
Gap year
Michigan State University
Molly Horwitz
Vincent Massey Secondary
Midreshet Tehila
Noah Jacobs
Berkley High School
University of Michigan
Jonah Javahery
Bloomfield Hills High School
Santa Monica College
Eden Joyrich
West Bloomfield High School
Gap year
Jacob Moshe Klein
Frankel Jewish Academy
Wayne State University
Sofia Klein
Frankel Jewish Academy
Kalamazoo College
Lily Kollin
North Farmington High School
Haverford College
Lilley Kroll
Frankel Jewish Academy
George Washington University
Rebecca Lanius
unknown
Eric Lipsky
Frankel Jewish Academy
IDF
Michigan State University
Samantha Lofman
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University
Aviva Lupovitch
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University
Peli Mechnikov
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University
Tania Miller
Groves High School
Wayne State University
Samuel Neiman
Michigan State University
Sarah Phillips
Frankel Jewish Academy
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University of Michigan
Steven Takal
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University
Allison VanDerAue
North Farmington High School
Undecided
Daniel Zivian
North Farmington High School
Michigan State University

This year, on my Mom’s 18th Yahrzeit, I posted on Facebook encouraging my friends and family to make a chai ($18) donation in her memory to Hillel Day School’s “Sheri Traison Devries, Ph.D. Scholarship Fund.” My post elicited over 30 donations to Hillel, amounting to over $2,000!

I will be forever grateful for my Hillel family – not just for these recent generous donations, but much more so for the comfort and compassion my family and I have received from our Hillel family.

Before I was old enough to attend Hillel, I remember taking Friday afternoon naps on the bottom shelf of the cart my Mom pushed from classroom to classroom, delivering challah for Shabbat. I remember (and still have) the Siddur cover my Mom stitched for my first grade Siddur Party. I remember working on my eighth grade yearbook in Hillel’s “Mini Computer Lab,” which my Mom designed.

When I was in elementary school, I was called into the main office to say goodbye to my Mom on the phone as she was breathing her last breaths in a hospital in California. Throughout her illness, and especially at that time, Hillel emotionally supported me.

I remember many teachers comforting me, and attending my Mom’s funeral and shiva. I remember standing up among my fourth grade peers every morning in minyan to recite the Mourner’s Kaddish, and teachers reciting the prayer with me so I didn’t have to do it alone.

I was supported and loved at Hillel Day School, and I’m not sure I could have managed the pain of parental loss without my “second family.”

When deciding where to donate your money, please choose Hillel. When deciding where to send your kids to school, please choose Hillel. Because when you need support and love…Hillel will choose you.
ALUMNI PROFILE
A Q & A WITH EDDIE ALTERMANN, CLASS OF 1986

EDDIE ALTERMANN (1986), CHIEF BRAND OFFICER FOR HEARST AUTOMOTIVE, IS THE PRODUCER OF THE NEW DOCUMENTARY AUTONOMY, ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-DRIVING CARS, AND THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACT. WE CAUGHT UP WITH EDDIE AT THE SXSW FILM FESTIVAL.

Q. What was the experience like to premiere a film alongside some of Hollywood’s A-listers and exciting up and comers?

A. Pretty mundane and work-like, actually! It was nice to see how the kishkah gets made in the film business, at least on the documentary side. I’d imagine there’s a lot more hype, ego, and politics on the feature-film side.

Q. In interviews about the film, you refer to the legal ramifications of autonomous cars, in the case of accidents, etc. Looking at it through a Jewish lens, what are some of the ethical issues you see coming that will have to be worked out?

A. There’s been much made of the so-called Trolley Problem, which is an old thought experiment wherein a conductor has the choice of directing a runaway trolley toward one of two groups of people. Which group does the conductor choose to hit? In extreme edge cases, the autonomous car may be faced with real-world versions of the Trolley Problem and may have to work out, in an instant, the benefits and costs of ramming into one group of people versus another. But the truth is that humans are terrible at the Trolley Problem, and autonomous cars will be, too. The bigger questions, in my mind, are what are the ethical and legal issues around machines that could potentially take lives? Will we ever allow that to happen, or will we still need to provide some element of human control? I think this is one of the big limiting issues of autonomous cars.

