DIVREI Hillel
summer 2021 | י"ט 5781
a look at the 2020-2021 school year

Silver Linings of Covid

Excellence in Hebrew and Math Curricula
MIND AND SOUL. BETTER TOGETHER.

WELCOME

This issue of Divrei Hillel celebrates the many achievements of the 2020 - 2021 school year, both in-person and remote, covering our strong secular and Judaic academic programs, alumni news, innovative school initiatives, and community events. Please spread the word about our amazing school to all who will listen. The more Jewish children we can educate, the better the prospects for a vibrant, engaged, world-class Detroit Jewish community for generations to come.

I want to thank all of you for your warm welcome to Detroit and Hillel. I hope to meet even more Hillel alumni, parents, past parents, and grandparents in the weeks and months to come.

Enjoy this issue!

Sincerely,

Dr. Darin S. Katz

Head of School
Q&A WITH HEAD OF SCHOOL, DR. DARIN S. KATZ

Q. Tell us about your journey in the field of education, as well as your journey to Hillel Day School.

A. After completing graduate school and a very short stint in the world of science research, I decided to change career paths and began a career in education. From 1998 to 2012, I was a science teacher and Science Department Chair at The Agnes Irwin School, a highly regarded, nonsectarian, all-girls school in the Philadelphia suburbs. In 2012, I was asked to join the Senior Leadership team of Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy, the oldest pluralistic secondary Jewish day school in all of North America. I served as the Academic Dean and the Director of Upper School from 2012 until 2020.

As I began to explore headships at Jewish day schools around the country, I became aware that Hillel was searching for their new Head of School for July 2020. I knew about Hillel from Agnes Irwin School, a highly regarded, nonsectarian, all-girls school, or an entire community of teachers responding within minutes to a possible Covid exposure, we view ourselves as one family who are there for each other and our students.

A. Hillel enjoys the reputation as a premier Jewish day school, known for its breathtaking facilities, use of open space, and innovative approach to secular and Jewish education. Additionally, the Detroit Jewish community is known to be one of the most cohesive, supportive, and philanthropic Jewish communities in the entire country. The combination of an incredible metro Jewish community and leading a school like Hillel brought me to metro Detroit.

Q. What is the one thing you want the community to know about you?

A. I am an optimist about life in general and a person of deep faith - faith in God, faith in Judaism, faith in others, and faith in myself.

Q. What do you see at Hillel that is unique, or different from the institutions where you have worked before?

A. I have never worked in a school in which the Leadership Team, faculty, and staff work so collaboratively and collegially to accomplish any task. I saw this time and time again this year. Whether it was staff members from our Advancement Office handing out ice pops to all students on the first day of school, or an entire community of teachers responding within minutes to a possible Covid exposure, we view ourselves as one family who are there for each other and our students.

Q. What is your proudest accomplishment inside of education? And outside of education?

A. Without question, my proudest accomplishment is serving as the Head of School at Hillel Day School. I believe so strongly in the power of Jewish day schools to transform the next generation of students to become knowledgeable, committed, and proud Jews who will serve as leaders here in metro Detroit, across the country, and in Israel.

Q. What do you see as Hillel’s strengths, and where do you see opportunities for improvement?

A. First and foremost, the Hillel Leadership Team, faculty, and staff are beyond compare. They are the most talented, committed, and dynamic educators with whom I have ever worked and stop at nothing to meet the needs of each student. Our curricula are rich and deep – focusing on the “basics,” teaching content and skills, and also focuses on “soft skills” that we know are critical for success in the 21st-century - critical thinking, collaboration, and communication.

Hillel has become a national leader for our breathing facilities and how we use space to promote an innovative academic program. We have paid particular attention to improving General Studies. While both are extremely important, at the end of the day, Hillel exists because we are a Jewish day school. Ensuring that we are delivering an outstanding Judaic curriculum is central to our mission and core values. We have already engaged in a renewed focus to improve all of these across the board. I will continue to make them an institutional priority in the coming year.

Q. What is a little-known fact about Dr. Katz?

A. First, I own over 50 pairs of funny, wacky, and colorful socks and I wear one pair to school each day. I am a “sock guy.” Second, after graduating college, my three roommates and I hiked to the bottom of the Grand Canyon in the middle of July with 40-pound packs on our backs. An animal or one of my roommates (who never actually admitted it) ate all of my food and I had to be rescued by a Ranger to make it back up to the rim. Needless to say, I don’t ever plan on visiting the Grand Canyon again.

Third, I danced for 48 hours straight in the 1990 Penn State Dance Marathon which is the largest student-run philanthropy in the nation. Other than the birth of my two sons, getting married, and working at Hillel, I consider that feat to be one of my proudest accomplishments.
While all of us had to adjust to having school in a pandemic, what did not change was the deep teaching and learning in the classrooms happening each and every day. Hillel maintained a strong commitment to creating a sense of normalcy for our students which proved critical for their mental health. Hillel maintained high standards of academic excellence for all students whether they were learning in-person or through our robust remote learning program. Nevertheless, we will take this opportunity to find the silver linings of the pandemic. For example, attendance at parent-teacher conferences and other parent programs has never been higher so some of those are likely to continue via Zoom in the future. The pandemic also forced Hillel to change its arrival and dismissal system which has proven to be a big success. This staggered arrival and dismissal has allowed students to start the day calmly by entering their own community doors and has greatly eased congestion in the parking lot at dismissal. Lastly, in order to maintain our boo-oo (the Hebrew word for “bubbles”) in which students operate throughout the day, schoolwide programming for many Jewish holidays including Purim, Pesach, and Yom Ha’atzmaut was revamped this year. Many actually found the new programming to be more age-appropriate, festive, and joyful. These are just a few of the examples of COVID silver linings that will become part of Hillel going forward.

ZOOMING NEAR AND FAR

Parents, grandparents, alumni, and friends were able to participate in community programming from the comfort of their own homes, no matter where they lived. Rabbi Fain led two parent Torah learning sessions that proved engaging, even over Zoom. The first focused on “How Chanukah Sheds Light on Healing a Divided Nation.” Parents explored the complicated historical narrative of the Chanukah story and gained insight from Rabbincic reframing of the story into how we can use the different Chanukah narratives to find individual hope, heal and come together as Jewish people, and a country. The second, “Purim and Masks” discussed how masks on Purim, and perhaps even during the pandemic, help reveal our true identity rather than hide it. We explored how God masks Gods’ self in the Megillah, and on Purim, and what this might mean for us today.

We also had a movie club on The Social Dilemma documentary where the inventors of the Facebook “like” button and former executives of the internet’s top social media platforms take responsibility for the impact they’ve had on a generation of young people who alter themselves to become more popular, whose spending habits are manipulated by the ads fed to them, and whose knowledge and opinions are often formed by the algorithms that direct certain news items towards them. Having a virtual program allowed us to invite Yoni Friedman (class of 2005), a client partner at Reddit and former agency lead at Google who lives in New York, to moderate the discussion. Yoni shared how his Hillel experience helps frame his professional life within these social media platforms. Hillel instilled in Yoni values about the importance of being a moral person and to always take the high road even though it might be harder. Yoni noted that in work, especially in sales, it’s easy to not be truthful all of the time and to skew reality when dealing with numbers and data. However, when you’re grounded and return to your Jewish roots and you’re a moral and ethical person, you continue to do those things in the real world and be an honest person.

Leah Gawel, departing eighth-grade language arts, Jewish history/Shoah, and seventh-grade Diyuyan teacher facilitated an engaging book club discussion about The Kurdish Bike by Alesza Lighthouse. This award-winning novel is the narrative account of an American teacher’s journey to Kurdish, Iraq. Participants discussed how this woman, living in a not-so-comfortable world, struggles to make sense of issues such as violence, lack of respect for women, and poverty.

Finally, our virtual shabbatim were a wonderful way for the entire Hillel community, students, parents, grandparents, alumni, and more to connect and engage. The year began with a fun and festive Welcome Back Sing-a-Long Shabbat with Tamarack Camps and we had a wonderful Generations Day Candle Lighting led by four beloved sets of current Hillel grandparents and past parents. While we may have longed for hugging hello and sharing these experiences in person, we are grateful for the people who were able to join us who might not otherwise be able to due to distance and we anticipate having Zoom options for future programming.

LET’S SEE HOW FAR WE’VE COME

The summer of 2020 was spent planning for reopening. The Educational Continuity, Academic Excellence and Reopening Task Forces, together with the Leadership Team, worked tirelessly to plan for reopening the facility for the 2020-21 academic year and develop the “flexible model” to meet the needs of students, families, and staff. We have always appreciated our amazing state-of-the-art facility, however, we never imagined how these transformative renovations would become so vital (let alone imagine a pandemic)! These vast, open spaces were reconfigured to safely accommodate all students and staff and allowed us to return to in-person learning. Desks and tables were placed six feet apart in all Gan through eighth grade classrooms. Plexiglass was installed in many areas of the building including at the security desk, the lobby reception desk, the IT help desk, and in many other offices. High-top tables in our DaVinci studios, art room, and science classrooms were also refitted with plexiglass to allow students to share a table to complete laboratory exercises safely.

In order to open, extensive health, safety, and operational protocols were created in accordance with the Governor’s Road Map and advice from our three medical advisors Dr. Miriam Levine, Dr. Brian Gendelman, and Dr. Graham Krasan, who we cannot thank enough. Once the building was prepared, we held numerous Parent Town Halls to prepare and update our parents and staff on the health, safety, and operational protocols for in-person learning, and plans for academic, athletics, and Jewish life. Even during this challenging time, it was imperative that parents had the opportunity to meet Dr. Darin Katz. We made this happen during various meet and greets on Hillel’s side playground so children had access to the playground equipment during these chats.

On Wednesday, September 2, we jubilantly welcomed over 500 students back to Hillel and never looked back.
A STUDENT’S PERSPECTIVE ON WHAT IT’S LIKE TO GO TO SCHOOL DURING A PANDEMIC

BY TALIA COLTON, RISING 7TH GRADER

At Hillel, in order to be at school, we wore masks and stayed socially-distanced. This was my experience during the pandemic.

When I was in school, I wore masks and face shields (if needed). The masks kept us safe, and are a very important resource for school. During classes, our masks stayed on. We were only with one group of people for all of our classes, except for Hebrew, which is leveled, and that’s when we mixed groups. We used our face shields when it was time for snacks.

Recess was the time we could socialize with whoever we wanted in our grade outside. It was great to be with close friends and also hang out with new people, a group that you were never friends with before. When it was cold out, we put on face shields, and ate lunch at our desks, which were also socially-distanced, and only with students in our homeroom.

This year, we also had a different Shabbaton. Usually a Shabbaton takes place at Hillel or at Camp Tamarack. It’s a big sleepover with your grade, and you celebrate Shabbat, play board games, have outside activities, and do havdalah, and it’s a lot of fun. This year, we had to do it differently because of COVID. We went to a farm and it ended up being great! We went on a hayride, drank cider, played glow-in-the-dark “capture the flag,” did havdalah, and sat around the bonfire together! It may not have been the same, but at least we could still have a Shabbaton during the pandemic.

Last spring, I was online. It was tricky. I had a hard time focusing and understanding what we were doing. I am so beyond grateful that I could go to school and be with my friends during the pandemic.

Hillel has been fortunate to experience overall enrollment growth over the last decade, despite the decline in metropolitan Detroit demographics and COVID-19. This growth is a testament to the strength of the Early Childhood Center, the school’s state-of-the-art technology, renovations, and facilities, and the school’s overall commitment to providing an education that is student-centered, innovative, relevant, and focused on preparing students to succeed in high school, college, and beyond.

Despite some parents choosing to homeschool their children during COVID, the majority of those parents have re-enrolled their students for the 2021-2022 academic year. Additionally, because learning never stops at Hillel and the buzz was so positive, we welcomed many students at the beginning of the year and eventually had to institute an enrollment freeze. This past year as kindergarten and first grade were full and most other grades were near capacity due to the imposed physical distancing health and safety protocols.