Q. What’s your absolute favorite car ever and why? Is there a particular memory associated with it?

A. I love the Porsche 911, mainly for its versatility. It’s a car you can drive to the racetrack, drive hard on the track, then drive home. That’s why that particular model has lasted so long, and I’ve had many memorable experiences using those cars in that exact way.

Q. You’ve called the American highway system a “great invention.” What’s the best U.S. drive people should put on their bucket list, and if it could be in any car, which one would you suggest for that drive?

A. Highway 1 up the California coast is the grand-daddy of great drives. I would recommend an agile, lightweight convertible for that one, something like a Mazda Miata, where you can really experience all the sights, sounds, and smells offered by that great, winding road.

CLASS OF 1977
Dr. David Gottfried was elected as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in 2018.

CLASS OF 1988
Ami Abramson (9th grade) was named one of 27 Outstanding Fellows for the fifth cohort of the Global Leadership Program by the Schusterman Family Foundation. The program strengthens participants’ personal leadership capacity, as well as their ability to foster collaboration and drive sector-wide change.

Charles Ortenstein (8th grade) won a Deadline Club Award from the New York chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists in the Business Investigative Reporting category for uncovering widespread financial conflicts of interest at Memorial Sloan Kettering.

CLASS OF 1992
Jaime Ray Newman won an Academy Award for “Skin” in the Best Short Film category at the Oscars. Newman, who produced the film about racial violence, is a longtime actress who got her start as Ado Annie in her eighth grade Hillel musical, Oklahoma.

CLASS OF 1993
Culinary Arts therapist Julie Ohana appeared on CNN in May to discuss mindfulness in the kitchen as a tool for therapy. As a social worker, Julie finds that when home cooks are focused on meal preparation, they relax, open up, and are better able to connect with loved ones and problem-solve.

CLASS OF 1994
Dr. Zachary Liss received the 2019 Frank A. Westman Young Leadership Award from the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit.

Beth Schwartz Cassidy and husband Jeff Cassidy welcomed a son, Penn William (Chaim), on May 31, 2019.

CLASS OF 1998
Jennifer Schanes was married in May to Josh Mendelsohn. The couple resides in New York City.

Jeremy Shuback worked as the Animation Director and Video Producer at BimBam from 2012 to 2019. He directed over a hundred videos, which have been featured in many Jewish film festivals and seen in classrooms across the country. Catch up with Jeremy on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/user/thefullfrog/featured

CLASS OF 2000
Hillel past parents and grandparents Susan and Howard Tapper have established the Michael Kroopnick Endowment for Healthy Emotional Development and Resilience in memory of their nephew Michael Kroopnick 2" (2000). The fund helps to educate students about mental health issues and de-stigmatization. The proceeds will sponsor annual programs for children and parents.

CLASS OF 2016
Lauren Schostak has won a Cohr-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies at Wayne State University high school writing competition for an essay grappling with anti-Semitism among the organizers of the Women’s March, a movement that speaks to her as a young woman, but which she cannot support. We are proud to share an excerpt here:

Perhaps I failed to see this reality as a child, as my innocence then was much greater than anything else. Perhaps that I was now finally beginning to see clearly - to see the world beyond innocence - the raw, real, truth? The violence, hate, and malice of others?

It’s a crazy thing - growing up. What is even crazier is how we see the world when we are young children: simply through nursery rhymes and cartoon characters. But, what’s even crazier is growing up only to realize this: you, your parents, your grandparents, and your great-grandparents have and will experience discrimination solely because of your status as a minority.

This is the raw truth. There is no way to argue against its validity. I accept it - we all must accept that it is real. However, we are capable of working to diminish it – to stand up for our religion and our people. To stand up, and speak out for the courageous soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces, and to remember each victim affected by the Holocaust—both Jewish and non-Jewish alike.

As minority groups, it is our responsibility - our mission - to use our voices to uplift those without power. For every one of the six million Jews perished, I use my voice for you.