We are pleased to report that families who enrolled for what they intended to be just the 2020-2021 school year are not only staying, but they have become our greatest cheerleaders and have recruited other families to join Hillel and helped us expand our outreach. We project that this expanded market, together with an 85% matriculation rate from ECC4 to kindergarten predicts that enrollment should continue to rise. We love welcoming new families to Hillel, sharing this incredible experience, and growing our school so keep the referrals coming!

NEW YEAR, NEW MOTTO

This year Hillel introduced a new school motto that reflects more what we stand for as a Jewish day school and our expectations for student behavior. By working to meet these expectations on a daily basis, students will take ownership of their choices, attitude, and ultimately their learning, says Kim Love, Director of Student Services. “We want to help students develop their skills in a learning environment that teaches appropriate behavior and pro-social skills,” she added. “We all have a commitment to the community to maintain a positive and safe learning climate.”

ENROLLMENT BUZZ

BY AMY SCHLUSSEL, DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

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LEARNING/TEACHING FROM HOME IN HILLEL’S FLEXIBLE PROGRAM

Boker tov! Moreh Aron Kaufman greeted his second-grade Judaic Studies students who learned remotely via Zoom in our Flexible Program. Each morning began with a song and practicing Hebrew speaking skills through reflection. One by one, the students unmute and take turns sharing their feelings, describing their homes and who is there with them (of course this meant cats and dogs!) and what the weather looks like outside. A shared reflection creates structure and aims to promote new learning when students are in turn with their inner selves. From there, they discuss the Hillel motto, which is weaved throughout the activities and texts that follow, and visible through their interactions with one another. “Teaching during a pandemic is an extraordinary opportunity to deal with adversity and help students to develop confidence. We aren’t physically together, but spiritually, we are,” said Moreh Aron. Teaching during this unprecedented time gave him the chance to embrace new possibilities with his remote learning students; modeling how to write in cursive and speak Hebrew by using their surrounding environments, and placing an emphasis on settings for inspiration. Walking outside with his computer to converse with a tree or asking students to explore their homes to gather items to share, provided for unique opportunities that wouldn’t normally be available in a classroom setting. “We are all living in a different time. When they become parents and grandparents, I want them to look back and remember that they were having fun.” Though they were not sitting in the classroom, they are Hillel students and they were in school.

A SENSE OF NORMALCY

Hillel was committed to opening its doors for the 2020-21 academic year. While the majority of our teachers delivered instruction in the building, some, however, taught remotely from their homes for various reasons. To ensure that learning never stopped, Hillel utilized classroom proctors to support student learning. These invaluable proctors kept students on task and managed classroom behavior while the curriculum and instruction were delivered by the classroom teacher on the SmartBoard via Zoom or Google Meet.

Thank you to these wonderful proctors for making sure our students continued to learn while their teachers stayed safe.

K-8 ASSESSMENTS GIVE PARENTS INSIGHT INTO STUDENT GROWTH

Teachers began sharing assessment data with families as part of Hillel’s measures to ensure parents know, and understand, how and what their children learn. To that end, Principal Melissa Michaelson and Director of Student Services Kim Love held a virtual parent meeting to give parents an overview of the types of formative and summative assessments in place at Hillel for Gan through eighth grade students; they include the Fountas and Pinnell literacy assessment for first through fourth grades, which looks at fluency, accuracy, and comprehension, and the springtime ERB/CTP computer-based assessment for fifth through eighth grades in subjects such as writing mechanics and quantitative reasoning that compares Hillel against a national norm. “These tools help us understand students as readers, writers, and mathematicians, and help teachers set meaningful goals for students,” Ms. Love said. In accordance with Hillel’s learning philosophy, Ms. Michaelson reminded parents to remember that assessments are data points, and that progress is the key.

LEARNING NEVER STOPS AT HILLEL

DESPITE ALL OF THE CHALLENGES COVID PRESENTED, HILLEL CONTINUED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR STUDENTS LEARNING BOTH IN PERSON AND REMOTELY. THE STUDENTS CONTINUED TO LEARN AND THRIVE AND THE SCHOOL MANAGED TO MAKE SOME INCREDIBLE ENHANCEMENTS TO OUR PROGRAM.

A SENSE OF NORMALCY

The Jewish value of hachnasat orchim (welcoming guests) was on display when Hillel parents Julie and Ofer Ohana, whose children Shai (third grade) and Avital (fourth grade) participated in the flexible model program and invited their classmates to a sukkah hop, complete with tefillot, a story, and shaking the lulav. At the time Julie, a Hillel alumna (class of 1993) shared that “It’s so good for the kids to be together and to feel a sense of normalcy even with masks and at a distance,” said Julie, a Hillel alumna (class of 1993). “It’s about as normal as we can get these days.” This visit at the time was the first time the third graders were together since school began. “The kids loved being able to see one another,” Julie said.

PROCTORS MAINTAIN STRUCTURE

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Hillel Day School

EXCELLENCE IN HEBREW LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Notwithstanding all the incredible advancements Hillel has made over the last decade, we realized that without a renewed emphasis on the Hebrew curriculum, together with a staff of qualified and engaging teachers to support the Hebrew and Judaic curricula, Hillel will not be able to achieve its fundamental mission and purpose. For that reason, Hillel retained Dr. Vardit Ringvald from Middlebury College to perform a Hebrew curriculum audit this past year. Dr. Ringvald found that Hillel’s teachers work hard and are very dedicated educators. Pursuant to the audit, Hillel Hebrew teachers will be trained in the Proficiency Method (from the American Council of Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)) to best teach the students language acquisition. As a result, Hillel has engaged Hebrew at the Center, Inc. (HATC) to implement a new Hebrew curriculum to ensure that our graduates attain Hebrew fluency.

Rabbi David Fain and Amira Soleiman have already begun working with HATC and we are excited for all Hillel Hebrew teachers to begin working with HATC this summer to support a holistic Prek through eighth grade Hebrew program. In the context of a multi-year plan, we will develop a shared vision among all constituents of the role and purpose of the Hebrew language and culture in the school. Hebrew educators will develop expertise in the teaching and learning of Hebrew, use a combination of cutting-edge 21st-century skill sets and HATC developed tools, a systematic approach and plan for providing new teachers and current staff with ongoing professional development, articulate Hebrew language outcomes for all students, develop a dynamic, spiral curriculum that will support the acquisition of Hebrew language for all learners, and a school-wide assessment system to collect data in order to make informed data-driven decisions within and about the Hebrew program.

Knowledgeable, Hebrew-speaking students are a fundamental component of Hillel’s Portrait of a Graduate. This curriculum will enhance our students’ Hebrew language acquisition. This proficiency, together with the new Hebrew curriculum, will enable Hillel Hebrew teachers to differentiate instruction, engage, and challenge students to become fluent Hebrew speakers. Thus ensuring Hillel graduates strive towards our Portrait of a Graduate and help fulfill our mission.

HILLEL PILOTS MSU MATH CURRICULUM

Hillel is one of a handful of schools nationwide selected to pilot CMP4 (Connected Mathematics Project), the new edition of a middle school math curriculum developed by Michigan State University. The curriculum, taught in our 7-8 learning community, improves upon the previous CMP3 edition, balancing procedural and conceptual lessons, number crunching, and reasoning. Units of the curriculum are connected in a way that dominoes forward, helping students to connect math concepts and deepen their learning as they progress.

Kathy Dole, a veteran mathematics educator and presenter, who has conducted professional development over many years, approached teacher and 5-8 Mathematics Coordinator Michelle Bornick with the opportunity to pilot CMP4. “I’ve always been impressed with the way Hillel’s faculty have embraced the philosophy of connected mathematics,” Ms. Dole said. “I have long known the dedication of these teachers, and that they will provide thoughtful feedback to the CMP4 authors. This was important to me when choosing a field site.”

CMP4 is one of several new math programs introduced at Hillel last year saw the introduction of a new eighth-grade geometry program, and a 7-8 algebra curriculum has also been adopted. Foremost among the criteria when choosing a program is that it suits our students’ varied needs while engaging them in meaningful learning opportunities. The curriculum puts math in context, and relates to our students’ lives,” Mrs. Bornick said, reporting that one student declared, “This is actually fun!” This is where the balance of process and understanding is key,” she said. “At the same time,” Mrs. Bornick said, “It’s an honor to participate in the CMP4 pilot program. It’s like we’re a lab school. We get to be reflective educators, and be as intentional as possible in what we teach, and why.”

A NOVEL APPROACH TO STORYTELLING

This year sixth graders read “The New Kid” by Jerry Craft and examined ways to analyze a text and write about their findings. The novel study also included important worldly topics such as social and racial injustice. Following the completion of the novel study, students wrote about a topic, memory, or theme that has significance in their own lives, and then transformed this writing into a visual and textual graphic memoir. It was inspiring for teacher Renee Liberman to watch her students write about pertinent themes and ideas that others can learn from. “The sixth graders took risks combining narrative story elements and essay writing to draft their memoirs. The fun and learning continued when students transferred their themes into a graphic novel.”

Platon Shub’s graphic memoir Do Not Take Things in Life for Granted is a story about appreciating everything in life and focused specifically on this teaching from Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks - “value the people who love you and make the most of each day.” This appreciation has been heightened for Platon during the pandemic.

Similarly, Reese Kaufman’s graphic memoir Survivor is a tale of perseverance through the challenges she and her family faced while her Nana Kaufman aka “superhero” was battling cancer. “I was able to express what I was feeling. It really helped me,” said Reese.

The importance of teaching students to read, analyze, and create a graphic novel from a memory helps students to express truths or experiences in a way that is different from traditional prose.

GAN STUDENTS ADOPT-A-PET

Gan students “adopted” classroom pets this year.

The children became the “teachers” and helped their stuffed animal friends learn the alphabet and phonics. These emerging readers selected their pet, named it, and promised to take the very best care of it. They even signed their name on a special certificate of adoption. These furry students have learned alongside the Gan students and now the students are reading to their “students.”

MINDFUL MINUTES

Our incredible team of school Social Workers has introduced a daily “Mindful Minute” exercise schoolwide to help students center themselves as they finish lunch and approach their afternoon learning. Following birkat hamazon, the student body pauses for a minute to breathe deeply, and to remember that everyone is in a safe and comfortable environment optimal for learning. “You can feel the power of the community reverberate,” said Barb Kenny, LMSW, who works with 5-8 grade students. Ms. Kenny and Mr. Harrison Leibow, our K-4 social worker, along with Kim Love, Director of Student Services, gave much thought to the importance of mindfulness as part of our return to school. The coronavirus is and was a source of much thought to the importance of mindfulness as part of our return to school. The coronavirus is and was a source of anxiety, they said, and mindfulness exercises “help bring kids back to the present moment, helps with emotional regulation, and helps them access higher-level thinking skills...” and brought some laughs when Ms. Kenny and Mr. Leibow told jokes - and sometimes good ones - during their Friday Funnies themed Mindful Minutes.
Students across Hillel got a taste of the political process as the November presidential election neared. The question of a more or less powerful and sizable government is at the heart of partisan politics, and depending upon which side of the question you fall on can determine how a citizen will vote in an election. Not only were voters 18 and over debating this before going to the polls, so, too, were our savvy seventh graders, in social studies. “Parties in and of themselves are not good or bad - they represent beliefs,” teacher Josh Cutler explained during a lesson on the election. “On the extreme end, liberals may want to heal the world, and conservatives may be influenced by religion or economics. While some voters are partisans who vote for a single party, most people fall somewhere in the middle and vote according to their personal beliefs on each issue at stake; they’re called moderates,” he said.

“So if you’re a moderate, which party would you run in as a candidate?” asked students. “Well, in the U.S. you need the support of the two largest parties, either Democratic or Republican, to move about the country and campaign. Sometimes, a strategy is to join a lesser party to achieve prestige and gain steam before joining the larger two parties,” Mr. Cutler said. Students who have never seen a paper ballot were in for a treat. While due to COVID, he could not bring in a ballot machine like he usually does, students voted using an old-school ballot box from when Mr. Cutler was a kid and counted the ballots by hand.