Jeremy Most was sworn in as State Senator for Michigan’s 11th District in December, 2018.
CLASS OF 2003
David Devries co-produced Plus One, a film that won the Audience Award at the 2019 Tribeca Film Festival. Jason Orley directed Big Time Adolescence, starring Pete Davidson and Jon Cryer.

Dr. Alexander Orman has received the honor of being named Chief Resident in Emergency Medicine in his final year of residency at Ascension St. John Hospital.

CLASS OF 2005
Kendall Maxbauer welcomed a baby girl, Dor, on May 5, 2019. Elad Zutz welcomed a baby girl, Kendall Maxbauer, of residency at Ascension St. John Hospital.

Dr. Alexander Orman has received the honor of being named Chief Resident in Emergency Medicine in his final year of residency at Ascension St. John Hospital.

CLASS OF 2009
Rebecca Traison works in product development at MAC, and debuted a new collection in collaboration with the new live action film, Aladdin, which opened in May.

CLASS OF 2010
Jackie Katz is currently running across the country in the 4K for Cancer to benefit the Ulman Foundation, which provides support to young people with cancer. The 4,000 mile race began in San Francisco on June 16, and ends in Boston on August 3.

CLASS OF 2013
Tyler Presser assisted a University of Southern California team that won the collegiate space race by sending a rocket above the Kármán line, the imaginary boundary that marks the end of Earth's atmosphere.

CLASS OF 2015
Lily Kollin and Bebe Schafer were featured speakers at the teen-led, community-wide vigil held at Temple Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh following the mass shooting at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh on October 27, 2018. Melanie Teper competed as part of Team USA at the 2018 World Pole Sport Championships, and won the silver medal for the junior B category. She is now ranked second best junior B pole sport athlete in the world.

CLASS OF 2016
Jessica Caminker was one of 24 teens at Emory University in October for the second Teen Israel Leadership Institute hosted by the Center for Israel Education and the Emory Institute for the Study of Modern Israel.

The Frankel Jewish Academy RoboTraffic team brought two trophies home after competing in the 10th Annual Techion RoboTraffic Competition. The 3D CAD team of Elisha Cooper (2016) and Henry Tukel (2017), with support from FJA STEAM Lab Director Simon Pinter (2002), took home first place for their "professional quality" design of a fuel injector.

The Frankel Jewish Academy RoboTraffic team brought two trophies home after competing in the 10th Annual Techion RoboTraffic Competition. The 3D CAD team of Elisha Cooper (2016) and Henry Tukel (2017), with support from FJA STEAM Lab Director Simon Pinter (2002), took home first place for their "professional quality" design of a fuel injector.

CLASS OF 2017
Jessica Caminker and Emilie Weinberg partnecipated in the Prizmah Moot Beit Din Competition. Prizmah is an international Jewish day school network that runs an annual competition using traditional Jewish texts as lenses through which the students analyze contemporary ethical issues.

CLASS OF 2018
Eliana Krakoff received the Youth Volunteer Leadership Award at the 2019 Greater West Bloomfield Michigan Week Community Awards Breakfast.

CLASS OF 2019
Max Feber (2013) landed a $50,000 deal with Mark Cuban on Shark Tank, the ABC television show. Max is the founder of BRUW, a filter designed to simplify making cold brew coffee at home.

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We continually welcome being challenged in new ways, and are always looking for new teammates. If FJA is in your future, we would love to have you join our two-time national qualifying debate team!
**Welcome Back Shabbat Dinner**
Friday, September 6, 2019 at 5:00 p.m.

**Sukkah Hop**
Sunday, October 20, 2019

**Daytime Open House**
Wednesday, October 30, 2019

**Schoolwide Grandparents Day**
Spring 2020

**Movies & Munchies**
Sunday, December 8, 2019 at 5:00 p.m.

**Havdalahpooza**
Saturday, January 11, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

**Israel Independence Day Carnival and Kosher Rib Burn-Off**
Thursday, April 29, 2020 at 3:30 p.m.

**Annual Gala**
Sunday, May 31, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.