In our 3-4 community, while exploring rights and responsibilities, students discussed their own rights as learners; in the pursuit of knowledge, they said, each child has the right to learn and the responsibility to try their best, complete all of their work, and follow classroom rules. “They have also learned to respect whose views differ from their own, about voter registration, the purpose of primary elections, and how vice presidents are added to a ticket,” teacher Brittany Borsen said.

Following primary elections, third graders elected a snack from either the Salty Party or the Sweet Party, while fourth graders elected a candy treat from either the Chocolate Party or Sugary Candy Party. Additionally, fourth graders learned about the electoral college, with each student representing the state that they studied last year in third grade.

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8TH GRADE ALTERNATIVE TRIP

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and Israel’s travel restrictions, the eighth grade’s culminating trip to Israel simply could not happen this year. While students and staff were obviously very disappointed, Yifat Golan, our Israel Trip Coordinator, and Nicole Miller, our 8th Grade Advisory Leader, together with student input, planned meaningful alternative experiences for the eighth graders. The alternative experience began with a three-day overnight trip to Tamarack Camps. Here, students enjoyed swimming in the lake, high-ropes, campfires, and unforgettable bonding. Students then traveled to Silver Lake and Grand Rapids to enjoy dune rides and visit the John Ball Zoo. More outdoor adventures continued the following day as students hung from the trees at the Tree Runner Adventure Park at Oakland University and relaxed at Heritage Park. Dow Forest and Canopy Walk in Midland, Michigan, and canoeing in the Chippewa River were experienced the next day. From what we’ve been told, if you haven’t visited these attractions, you must. The students returned to Hillel on the last day for special Israeli-themed programming including games and authentic Israeli breakfast and lunch.

While the students were no doubt disappointed that their trip to Israel did not happen, they loved these alternative experiences and developed deeper connections with one another, and created memories that will last a lifetime.

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- ELLERY GNESIN

NEW SHABBAT TRADITION

Hillel started a new tradition this year - students and staff began wearing white shirts and customized white sweatshirts on Fridays in anticipation of Shabbat. Our core Jewish value of Kedushah (holiness) reminds us that there are opportunities to sanctify time and to elevate each day, and to add holiness to our existence; dressing up for Shabbat reminds us of the sanctity of the Jewish day of rest. Students and staff wore white shirts and sweatshirts to show their love of Shabbat and their Hillel spirit. Check out www.hillelday.org/spiritwear.com if you’re interested in purchasing a Hillel sweatshirt with your name customized on the back to celebrate Shabbat with Hillel and show your Hillel spirit!

SHINSHINIM

Our second year of pre-IDF Shinshinim, Noa and Yuval, joined Hillel this year and quickly became a beloved part of the community, interacting in classes, providing Hebrew support, planning Jewish holiday events, and more. We are blessed to bring these Shinshinim to Hillel in partnership with the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and the Jewish Agency for Israel. Morah Yifat Golan oversees these wonderful young adults and we look forward to four new shinshinim joining us next year to further infuse our school community with a love of Israel.

"IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN ISRAEL BUT THE TEACHERS PLANNED IT AS IT WAS, WHICH WAS REALLY COOL. I REALLY ENJOYED IT."
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Looking back at 2020-2021, so much was different in Hillel’s ECC yet so much was the same. While the adults may have had concerns imagining how the school would look with children wearing masks, once the doors opened all apprehensions disappeared. The excitement was evident and the learning and growth were seamless. We are so grateful that in spite of the pandemic, Hillel students still learned to be kind and compassionate. They learned to be mathematicians and scientists, artists and writers, and so much more. They learned social skills and health and safety protocols. And, of course, they helped a fellow student learn how to put on their hats and gloves ... or a mask! During this unprecedented time especially, they took pride in sharing and helping others.

Every day in the ECC this past year was remarkable. What a wonderful year we had - challenging and exciting at the same time. As many things needed to adapt, the ECC adapted, as well. First and foremost, the children were safe and happy. Each day the ECC glowed with enthusiasm, excitement, and joy. While our weekly cornerstones of havdalah and Shabbat may have been virtual, we still ensured everyone came together as a community, including moms, dads, grandmas, grandpas, aunts, uncles, and many more friends. We even had guests from Israel, one of the many silver linings to this COVID year.

As we try every day, we played outside even more. Our students were resilient and adaptable thanks to the herculean efforts of our incredible staff who went above and beyond to make sure our children felt safe, loved, and at home.

Thank you to all of our parents for partnering with us for this challenging year. Thank you for trusting us with your children. We are so proud of all that they accomplished and are very excited to see what the future holds for our youngest learners. 

As the week progresses, our young actors begin to write their own script, internalizing the lessons introduced during our large group storytelling. Being part of the Hillel community charges us with the responsibility to plan meaningful lessons which the children will carry with them into adulthood. Purim lessons nurture creativity, collaboration, and at the heart of it all, building community. We learn to share yummy treats with family and friends, we remember to give tzedakah so everyone can be included in the holiday, and we learn to take responsibility for our actions. We know students find great joy in this activity.

Purim is a great example of how learning and fun go hand in hand in the ECC. The story of Purim is rich with meaningful lessons and lends itself perfectly to the hearts and minds of our preschool students. Complete with kings and queens, heroes, and villains, the story of Purim helps teach our students the importance of standing up for yourself and being proud of who you are, the need to always do the right thing, and how one person doing the right thing can help protect the people in our community.

Purim allows our students to fully participate in all of the symbolic traditions of the holiday through a variety of activities - dressing up in costume, acting out plays, and repeating the script in their own words. This method of play-acting reinforces the themes we want them to understand while giving them ownership of the actual text. As the week progresses, our young actors begin to write their own script, internalizing the lessons introduced during our large group storytelling.

BY ROBIN PAPPAS, DIRECTOR OF EARLY EDUCATION

BY BARBARA DWORIN, ECC4 TEACHER
SHAKIN’ IT IN (AND OUTSIDE OF) THE SUKKAH

Jewish high holidays in a pandemic were more subdued, but we nonetheless made it possible for students to celebrate a festive Sukkot and Hoshanah Rabah at school, fulfilling the mitzvah of sitting in a sukkah, shaking the lulav and etrog, and even dancing with the Torah. Sanitizing their hands before and after handling the arbaat haminim and etrogim, each class visited one of our school’s three sukkot along with Rabbi David Fain, our Rav Beit Hasefer, to engage in learning about the chag.

FIRST (AND SECOND) GRADE HUNEGS FAMILY SIDDUR PARTY AND THE SECOND GRADE TORAH PARTY

In September, parents shared heartfelt messages with their second-grade children at a rescheduled Siddur Party. The long-awaited rite of passage, in which each student receives a siddur personalized with a missive from their parents, took on added weight and resonance for all involved. Typically, The Hunegs Family First Grade Siddur Party takes place as a large-scale celebration in the school gymnasium with parents and grandparents in attendance as students recite tefillot they have learned at school. This year, each class held a separate intimate gathering under the tents at the front of the school property; family members, wearing masks and socially distanced, were invited to attend and share special blessings with their students. The flexible model program second graders learning at home held a virtual siddur party on Zoom.

The constraints had the effect of freeing parents to speak openly about their children, and many held back tears as they shared what they had written. “May the prayers in the siddur lift you, and heal you throughout your life,” parent Lou Goldhaber said to his son Ray. Moved by the sentiments, Rabbi David Fain, our Rav Beit Hasefer, told students, “Hold your siddur close, and the people you love even closer.” Dr. Darin Katz thanked parents for “instilling the ways of the Torah in your children, as generations have done.” Then, turning to the students, he said, “use your siddur so often that the pages become so frayed that you have to bring it back to me so that I can replace it!”

SHABBATONIM

In lieu of their typical Shabbaton experiences, whether at Hillel or Camp Tamarack, fifth through eighth-grade students enjoyed fun, meaning outdoor havdalah programs this year. Sixth graders headed to Three Cedars Farm in Northville. The masked, socially distant students enjoyed havdalah, a hayride, corn maze, and a bonfire with treats. The farm provided a beautiful, rustic, and socially distant setting for the class to bond and foster positive relationships with one another. Seventh graders celebrated havdalah at the Tree Runner Adventure Park in Rochester that was only open to Hillel that evening.
BOOK CLUBS

While March is Reading Month provides a framework to celebrate the joy of reading, it is the book clubs outside of the classroom that also helped students to develop as lifelong readers and critical thinkers. During Community Read, Dr. Darin Katz, along with some eighth-graders read Start-Up Nation, by Dan Senor and Saul Singer, which delves into Israel’s success in producing more start-up companies than almost any other nation in the world.

These book clubs provide an opportunity for students to have in-depth discussions about their own lives and identities. Athletic Director Nicole Miller met with sixth and seventh graders during Community Read to discuss subjects relating specifically to health topics. As a wellness teacher, Mrs. Miller is passionate about extending learning and relating specifically to health topics. As a wellness teacher, Mrs. Miller is passionate about extending learning and relating specifically to health topics.

The book clubs also allowed students to find a common interest and to develop close bonds over a particular story or author. Some eighth graders met online (and over Starbucks) during mid-winter break to discuss Kingdom of the Wicked by Kerri Maniscalco. “Our favorite part of the book club was that we could connect over certain parts of the book,” said Rachel Chynoweth. Eighth-grader Sarah Krivichkin met with her reading club every Monday in the second floor DaVinci Studio to discuss Saving Wonder by Mary Knight because of the unique language and heartfelt plot.

Through reading and responding to different texts, book clubs create a kehillah (community) where students develop an understanding of each other, and a respect for different opinions, perspectives, and interpretations. Book clubs also provide an opportunity for teachers to witness academic and personal growth among students. We look forward to continuing the learning and discussions next year.

HILLEL AND JARC. CELEBRATING 30 YEARS.

Hillel and JARC wrapped up another successful year of their joint outreach program, where Hillel seventh-grade students meet and connect once a month with people JARC serves. The program has been going strong for more than 30 years now, with the pandemic only serving as a slight detour from the norm.

The program begins in December and runs through May every year, with Hillel students partnering with the group homes. “The kids really form a relationship, friendship, and connection with the people in that home as we progress through the year,” said teacher and program coordinator Leslie Baron.

While programming typically consists of a bingo night at Hillel, monthly events where the kids directly to the JARC homes for activities, and a bowling night at Langan’s NorWest Lanes, this year’s events all happened virtually on Zoom. The students and residents thought creatively to have events that included virtual bingo, charades, Pictionary, and talent shows.

“For the students, they learn so much about empathy, inclusiveness, and really appreciate a person for who they are,” Ms. Baron said. “We are all people, we all have the right to be loved and included”.

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HONORING A JEWISH INTELLECTUAL GIANT

To honor the memory of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks (z”l) and his unparalleled impact on Jewish day school education, Hillel held a Day of Learning on Tuesday, December 8 to mark the end of shloshim (a 30-day period of mourning). First through eighth-grade students learned about the life and legacy of Rabbi Sacks, the shloshim period, and the Jewish belief that Torah study merits the soul of the deceased. Teachers used selected quotes as prompts to discuss Jewish values, one’s relationship with God, forgiveness, gratitude, and Jewish practice. May the wisdom and teachings of Rabbi Sacks continue to inspire us here at Hillel Day School and at Jewish day schools around the world. We will continue to honor the memory of Rabbi Sacks today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.
WHILE STEAM ROTATIONS MAY HAVE LOOKED DIFFERENT THIS YEAR, WITH CHILDREN HAVING SPECIALS FOR TWO WEEKS AT A TIME, IT WAS STILL CRITICAL FOR STUDENTS TO EXPLORE AND MASTER STEAM CONCEPTS THROUGH MULTIPLE FRAMEWORKS. AS YOU'LL READ BELOW, THE STEAM CURRICULUM WAS MINDFULLY WOVEN INTO CURRICULUM AS STUDENTS EXPLORED PURIM, MICHIGAN, BLACK HISTORY MONTH, AND ADJUSTED TO COVID LIFE BEHIND A MASK.

WHAT’S BEHIND THE MASK

While our students understand that masks are essential for their safety and for the safety of others, it might not always be the most comfortable experience. Art teacher Charles Bugelli used this as an opportunity to put a positive and fun spin on mask-wearing. First and second graders created a foldable self-portrait showing their faces hidden by a mask, and then when unfolded, their mask moves down to reveal their mouth and words that describe them. The students learned about facial proportion and expression through observation and words that describe them. The students concentrated on one feature at a time, Mr. Bugelli was intrigued by the attention the students attributed to the eyes. “Wearing a mask can disguise that your mouth is smiling, but the eyes can smile even without a mouth. This really came through in the students’ work.” The next fold reveals a smile and a description of each child’s personality using adjectives such as funny, kind, and silly. The design and decorating of the mask and background completed the effect beautifully. Utilizing many elements of art such as space, line, and color, the first and second graders also revealed the dynamic and unique people they are behind the mask.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND PURIM

Third and fourth-grade students, together with Art teacher Lauren Cohen made crowns inspired by influential African-American artist Jean Michel Basquiat to celebrate Purim and Black History Month. Known for his expressive, abstract style, the three-pointed crown is a motif that appears frequently in his work. Students were encouraged to utilize design and color to express the emotion and feeling that accompanies abstract art.

Students cut three-point crowns from cardboard, painted them and added layers for visual depth and dimension. They then added embellishments to enhance the beauty of the crowns, making this a great compliment to The Book of Esther and Purim celebrations.

4TH GRADE MICHIGAN TILES

As part of their Michigan unit, fourth graders in art teacher Lauren Cohen’s class added an art history component for the first time ever through their creation of Michigan Pewabic tiles. Leading up to the project, students researched the significance of Pewabic Pottery, Michigan's oldest pottery, known for its iridescent glazes. Following their research, each fourth grader chose a unique Michigan symbol to create on their tile. During the process, students learned about different types of relief sculpture, and more specifically, low relief sculpture (bas-relief), where the sculpture projects slightly from the background surface. Fourth-grader Eli Panza recreated the Michigan State Capitol building, a monument he hopes to visit one day. “I saw a picture of the capitol building and was really excited to recreate it,” said Eli.

Eli’s tile was one of four fourth-grade tiles that were selected by their classmates as a top favorite. Other winners were Esther Matthews, Eden Liss, and Mia Levine.

“I was proud that my classmates liked my tile,” Eden said as she held her Love Michigan tile. Ms. Cohen was hoping to create an all-encompassing installation at Hillel, but the students were so proud of their creations they took them home to share with their families. “This is one of my proudest moments as an art teacher,” said Ms. Cohen. “Fourth graders enjoyed each step of the creative journey and are very proud of themselves and their art. The Michigan unit is a memorable experience, and I was thrilled art could take part in it.”

4TH GRADE MICHIGAN TILES

THE JASON ZAKS INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY AWARD

Just outside the MakerSpace, a fourth plaque was added to recognize this year’s recipient of the Jason Zaks Innovation & Technology Award, sixth-grader Ari Salama. “I was really surprised to win this award,” said Ari, as he stood proudly in front of his plaque. It reads “I like to build things because I like to see my things work. I love to learn because I like to know more.” On Thursday, May 20, fifth through seventh graders, faculty, staff, members of the Hillel Day School Class of 1988, and family members of the late Jason Zaks joined to celebrate his life and memory through a virtual presentation. Jason Zaks graduated from Hillel Day School in 1988 and is remembered as a kind person who was passionate about animals and technology.

Ari was nominated by his teachers because he is a student who has grown through the years to be a thoughtful, caring, and respectful mensch who seeks out leadership opportunities among his peers. Though the MakerSpace has been closed this year due to COVID, Ari acquired new maker and tech skills on his own time, which included taking a Mark Rober class on engineering. Ari was also recognized for his Mission to Mars project, where he designed a rocket to allow humans to travel to Mars. In addition to his plaque, Ari also received a smart robot car kit, Mazal Tov to Ari Salama.
KAPPY FAMILY ANNE FRANK AND ELIE WIESEL NIGHT ART & WRITING COMPETITION

Eight-grader Spencer Cherrin is the winner of the 2021 Kappy Family Anne Frank and Elie Wiesel Night Art & Writing Competition! This competition seeks to educate students about the Holocaust, engage them through Anne Frank and Elie Wiesel’s profound stories, and empower them to move from thought to action using expression. This year’s theme was the power of memory.

The theme of Spencer’s poem “Keeping The Memories Alive” is about how everyone in the world has to gather all of the memories of the Holocaust, and share them with others, so that we can educate everyone on why it is important to remember. When the poem repeats the phrases “No, but how could I fail to remember” and “Do I want to recollect the memories of,” it means that you should try and gather as much information and memories as possible in order to keep the memory alive. We always want to know how we got here. The Nazis just want us to forget about it, but we won’t listen. In fact, we will do the opposite. We will keep the memory alive and share it.

KEEPING THE MEMORIES ALIVE
BY SPENCER CHERRIN

Do I want to recollect the memories of Being in the ghetto with prisoners plunged inside, Children screaming for their siblings and parents, Families getting split, one half-killed, one half-drilled? No, but how could I fail to remember. Do I want to recollect the memories of Prisoners losing their identities, Being marched from freedom to death? No, but how could I fail to remember. Do I want to recollect the memories of Being lined up one by one in the piping hot being shot, Mom looking for food but being caught? No, but how could I fail to remember. Do I want to recollect the memories of The beasts walking around enjoying their hunt, The cries of the wounded begging for life, Faces of mothers carved with despair, A child hiding, sweating out fear? No, but how could I fail to remember. Do I want to recollect the memories of The departed blessed with an instant death, The living condemned to a short, wretched life And a long torturous journey to an unnamed place? No. I have to recollect the memories and Never Let You Forget. By the harmonious winds flying by, WE, the world, can come together and make a change. If someone turned a blind eye and missed the pain, You will experience the shame in the rain.

HILLEL KIDS HAVE HEART

During the month of February, Hillel Gan through sixth-grade students could elect to raise funds for the American Heart Association Kids Heart Challenge. Hillel had a record number of participants in the program, with over 125 students donating. What’s more incredible is that students broke another Hillel record, raising nearly $20,000 for the American Heart Association!
Good evening and welcome to the 2021 Hillel Day School Annual Gala. My name is Zachary Elbinger and it is my honor to speak to you tonight.

You probably think I’m going to talk about the pandemic and how because of the perseverance of so many people we have been able to learn in person this year with very few interruptions. Or maybe you expected to hear me talk about how we should be grateful even though we have missed out on so much. Some of you may also feel that I should talk about how prepared Hillel students are when they enter high school. I’m not going to talk about that either. I could also brag about my grandparents, Sheni and David Jaffa, who are receiving the Dream Maker Award tonight. Of course I will do that in a few minutes. I’m not giving up the opportunity for some brownie points.

This is my story. Every year this is an opportunity for us to thank those who have contributed to the success of our amazing school. I’m not going to talk about all those things, but I am actually heading in a different direction.

Every year this is an opportunity for us to thank those who have contributed to the success of our amazing school. I’m not going to talk about all those things, but I am actually heading in a different direction. Instead, I’d like to start by telling you the story of how I ended up here. I want to take you back to 1979. Yes I’m aware I wasn’t born for 28 years later but humor me. That was the year my mom started kindergarten. My Mimi tells the story that she looked at different schools for my mom and decided that she wanted to send her to Hillel Day School, but my Papa refused to pay for it. So what did my Mimi do? Well—she was being her usual persistent self. A woman who does NOT take no for an answer. She called my late great grandfather, Harold Jaffa, who I happen to be named after, and asked if he would pay for my mom’s first year. The rest, as they say, is history. After my Papa saw the value of the education my Mimi had insisted on, he supported the rest of the journey. My mom and aunt went on to become proud Hillel graduates. My sister and I, plus our three cousins, now follow in their footsteps.

Interestingly, our story isn’t that unique. One person sees the value of a Hillel education and the next generation follows. I could also talk about all those things, but I am actually heading in a different direction.

The building may have changed and technology may have become an integral part of our education, but the Hillel touch has remained constant. Through tragedy and turmoil, successes and failures, a pandemic that no one would have expected to happen in their lifetime and the uncertainty that ensued, Hillel remained the one thing that we can all count on. It is that connection that I would like to talk about.

If we were to look up the word connection in the dictionary, I’m sure it would say something about one thing being linked to something else or a relationship between people. I agree that it means those things. However, the dictionary definition does not show the sort of connection that I want to talk about this evening. A connection is measured by our actions and the impact we have on the people we come into contact with and our community as a whole.

I see meaningful connections every day at Hillel. I witness it when our teachers lovingly help the little kids who are nervous or hesitant to get out of their parents car in the morning. I see connections when I watch Hillel staff outside directing traffic, making sure we are safe amidst the chaos of busy mornings and afternoons. I see connections when I walk through the Mercaz and watch excited teachers and administrators collaborating in the conference room with the goal of providing us students with the best educational experience possible. When I see a teacher sitting with a student who may be having a bad day or needs some extra help, that is a connection too.

Connections are what makes Hillel such a special place. I know I experience it often but not even realizing it. There is one time though, that stands out to me. As most people know, I’m a pretty upbeat and social guy. I love being around people. I enjoy hanging out with my friends at school, playing football at recess, and, yes, even doing group projects. I always feel safe, happy, confident and supported at Hillel. When the pandemic hit, we had to attend school at home virtually. I tried to have a positive attitude. But even the most positive guy can feel down. One afternoon while attending a class, I was frustrated because I didn’t fully understand what was going on. I got off that final class of the day upset with the situation. Before I knew it, I was getting a notification of a video call from my last teacher. She could sense that I was annoyed and wanted to check in with me. She spent a while explaining what I didn’t understand and when we said goodbye I felt so much better. This is the essence of a connection. My teacher had the challenge of teaching a class online at the end of the day while dealing with the unnatural experience of teaching from home, but she still was in tune to the fact that I wasn’t myself.

I know I’m not the only one who has been touched by the same connections, the same Hillel touch. My Mimi and Papa are being honored tonight because of their desire to make the world a better place for those less fortunate. Their philanthropic resilience has enabled so many to experience a Jewish education, to attend summer camp, enjoy the arts, to have a synagogue membership or put food on the table for their family. My grandparents should no doubt be honored for these contributions. However, what stands out to my sister, my cousins and me though is their kind hearts, their interest in our lives, their devotion to their family and their legacy of connection, of helping people where they are needed most. They are true role models to us.

As I prepare to graduate from Hillel I know that the connections I have witnessed from teachers, staff, administration, other students, and the alumni who have come back to tell their Hillel story will propel me to go above and beyond to be the best I can be and the best I can be for the world around me.

Connections can be described in all the ways I said I wasn’t going to talk about in the beginning of my speech. It is perseverance. It is being grateful even when challenges arise and it is being prepared to step up and make a difference in the lives of others and in our community. It is the Hillel touch.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you tonight. Yasher Koach to our distinguished alumni and to our very special Dream Maker Honorees.

Congratulations to BRODY FLEISHMAN, this year’s recipient of The William Schumer Award for Excellence in Ivrit and Judaic Studies. Brody is recognized for his striving for excellence in Ivrit and Judaic Studies, as well as his demonstrated commitment to Zionism and Israel.
FACULTY SHOUTOUTS

MORAH YIFAT GOLAN
Morah Yifat Golan, Israel Coordinator, was chosen as the recipient of Hillel Day School’s first-ever Professional Enrichment Grant. “We are excited for Yifat and this opportunity, and everything it will bring to Hillel’s community,” said Barbara Applebaum, Director of 5-8 Communities. Morah Golan will complete her MA degree in the Art of Hebrew as a Second Language at the Middlebury School of Hebrew. Morah Golan was one of ten recipients awarded a full scholarship from Middlebury. The program offers the most advanced pedagogy Morah Golan completed her MA degree in the Art of Hebrew as a Second Language at the Middlebury School of Hebrew. Morah Golan was one of ten recipients awarded a full scholarship from Middlebury. The program offers the most advanced pedagogy for teaching Hebrew and acquiring further linguistic and cultural fluency. “I am grateful to the administration for their support as I pursue a second MA in Jewish education,” said Morah Golan. “I am excited to incorporate what I learn to my team and my students.”

FACULTY PROFILE

MICHELLE BORTNICK
Math has always come easy to Michelle Bortnick, as has her love of working with children. “When I was younger I knew that I would become a teacher,” says Michelle. “Growing up I always liked math and I liked to think about numbers in a creative way. I always knew that a career in teaching would be ideal for me.” Although she claims that somewhere along the way she lost her love of math because of less than inspiring teachers, once she began teaching math at Hillel, she rediscovered that love. Mrs. Bortnick’s favorite grades to teach are middle schoolers because she believes “it is such a crucial time and the math is so exciting.” She loves reminding students this age about the importance of a growth mindset, believing in themselves, and that taking risks results in learning. “Every effort is worth it when they work hard and get to that ‘aha’ moment!”

“EVERY EFFORT IS WORTH IT WHEN THEY WORK HARD AND THEY GET THAT ‘AH-A’ MOMENT!”

Entering her 15th year of teaching, all of which have been at Hillel, Michelle is now teaching math in seventh and eighth grades and is a 5-6 math coordinator. Michelle previously taught fifth-grade language arts, social studies, and math, and third-grade math. She was also spent several years as the 5/6 learning specialist before eventually moving up and focusing full-time on math. In the last two years, Michelle was involved in bringing new math curricula to Hillel. Together with a team of teachers, she researched and vetted various curriculums. “We consider research that shows their effectiveness, as well as talking to other schools to hear about their experiences. We also value endorsements from leaders in the fields of mathematics;” Michelle shared. “When we select a curriculum, it is because it aligns with our mathematical philosophy and offers the most for our students. A solid curriculum gives context and relates to students’ lives. It also teaches students strategies that promote number fluency and ways to think about numbers in flexible ways.” A perfect example of a contextual math unit was when Hillel introduced a new retirement plan for teachers and staff. Her students were studying exponential functions and used that knowledge to create videos to teach staff the importance of saving for retirement.

Michelle cherishes the relationships she forms with her students and Hillel’s emphasis on community. While teaching during the pandemic was “never boring,” the pandemic reminded her “to be grateful for each and every day we are able to come to school and learn in person.” She looks forward to seeing more smiling faces - not just smiling eyes - next year.

Michelle lives in Huntington Woods with her husband, Jeffrey, and their children, Elizabeth, a rising second-grader, and Abigail, a rising kindergartner. The family will spend the summer biking around the neighborhood, swimming in the pool, and spending time with family.

MICHELLE BORTNICK

HELAYNE SHAW
On Wednesday, May 26, Tamarack Camps celebrated ECC4 teacher Helayne Shaw, a Tamarack legend, during the virtual Send a Kid to Camp event. Ms. Shaw started attending Tamarack Camp at the age of seven and has spent her summers working there for over 35 years. The camp provided Ms. Shaw with her passion for Judaism, which she now shares with her students. In fact, her time spent at camp is what made her pursue Jewish education and share the lessons she’s learned about friendship, community, and respect for others with the children and families in the Hillel community.

DR. JOSHUA CUTLER
Mazel Tov to Dr. Joshua Cutler, seventh and eighth-grade social studies teacher, who was awarded one of the Abraham Lincoln Teacher’s Fellowships by The Tikvah Fund. Dr. Cutler was one of 16 chosen recipients from over 200 applicants within exceptional schools around the nation. Dr. Cutler has a BS in history and social studies education from Wayne State University, an MA in athletic administration and coaching from American Military University, and an EdD in teacher leadership from Concordia University-Portland. Dr. Cutler’s dissertation research topic was the impact of instruction using historical fiction on student understanding in middle school history classes. The Abraham Lincoln Teacher’s Fellowship is an initiative of the Tikvah Fund, an educational organization that provides high-level learning opportunities for students, parents, and teaching professionals in subjects such as Western history and literature, American democracy and culture, Zionism and modern Israel, and more.

MILESTONES

PAM FARBER
For 30 years Learning Support Specialist Pam Farber has been one fierce advocate for her students. Her commitment and dedication are unparalleled and serves as a model for us all. Pam has been a true blessing to Hillel Day School for 30 amazing years. May further generations of children and staff continue to be touched by her inexhaustible gifts and talents. Thank you for 30 years of loyal, dedicated service.

MORAH AYALA PERLSTEIN
Hillel is what it is today because of Morah Ayala Perlstein’s impact over the last 45 years. She has imbued countless students with a love of Judaism, respect for Torah study, and menschlichkeit qualities. Her impact on families is multi-generational as many current Hillel parents share the gift of having Morah Perlstein as a teacher with their children. We are forever grateful for the opportunity to work with and learn from her. May her tremendous impact on Hillel, and on the Jewish community of Detroit, continue for another 45 years.

HELAYNE SHAW

ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 26, TAMARACK CAMPS CELEBRATED ECC4 TEACHER HELEAYNE SHAW, A TAMARACK LEGEND, DURING THE VIRTUAL SEND A KID TO CAMP EVENT. MS. SHAW STARTED ATTENDING TAMARACK CAMP AT THE AGE OF SEVEN AND HAS SPENT HER SUMMERS WORKING THERE FOR OVER 35 YEARS. THE CAMP PROVIDED MS. SHAW WITH HER PASSION FOR JUDAISM, WHICH SHE NOW SHARES WITH HER STUDENTS. IN FACT, HER TIME SPENT AT CAMP IS WHAT MADE HER PURSUE JEWISH EDUCATION AND SHARE THE LESSONS SHE’S LEARNED ABOUT FRIENDSHIP, COMMUNITY, AND RESPECT FOR OTHERS WITH THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN THE HILLEL COMMUNITY.

DR. JOSHUA CUTLER

MAZEL TOV TO DR. JOSHUA CUTLER, SEVENTH AND EIGHTH-GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER, WHO WAS AWARDED ONE OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN TEACHER’S FELLOWSHIPS BY THE TIKVAH FUND. DR. CUTLER WAS ONE OF 16 CHOSEN RECIPIENTS FROM OVER 200 APPLICANTS WITHIN EXCEPTIONAL SCHOOLS AROUND THE NATION. DR. CUTLER HAS A BS IN HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION FROM WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY, AN MA IN ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATION AND COACHING FROM AMERICAN MILITARY UNIVERSITY, AND AN ED D IN TEACHER LEADERSHIP FROM CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY-PORTLAND. DR. CUTLER’S DISSERTATION RESEARCH TOPIC WAS THE IMPACT OF INSTRUCTION USING HISTORICAL FICTION ON STUDENT UNDERSTANDING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL HISTORY CLASSES. THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN TEACHER’S FELLOWSHIP IS AN INITIATIVE OF THE TIKVAH FUND, AN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES HIGH-LEVEL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND TEACHING PROFESSIONALS IN SUBJECTS SUCH AS WESTERN HISTORY AND LITERATURE, AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AND CULTURE, ZIONISM AND MODERN ISRAEL, AND MORE.

PAM FARBER

FOR 30 YEARS LEARNING SUPPORT SPECIALIST PAM FARBER HAS BEEN ONE FIERCE ADVOCATE FOR HER STUDENTS. HER COMMITMENT AND DEDICATION ARE UNPARALLELED AND SERVES AS A MODEL FOR US ALL. PAM HAS BEEN A TRUE BLESSING TO HILLEL DAY SCHOOL FOR 30 AMAZING YEARS. MAY FURTHER GENERATIONS OF CHILDREN AND STAFF CONTINUE TO BE TOUCHED BY HER INEXHAUSTIBLE GIFTS AND TALENTS. THANK YOU FOR 30 YEARS OF LOYAL, DEDICATED SERVICE.

MORAH AYALA PERLSTEIN

HILLEL IS WHAT IT IS TODAY BECAUSE OF MORAH AYALA PERLSTEIN’S IMPACT OVER THE LAST 45 YEARS. SHE HAS IMBUED COUNTLESS STUDENTS WITH A LOVE OF JUDAISM, RESPECT FOR TORAH STUDY, AND MENSCHLERICH QUALITIES. HER IMPACT ON FAMILIES IS MULTI-GENERATIONAL AS MANY CURRENT HILLEL PARENTS SHARE THE GIFT OF HAVING MORAH PERLSTEIN AS A TEACHER WITH THEIR CHILDREN. WE ARE FOREVER GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH AND LEARN FROM HER. MAY HER TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON HILLEL, AND ON THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF DETROIT, CONTINUE FOR ANOTHER 45 YEARS.

On Wednesday, May 26, Tamarack Camps celebrated ECC4 teacher Helayne Shaw, a Tamarack legend, during the virtual Send a Kid to Camp event. Ms. Shaw started attending Tamarack Camp at the age of seven and has spent her summers working there for over 35 years. The camp provided Ms. Shaw with her passion for Judaism, which she now shares with her students. In fact, her time spent at camp is what made her pursue Jewish education and share the lessons she’s learned about friendship, community, and respect for others with the children and families in the Hillel community.

Mazal Tov to Dr. Joshua Cutler, seventh and eighth-grade social studies teacher, who was awarded one of the Abraham Lincoln Teacher’s Fellowships by The Tikvah Fund. Dr. Cutler was one of 16 chosen recipients from over 200 applicants within exceptional schools around the nation. Dr. Cutler has a BS in history and social studies education from Wayne State University, an MA in athletic administration and coaching from American Military University, and an EdD in teacher leadership from Concordia University-Portland. Dr. Cutler’s dissertation research topic was the impact of instruction using historical fiction on student understanding in middle school history classes. The Abraham Lincoln Teacher’s Fellowship is an initiative of the Tikvah Fund, an educational organization that provides high-level learning opportunities for students, parents, and teaching professionals in subjects such as Western history and literature, American democracy and culture, Zionism and modern Israel, and more.

For 30 years Learning Support Specialist Pam Farber has been one fierce advocate for her students. Her commitment and dedication are unparalleled and serves as a model for us all. Pam has been a true blessing to Hillel Day School for 30 amazing years. May further generations of children and staff continue to be touched by her inexhaustible gifts and talents. Thank you for 30 years of loyal, dedicated service.

Hillel is what it is today because of Morah Ayala Perlstein’s impact over the last 45 years. She has imbued countless students with a love of Judaism, respect for Torah study, and menschlichkeit qualities. Her impact on families is multi-generational as many current Hillel parents share the gift of having Morah Perlstein as a teacher with their children. We are forever grateful for the opportunity to work with and learn from her. May her tremendous impact on Hillel, and on the Jewish community of Detroit, continue for another 45 years.
MIND AND SOUL. BETTER TOGETHER.

FAREWELLS

WE BID FAREWELL TO STAFF MEMBERS WHO HAVE DEDICATED YEARS OF SERVICE TO HILLEL, WHO HAVE MADE HILLEL THEIR LIFE’S WORK, AND WHO WILL BE MISSED DEARLY BY COLLEAGUES AND STUDENTS. WE WISH THEM HEALTH AND HAPPINESS AS THEY RETIRE, AND THEY WILL NEVER BE FAR FROM OUR HEARTS.

STEVE JONES

PERMANENT GUEST TEACHER

Imagine a world where every person greeted each other with a warm smile and an enthusiastic “Good morning.” It has been almost 20 years since Steve Jones joined Hillel and throughout his career, there were many constants, especially his friendly, “Good Morning! How are you?” Steve modeled friendliness every single day at Hillel, providing comfort for those around him. His constant commitment as a permanent guest teacher, math teacher, and coach was noticed and appreciated. One of the beautiful recognitions of Steve’s accomplishments is that through his constant demonstration of dedication, enthusiasm, and care, much of his job was anything but constant. As a guest teacher, he frequently did not know what the day would entail or what classes he would cover, and at times, needed to create plans himself. His days were filled with unknowns, yet, he remained flexible, approachable, and positive. Steve also had an intuitive sense of what was needed around the school, and would often fulfill the needs before anyone asked.

When Hillel needed a math teacher, Steve stepped up and taught both Geometry and Algebra. Steve coached interscholastic and intramural sports and used his initiative and drive to start and maintain the golf program. It is due to Steve’s insight and dedication that our golf program is what it is today. In all sports, he always guided Hillel athletes with encouragement and kindness, helping each child to find their own way to success.

Steve’s devoted heart, friendly personality, and consistent helping hand will always be referenced and appreciated. Mazal Tov, Steve, on your retirement.

CATHY FRIDSON

ECC ADMINISTRATOR

Hillel is where ECC Administrator Cathy Fridson spent her days for the past 15 years. Cathy started part-time in the accounting department during the summer of 2005, handling accounts payable and student billing, and joined the ECC full-time in 2010. Since its inception, Cathy was the backbone and an important team member of the ECC. Her warm smile, welcoming demeanor, and helpful, whatever-it-takes attitude, made her a truly invaluable asset to Hillel. “Cathy was not simply an administrative assistant, she was everything. She knew more about the operations of the ECC than most, and we will all miss her smiling face and helpful hands,” said Robin Pappas, Director of Early Education. Cathy says she will miss the people at Hillel the most. “Hillel has such a dedicated group of educators. I will also miss theenschilheit and the children. I am proud of the continuing opportunities they provide for Jewish learning” said Cathy. She will also miss the smiles and hugs of the ECC children and the good times she shared with all of the ECC staff. We congratulate Cathy on her retirement.

MARCIA SEIGERMAN

LEARNING SPECIALIST

Marcia Seigerman devoted 27 years at Hillel to loving and guiding little people, even her children, Deborah and Jared, who are Hillel alumni. Marcia’s friendly demeanor, thoughtfulness, and kindness have had a tremendous impact on our Hillel community. In addition to her loving nature, Marcia was an incredibly conscientious and diligent Learning Specialist. She always exuded a positive attitude and made certain she met the needs of her students. She has worked with countless students over the years, not only helping them to meet their full potential but also grounding them in love and warmth.

Marcia has been like a chameleon of sorts at Hillel Day School, taking on numerous different roles. Our 2021 distinguished alumni, Senator Jeremy Moss, thanked Marcia at the Annual Gala for sparking his interest in government on a field trip to the state capital, arranged by his then classroom teacher Mrs. Seigerman. Marcia was previously the Resource Room Coordinator in charge of overseeing the needs of grades 1-4 students who would work with teachers strictly via pull-out support. At the time, Marcia managed a team of approximately eight teachers. Since she started her career, Marcia has had to adjust to the ever-evolving student and field of education. Her desire to grow as an educator and help others is only matched by her love for the students. As Marcia retires, the entire Hillel family lovingly thanks her for her years of dedicated service to generations of children and this community as a whole.

JENNIFER BASS

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JENNIFER BASS

Hillel parent to Millie (seventh grade) and Avi (first grade) Bass, joined our kitchen staff, helping to safely prepare and deliver healthy meals to our students every day.

DR. SETH KOPEL

taught at Hillel for 18 years before working as the Director of Judaic Studies at Frankel Jewish Academy and has returned as a Judaic Studies teacher and Advisor in the 5-6 learning community. Seth will move into the 7-8 learning community next year. Seth has a wealth of background and experience in formal Jewish education and programming and we are delighted to have him back.

RACHEL MANELA

is our Librarian/Media Specialist. She has a Masters in Library Science from Wayne State University. She most recently worked at the Novi Public Library, where she worked to build the youth non-fiction collection.

Hillel alumna TAL MELAMED (class of 2003) has returned to Hillel. For the past three years, Tal has taught elementary and middle school in Kfar Shmaryahu, Israel. She returned with her family to Michigan and is a 5-6 Advisory and Judaic Studies teacher. Tal is also the daughter of our 3-4 Judaic Studies teacher Nishe Wilner.

EMILY PARR

is our 3-4 Learning Specialist, after working as a special education teacher for the New York City Department of Education since 2007. She has a Masters in Education from Mercy College (NYC), and a BA in Literature Science and Art from the University of Michigan.

SPENCER WOLFE

returns to Hillel as our K-3 science teacher after having served in student support roles and as a sixth-grade advisor last year. After graduation from Michigan State University in 2018, Spencer moved to Utah, where he worked as a field instructor at a wilderness therapy company. Spencer helped support, motivate, and educate his students while hiking and camping. Spencer will share his passion and knowledge about science, nature, and the outdoors with first through fourth-grade students next year.

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Each year Hillel offers many opportunities for our students to participate in athletics. Whether it is intramural (in-house offerings) or interscholastic competitions with local schools, our program philosophy emphasizes participation for all in a safe and encouraging environment. Hillel believes that athletic participation and physical activity contribute to growing the whole child while promoting a healthy lifestyle. This year, despite the challenges we faced with COVID, we continued to strive to meet our goal to offer a program that provided opportunities for both individual and collaborative skill growth, character development, and community spirit. A program that helped participants to build self-confidence and one that instilled the importance of derech erez. While this year was unlike any other, Hillel did not shy away from offering opportunities to participate. In order to do so safely, we elected to do so as intramurals for our older students. Throughout the year offerings included basketball, cross country, intro to racquet sports, soccer, and tennis, volleyball. Hillel was able to streamline this process as we already had a robust intramural program in place.

Back in October as we were completing our first session of athletics, eighth grader Caleb Starr shared the following regarding his experience, “I feel that Hillel athletics have always been exceptional and this year is no different. Hillel did an excellent job keeping students active and engaged as well as caring for their well being”. Additionally, eighth grader Aryeh Gamer stated, “One thing that I especially enjoy about cross country is getting to know people from other grades. When I started doing cross country, I looked up to the older kids and followed their example. Now, I'm glad that I have the chance to encourage others, and give them that same experience”.

With tradition, this spring we held our annual Kaufman Family Athletic Program which is highlighted below. Our program celebrated our robust intramural program that helped participants to build self-confidence and one that instilled the importance of derech erez. While this year was unlike any other, Hillel did not shy away from offering opportunities to participate. In order to do so safely, we elected to do so as intramurals for our older students. Throughout the year offerings included basketball, cross country, intro to racquet sports, soccer, and tennis, volleyball. Hillel was able to streamline this process as we already had a robust intramural program in place.

The second half of the program celebrated our student-athletes and award recipients. This year we were happy to recognize outstanding eighth graders who stood out among their peers. These students received The Coach Tony Sanders Mensch Awards. Award winners include Michael Basso, Aryeh Gamer, Brody Fleshman, Elon Rosenberg, Rebecca Mills, and Caleb Starr. The Kaufman Scholar-Athlete Awards, created in honor and loving memory of Herbert W. Kaufman, is given to two recipients based on academic success, athletic talent, and leadership. Congratulations to this year's recipients, Spencer Cherrin and Naomi Kahan.

Mazel Tov to all our participants and award winners.

Thank you to Sue and Alan Kaufman and their family for sponsoring this annual program. As a reminder, all gifts made to the Kaufman Family Athletic Fund will be generously matched to ensure that every Hillel student can participate in sports, regardless of their ability to pay. Donations can be made at www.hillelday.org/athletics2021.

COACH TONY MEMORIAL COURT

April 9, 2021, to honor and memorialize our beloved Coach Tony Sanders. Coach Tony passed away on April 2, 2020, due to complications from COVID-19. The day began with a dedicated Day of Learning sponsored by Hillel friends and colleagues. Students, dressed in Hillel spirit wear, gathered in 600-alls to share memories and provide comfort to one another. While COVID-19 forced the celebration of Coach Tony’s life to be long overdue, celebrating his life a year later was incredibly meaningful, as the lasting impact he had on so many is still felt today.

Students participated in a gym walkthrough, stopping to pay special attention to two significant details on the gym floor. Coach Tony’s signature displayed on the floor is a reminder of the time he spent coaching and guiding students from that very spot; Coach Tony’s court faces the bleachers so everyone who visits the gymnasium can reflect on their time with him.

Stones were also painted in Coach Tony’s memory by the students and placed in a rock garden outside of the school. Unlike a flower, a stone will last forever, just as the memories of the people whom we love last forever. El Maleh Rachamin (God of Mercy) was recited by teachers as the students reflected at the rock garden. In the afternoon, the Hillel community gathered via Zoom for a heart-warming memorial to share memories and provide comfort to one another.
THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

TODAH RABAH AMY SAPEIKA!

Amy,
Thank you for all you have done for the PTO these past 3 years.
For building it up into a strong, vibrant community of volunteers.
For making a million little split second decisions for the benefit of our Hillel community of students, faculty and parents.
For putting your own needs on hold, and keeping PTO the focus of most of your days.
For making plans long before a program rolls out, and then changing them last minute to accommodate the ultimate unknown: COVID.
And then smiling and laughing with us all the way through.
For reassuring us our efforts as volunteer were all worth it.
And for making sure PTO did not fail, but thrived through it all.
You persevered and gave it your all.
Your goodness shined through and through.
We want you to know it mattered, and YOU mattered.
More than we can even show!
And we want you to know we are so grateful and Thankful for all you have done.
It’s time for you to sit back, relax, and let us take over the show, and know you have left this organization stronger then it was before.

Better Together
Love,
The Hillel PTO
NEW FAMILY PROFILE

MEET THE TAMAROFF FAMILY

Gillian and Jason Tamaroff always planned on sending their kids to public school. In fact, their eldest son Elan attended Pierce Elementary for kindergarten…then the pandemic hit. While generally underwhelmed and unimpressed with Elan’s first year at Pierce, they admit that but for the pandemic, they probably would have never considered Hillel or any other private school as they both grew up attending public schools and specifically moved into Birmingham to take advantage of the public schools. Yet, once they did decide to make the switch, they toured Hillel and other private schools in the area. “It was Amy Schlussel’s first tour since the pandemic shutdown,” said Gillian and Jason. “Despite the school looking a bit like a deserted ghost town, we were still blown away by the facility and everything Amy explained about the curriculum and values at Hillel. We loved the emphasis not only on academics but on nurturing the soul and emphasizing the social/emotional connection, as well. We want to instill these values in our kids for their boys. A COVID-19 silver lining!”

Fate certainly plays a role in the Tamaroffs’ life. Although they’ve known each other since middle school and attended school together all the way through the University of Michigan, they reconnected while living in Chicago and the rest, as they say, is history. Their transition to Hillel is pretty similar. While they were always aware of Hillel, they were intimidated thinking that Hillel was only for super religious families. However, they now understand that Hillel is for everyone and that Hillel’s core Jewish values align with the ones that they try to instil in their children. “We have been so happy to watch Elan, entering 1st grade, and Jacob, entering ECC4, become more immersed in their Judaism and learning Hebrew, but it also goes beyond this – it’s about spirituality, Jewish values, Jewish education, and fostering a love for Israel that our children most certainly wouldn’t be getting at Birmingham public schools. Especially in today’s political environment, this is important than ever.”

While it was not a typical year to start Hillel, the Tamaroffs are so impressed by just about everything and are so grateful to have been at Hillel during this uncertain time. “The faculty is so dedicated and warm. They make us feel welcome - despite social distancing and health protocols. We are so impressed with the curriculum and technology and how much our children have learned and grown in just one year. Despite the circumstances, our boys thrived and we couldn’t be more grateful.” They attribute the boys’ success to Hillel’s small class sizes, collaborative environment, and warm loving atmosphere. “We constantly hear Elan singing prayers and Hebrew songs around the house. He begs to play iTaLAM on his iPad. Jacob came home every day with new facts to proudly share about nocturnal animals, dinosaurs, and countless other topics. We are in awe.” Although initially worried about the social aspect – especially moving away from their neighborhood school, those fears were quickly erased as soon as they experienced the friendly, accommodating, and loving faculty and families. “Even though we haven’t had the opportunity to go inside the school or really congregate with other families in our kids’ classes, Hillel promotes such a sense of community and belonging that we’ve still felt so welcomed – almost like we’ve been here forever!”

Gillian and Jason look forward to hopefully entering the campus next year and seeing the school “in action,” volunteering, and especially getting to know the teachers and other families better. “In the meantime, they are so appreciative of the Hillel faculty and staff. “They took a chance coming back to school, put aside their own apprehensions, and put our children’s needs first. With all that, they still managed to give our kids an amazing year where they felt happy, safe, and secure, had fun, and learned a ton! These teachers are truly superheroes in our book!”

Gillian and Jason also believe in giving back to Hillel. “Anything we can do to help support the school which has so offered so much to our children and community is the least we can do. We give to Hillel to ensure not only that our children can take advantage of the well-rounded education that is rich in Jewish values, but that this can be available to other families in the community as well, regardless of their financial ability.” They also strongly encourage more families to look into Hillel for the “unparalleled education, dedicated and top-notch staff and administration, state-of-the-art facility, and the warm loving environment rich in Jewish values – what more could you want for your kids?”

We felt an immediate sense of belonging” Gillian even had tears in her eyes by the end of the tour and knew Hillel was the school for their boys. A COVID-19 silver lining!

There has never been a better time to enroll at Hillel Day School! In the fall, we welcomed over 100 new families to Hillel and invited prospective families Gan-8 to “zoom in” and learn more about Hillel. Hillel participants shared their excitement and confidence about the school, year, our innovative dual curricula, emphasized safety measures due to COVID-19, shared stories of student success, and answered many questions. “Although the meetings took place over Zoom, there was as definite intimacy as we engaged with families,” said Amira Soleimani, Director of Judaic Studies Curriculum & Instruction.

Our “Be You” themed family open house in January was nothing short of incredible. It simply did not matter that it was happening virtually. It was inspiring to watch prospective students and their families engage with Hillel faculty and staff. They enjoyed hearing Gan teacher Elissa Tischler read the book “Be You” by Peter Reynolds (if you haven’t read it to your children, please do), following a scavenger hunt led by first and second grade teachers Nancy Cohen and Aron Kaufman, painting Matisse-inspired portraits led by art teacher Lauren Cohen, and hearing super-silly jokes from social worker Harrison Leibow.

Finally, just because health and safety protocols prevented prospective parents from entering the building, that did not deter Amy Schlussel, Director of Advancement, from giving prospective families tours of the school via FaceTime. “Families shared how impressed they were with the confidence of the students and their engagement with their teachers,” said Amy. “Honestly, I did not know how the FaceTime tours would measure up to an in-person tour, yet the parents could still sense the specialness of Hillel.” This was a new adventure and Hillel ensured that new families had a warm welcome to join our Hillel community.
THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY IS STRONGER THAN EVER

YOM HA-ATZMA'UT PARADE

In spite of the pandemic, the entire Hillel community gathered to celebrate Israel's 73rd birthday. During Yom Ha-atzma'ut, students enjoyed experiential learning about Israel and its importance to the Jewish people. The day included a festive parade around campus where classrooms proudly waved Israeli flags and the banners they created for the occasion. ECC students made their own passports to travel to Israel while Gan through eighth graders made a dead sea salt scrub, enjoyed a kibbutz experience of cow milking with our shinshinim, baked pita with a “bedouin” danced to Israeli music, pet many adorable live animals, and decorated their own cupcakes. This day of celebration brought the sounds, sights, and tastes of Israel to Hillel. The festivities concluded with an evening program via Zoom, where students and families enjoyed a recap video of the day, special guest appearances from Hillel alumni and families now living in Israel, and age-appropriate break-out rooms. Thank you to Jan-Pro, Event Sponsor, Sandy and Jim Danto, Games Sponsor, and Mira and Leopoldo Eisenberg, Sweet Treat Sponsor.

HAVDALAPALOOZA 2021

Havdalepalooza 2021 was a fun-filled virtual evening for over 300 families complete with havdalah led by local clergy and age-appropriate break-out rooms that included a Goodnight Zoom storytime with JFamily for preschool-aged children, an Adventure Scavenger Hunt facilitated by Tamarack Camps for students in grades 1-4, and an Escape Room led by BBYO for grades 5-8. We thank our incredible sponsors GLR Advanced Recycling and Hunter Pasteur Homes for their support and our community partners: Adat Shalom, BBYO, Beth Ahm, Congregation Shaarey Zedek, Frankel Jewish Academy, JFamily, Tamarack Camps, Temple Israel, and Temple Kol Ami.

"WHAT A WONDERFUL DAY! WE LOVED EVERY MINUTE OF IT."
- Nancy and Bobby Schostak

MAGIC & MUNCHIES

On Saturday, December 5, families who donated to Hillel’s Annual Fund enjoyed a live, exclusive heart-stopping show with world-renowned New York magician T.J. Tana from the comfort of their home, complete with hand-delivered sweet treats, snacks, and beverages sponsored by Star Trax and Stingray.

GENERATIONS DAY

More than 500 grandparents, grandfriends, and special guests from near and far joined Hillel for Generations Day on April 23.

Everyone gathered virtually to enjoy adorable student performances, meaningful classroom visits, a book club, and concluded the celebration with a community Shabbat candle lighting. The smiles, laughter, and (happy) tears that we saw in our students and special guests filled our hearts with joy.

"WHAT A WONDERFUL DAY! WE LOVED EVERY MINUTE OF IT."
- Nancy and Bobby Schostak
DRIVE-IN
GALA

After postponing last year’s Annual Gala, we were determined to celebrate our honorees this year in person however that might look. With many thanks to our gracious host, Temple Israel, and our wonderful sponsors: Hedy & David Blatt; Eden, Kevin, Skylar, and Zachary Elbinger; TCF Bank; Temple Israel; Financial Network; Jan Pro Cleaning & Disinfecting; Putnam Investments; Debbie and Mark Landau; Kaufman Insurance and Financial Group, LLC. (Sabrina, Brian, Jadyn, Kendyl, Reese Kaufman, and Karen and Jerry Kaufman); and Sue and Alan Kaufman. Hillel honored Sheri and David Jaffa at our Drive-In Gala on May 23. Though it might have been pouring rain, attendees were not deterred from celebrating the wonderful couple and the accomplishments of Hillel this past year.

Sheri and David Jaffa have been stalwart supporters of Hillel Day School for decades, beginning with their decision to enroll their daughters, Eden (class of 1988), and Sabrina (class of 1991) in the 1980s. “We wanted a good education for them - after the first year, we were hooked!” Sheri recalls. “It was a godsend to give them a strong secular and Jewish education that would teach them about their heritage, how to be mensches, and to prepare them for the next stage of their education. That’s the way it was then, and that’s the way it is now.”

The couple are proud Hillel grandparents to Skylar Elbinger (class of 2018), Jadyn Kaufman (class of 2019), Zachary Elbinger (class of 2021), Kendyl Kaufman (class of 2021), and Reese Kaufman (seventh grade), and their devotion to Hillel continues unabated. In addition to making Hillel central to their philanthropic efforts, on numerous occasions, Sheri answers the call to volunteer, and both Sheri and David frequently attend events, from specific grade programs to the Annual Gala, often accompanied by their children and sons-in-law, Brian Kaufman, and Kevin Elbinger.

Sheri, a former teacher in Oak Park Schools, is a lifetime member of Hadassah, as well as active in American ORT, and American Friends of the IDF.

The couple, who make their spiritual home at Temple Israel, say their greatest joy is found in their close-knit family. They are exemplary role models for their enthusiastic and steadfast support of our school, and our larger Jewish community. We were thrilled to bestow upon them the 2021 Dream Maker Award. May they continue to go from strength to strength.
Thank you to the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit!

Hillel is incredibly grateful to the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit for their $103,320.00 allocation from the Emergency Allocation that helped us meet the needs of all students this year. The funds helped to defray the cost of 80 new teacher laptops, microphones, amplifiers, and document cameras that greatly enhanced in-person and remote learning for our students. In addition, the distribution offset the cost of personal protective equipment and increased cleaning needs that were necessary to keep the building open for in-person learning. “None of this would have been possible without the continued support of the Federation,” Dr. Darin Katz said. “We are truly blessed to be a part of the Federation family and the Detroit Jewish community.”

COVID-19 Challenge Fund

The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on nearly every operational aspect of the school. We are so grateful to those who donated to the COVID-19 Challenge Fund this year. These donations helped Hillel offset some of the costs associated with COVID. Since March 2020, Hillel provided approximately $90,000 in additional financial aid to over 65 families who were negatively impacted by the pandemic. To prepare for safe, in-person learning this year, we spent approximately $40,000 on PPE, plexiglass, and furniture for many of our classrooms. Finally, Hillel continues to pay approximately $2,000 per month for health status tracking software to ensure that only healthy students and staff enter the Hillel building each day. This is expected to continue into the 2021-2022 school year.

NEW GIVING LEVELS

Last summer, amid all the pandemic planning, the Advancement Office felt it was important to call for renewed support for Hillel’s mission to deliver an outstanding education to as many Jewish children as possible in our community, especially considering how donor support and the Annual Fund helped Hillel to safely return to school. Equally important, we wanted donors to feel part of our Circle of Community. Therefore, we chose to rename Hillel’s giving levels to reflect and celebrate our storied history, and the beloved state of Israel. The new giving levels are as follows:

- **King David** $50,000 or more
- **David Ben-Gurion** $25,000-$49,999
- **Golda Meir** $18,000-$24,999
- **Star of David** $10,000-$17,999
- **Sabra** $5,000-$9,999
- **Gefen** $2,500-$4,999
- **Chai** $1,800-$2,499
- **Pomegranate** $1,200-$1,799
- **Lion** $700-$1,199
- **Chaverim** $350-$699
- **Tzedakah** $1-$349
- **Legacy Circle** for donors who have included a gift to Hillel Day School in their will, retirement plan, or life insurance policy

DONORS SPONSOR DAYS OF LEARNING

Hillel is more than a school - we are a community committed to empowering our students with the skills to succeed in a complex and competitive world, instilling a passion for continuous learning, and inspiring a strong connection to Jewish living and values. As we navigated this past school year, the strength and dedication of Hillel’s teachers and staff allowed Hillel to face challenges, ensure safety measures, and meet the academic and social-emotional needs of our students whether they learned in-person or remotely. Wherever they were, smiling and laughter continued, even behind the masks. We were so very grateful to be together and viewed each instructional day during this new normal as a gift.

We thank the many parents, grandparents, alumni, and faculty who sponsored a day of learning to help ensure that Hillel teachers were able to safely provide authentic, meaningful, and engaging learning to all of our students. These sponsorships were a wonderful way to celebrate a child/grandchild’s birthday, honor a friend, and mark a special occasion. Each sponsorship was announced daily to the Hillel community through morning announcements and received recognition on Hillel’s social media channels. Hillel raised over $20,000 during this initiative and we are excited that this will continue throughout the 2021-2022 school year; secure your spot today.

LEGACY CIRCLE

Donors of $1,800 or more to Hillel’s 2019-2020 Annual Fund enjoyed a very engaging (and delicious) Virtual Wine, Cheese, and Chocolate Tasting led by Hillel alumnus Zach Berg (class of 1998), culinary outfitter at Monger’s Provisions in Detroit. Attendees enjoyed delicious wine, cheeses, and chocolates all delivered to their homes in advance of the event. These donors also had the unique opportunity to “meet” Head of School Dr. Darin Katz who had just begun his tenure during this unprecedented time for our school and community.

We encourage you to consider including Hillel in your will, retirement plan, or life insurance policy. Leave a legacy in honor or in memory of a special person at Hillel by purchasing a brick to be installed in the front pathway. Learn more and purchase your brick at https://www.hillelday.org/brickcampaign

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HILLEL’S FUTURE

PAVE THE WAY TO HILLEL’S FUTURE

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MIND AND SOUL. BETTER TOGETHER.
Advancement News

Byna and Noah Levine are the very proud parents of Josh (Shayna, class of 1992) Levine and grandparents of current Hillel students Brandon, Marni, Mia, and Cailey Levine. While Josh and Shayna are well known in the Detroit area for their philanthropic involvement and leadership, they both come by it naturally. Josh’s father Noah is a non-profit consultant and philanthropic advisor. He retired in August 2011 as Associate Executive Director after 30 years of service with the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta. It is no surprise that Bynna and Noah wanted to established a Donor Advised Fund in honor of their grandson Brandon’s bar mitzvah. The Levine Family Donor Advised Fund is an endowment created to instill a culture of philanthropy in the Levine grandchildren. Each year around Thanksgiving, Shayna and Josh Levine, together with their children, will be presented with funding opportunities for Hillel. They will then deliberate as a family to determine how approximately $400 of their funds will be allocated that year.

This past Thanksgiving weekend, Amy Schlussel presented the Levine family with funding ideas. After an incredible deliberation process, the children decided to allocate this year’s $400 as follows:

$200 towards Hillel’s Physical Education Department to purchase snowshoes. The children were very excited to see this new endeavor and Mrs. Nicole Miller, Hillel’s Athletic Director, is looking forward to implementing a snowshoe school fitness program next year.

$100 towards third-grade teacher Michelle Wolfe’s desire to purchase more series books for the third-grader’s Mystery Book unit. During this unit, third-graders are assigned a “just right” mystery book and grouped with other students reading the same book. Book clubs meet weekly to discuss the suspects, clues, predictions and work together to solve the mystery. Even reluctant readers are motivated to participate by the end of the unit, most students want to keep reading and request additional books in the series. These funds will help purchase additional series books such as Nate the Great, Milo and Jazz, Nancy Drew and The Clue Crew, and Sherlock Holmes.

$100 towards Lauren Sterling’s wish to purchase books for the sixth through eighth grade’s March Madness Reading Tournament. This multi-grade reading competition is a celebration of reading and captures the excitement built in fifth-graders’ Battle of the Books.

Please contact Amy Schlussel if you would like to establish a similar fund with your children and/or grandchildren.

MEZUZAH CAMPAIGN
Hillel families past and present are invited to participate in our ongoing mezuzah campaign, affixing beautiful student-made mezuzot to doorposts throughout our school. We invite you 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

SAVE THE DATE HILLEL’S ANNUAL GALA SUNDAY, MAY 15, 2022

THANK YOU TO OUR 2020-2021 SPONSORS

ENDOWMENT NEWS: THE LEVINE DONOR ADVISED FUND

To learn more about our sponsorship opportunities for 2021-2022, contact Marni Cherrin, mcherrin@hillelday.org or 248.851.6950
**DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI Awardees**

Hillel graduates grow to become outstanding role models at home, at work, and in the community. Our alumni are the school’s living legacy. Each year we present the Distinguished Alumni award to graduates who have made significant contributions in the areas of career and leadership service and humanitarianism, creativity, and courage. Two alumni stood out from the others this year.

**JESSICA ALTER (CLASS OF 1993)**

Jessica attended Andover High School, now Bloomfield Hills High School, and went on to the University of Michigan and the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). She received her MBA from Harvard Business School. Jessica has helmed business development for several companies in Silicon Valley, including her own. Currently, Jessica is Vice President of Business Development for Figma, a leader in collaborative design software. She previously co-founded and is still Chairman of Tech for Campaigns, the tech and digital arm for Democratic campaigns. She was recently named one of the 100 Most Creative People in Business by Fast Company. Jessica credits Hillel with instilling in her the importance of community. “Everything I’ve done involves building a community, and Hillel was my first one,” she said. The choices and friendships she made at Hillel continue to inform and shape her life, she said. “I’m close with classmates and teachers to this day, she recalls.

Both Jeremy and Jessica remain close with many of their Hillel classmates. Most current students recognize Jeremy from his annual visits to Hillel during 8th grade’s “Campaign for A Cause” and when he speaks with the fifth grade about the three branches of government. He also personally tours fourth graders during their visit to the Michigan State Capitol each year.

**STATE SENATOR JEREMY MOSS (CLASS OF 2000)**

Jeremy attended Groves and Michigan State University and is serving his first term representing the 11th district in southern Oakland County. His political career started in 2011 as a Southfield City Council member, when, at age 25, he became the youngest-ever elected official in the city’s history. He was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives in 2014 and began his work across the aisle to make the inner dealings of government transparent. Elected to the Senate in 2018, several of Jeremy’s bills have become law, including legislation to give tax relief to Michigan homeowners and to help high school dropouts find work. The bills have become law, including legislation to give tax relief to Michigan homeowners and to help high school dropouts find employment opportunities.

**MEREDITH SHAPIRO (CLASS OF 2020)**

Meredith Shapiro shares her thoughts about what made her Hillel experience so special, advice for eighth-graders, and how Hillel helped prepare her for her first year at Cranbrook Kingswood.

**Q. What class do you feel best prepared you for high school, and why?**

**A.** My favorite Hillel memory, if I have to choose, would have to be the Purim carnival in seventh grade. I loved the joy in the air of the Hillel community joining together to celebrate the holiday. It was so fun getting to run different activities with my friends. I loved getting to celebrate the Judaism that was taught so prominently throughout the years in such a lively way. Also, though this may not qualify as an individual memory, I feel I must mention Morah Gawel’s Shoa class. What I learned there has shaped the way I see the world, both as a Jew and as a person overall. That class helped me connect on a greater level with my Jewish identity and stand up against Anti-Semitism that I see in my daily life, especially as I have transitioned to a secular school. Not to forget Morah Gawel! I cannot thank her enough for the way she has taught me, both from the curriculum and in work ethic tactics; I have not gone a day in high school without using both of those things.

**Q. What advice would you give to eighth graders preparing for high school in the fall?**

**A.** The best advice I could give to eighth-graders is to try new things. Transitioning to high school can be scary, but in your first year of high school the pressure is much lower than any other year and is a great time to make new friends and venture out to do something new. This year, I tried three new sports that I had never competed in before (swimming, skiing, and sailing). This helped me make many new friends outside of the people I had classes with, and I had a lot of fun doing something I would not normally do. Also, joining activities has helped greatly to build school spirit and find a more personal community outside of the school at large. It is a great way to transition and make new friends.

**CLASS NOTES**

**MERRICK MICHAELSON (CLASS OF 2019)** won the MHSAA pre-regional cross-country race and ran the state race in October, finishing in the top 50 for his division.

**LINDSAY SCHLUSSEL (CLASS OF 2018)**

BBYO Kulanu Chapter N’siah (President)

**RACHEL BAKER (CLASS OF 2017)** was sworn in to the Michigan National Guard as an intelligence analyst.

**EMMA CHERRIN (CLASS OF 2017)** was the Berkley High School Student Body Vice President and Co-Founder and Co-President of the Berkley High School Girl Up Club.

**ISABEL JACOBSON (CLASS OF 2020)** received a $2,500 National Merit Scholarship.

**JULIA DISKIN (CLASS OF 2015)**

was elected to serve on the General Assembly for Michigan State University’s Student Government. Julia had the opportunity to speak on behalf of herself and the community about antisemitism and how she is proud (and unfortunately scared) to be Jewish.

**PELLI MECHNIKOV (CLASS OF 2015)**

is president of Spartans for Israel at Michigan State University. A large portion of this past year was spent thinking of ways to engage students with Israel programming during a pandemic. Spartans for Israel ended the year with various events themed around Israel Week for over 400 students.

**SPOTLIGHT ON A HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMAN**

**MEREDITH SHAPIRO (CLASS OF 2020)**

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Congratulations Hillel Day School Class of 2017 Alumni

Yael Atzmon
Pioneer High School
University of Michigan

Rachel Baker
Frankel Jewish Academy
Wayne State University

Jessica Caminker
Frankel Jewish Academy
Gap Year at Midreshet Lindenbaum

Emma Chenin
Berkley High School
University of Michigan

Ilana Diskin
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University

Hannah Gorman
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan

Katie Holland
North Farmington High School
University of Vermont

Isabel Jacobson
Crabtree Koonswood
Princeton

Joey Katz
Groves High School
University of Michigan

Julie Klein
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Michigan - School of Nursing

Marlee Kroll
Frankel Jewish Academy
Arizona State University

David Salfa
Grantham Kingswood
Wayne State University

Emily Schiffer
Frankel Jewish Academy
Albion College

Arielle Shlafer
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University

Liana Tarnopol
Frankel Jewish Academy
Northwestern University

Eli Pinals
Huron High School
Northeastern

Emery Williams
Tuskegee University

Adina Robbins
Frankel Jewish Academy
Washington University

David Weinberg
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University

Mackenzie Morton
Frankel Jewish Academy
Michigan State University - Lyman Briggs College

Joseph Shumunov
Frankel Jewish Academy
Kalamazoo College

Lev Sklar
Berkley High School
University of Michigan

Arielle Silver
Frankel Jewish Academy
University of Western Ontario

Elyssa Biederman, Class of 2018

For Hillel Alumna Elyssa Biederman, extracurricular activities were just as important as academics to help prepare her for the future. As a student, not only did she excel academically due to smaller class sizes and a profound teacher-student connection, but her talents in cross-country allowed her to leave her footprint in a legacy of alumni at Hillel Day School. During the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, Elyssa was awarded the Coaches Award for her talent, commitment, and sportsmanship. “Elyssa was a talented runner in her days here at Hillel; she constantly pushed herself to be where I am today,” she said. “I always thought I should have run a short distance because hockey is similar to sprinting, but long-distance helped me with endurance.”

Now a junior at Birmingham Groves High School, Elyssa plays on a 16-and under team for Little Caesars, one of four organizations in Michigan offering Tier 1 (AAA) girls’ hockey. She is also a current member of the National Honor Society and will be playing women’s ice hockey for the Colgate University Division 1 College Team in New York State starting in the fall of 2022.

A Hillel core value that has stayed with Elyssa as a young Jewish adult, is that of perfecting the world. She volunteers as a student coach for the Little Caesars girls 12-year-old team and is excited to guide young girls who are all headed in the same direction as she was at that age. Additionally, Elyssa works as a madrich with second graders at Adat Shalom’s Hebrew School, where she guides them as they learn and connect with Jewish history and Hebrew. “Hillel provided our children with small classes, which allowed them to thrive academically, creating a good foundation for high school success and taught Judaism consistent with our family’s values,” said her mom, Maria Biederman. “We are grateful to have such a wonderful Jewish day school in our community.”

Sophie Erlich, Class of 2013

SOPHIE ERLICH (CLASS OF 2013) graduated from Michigan State University and will be attending the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health to pursue a Master of Science in Environmental Health.

Tyler Presser, Class of 2013

TYLER PRESSER (CLASS OF 2013) graduated from USC School of Engineering and received the Department of Astronautical Engineering Rocket Scientists of the Year Award.

Eden Lichterman, Class of 2012

EDEN LICHTERMAN (CLASS OF 2012) works as an e-commerce writer for Meredith Corporations’ magazines such as People and InStyle. Her content is centered around the stay-at-home lifestyle, making product recommendations for clothing and masks. As a journalism student at Northwestern University, she held two internships which affirmed her decision to make writing a full-time career. Her first experience in the field was as a reporting intern at SEEN Magazine, a local lifestyle magazine in Metro Detroit, where Eden had the opportunity to meet and interview local designers and business owners. Next, Eden was awarded an internship as a lifestyle editorial intern with Bustle, a digital publication in New York City, where she covered industry events.

During her time at Hillel Day School, English was Eden’s favorite subject and cemented her love for writing. “My Hillel teachers gave me the tools to become a strong writer both academically and in my journalistic pursuits. Without that foundation, I would not have gone on to take advanced English classes in high school and ultimately attend a journalism school,” said Eden. As for advice she can impart to our students who are interested in pursuing a career in journalism, Eden says to read and write as much as you can. The more you write, the easier it will be to find your voice and develop a passion to write about topics that are meaningful to you.

Sarah Weinfeld, Class of 2010

SARA WEINFELD (CLASS OF 2010) is a 2018 graduate of Michigan State University, where she received her BA in Human Development and Family Studies with a minor in Health Promotion and a 2020 graduate of the University of Michigan School of Social Work. Sara studied Interpersonal Practice and received a School Social Worker specialization. She is currently the social worker at the Frankel Jewish Academy.

The Class of 2017 Was Also Accepted To:

Ball State University, Binghamton University, Case Western Reserve, Columbia, Cornell University, DePaul University, Eastern Michigan University, Eli Lilly, Emory University, George Washington University, Grand Valley State University, Indiana University, McGill University, Michigan Tech, University of Washington, Oakland University, Oberlin College, Ohio State University, Penn State University, Purdue University, Queens University, Smith College, Syracuse University, Temple University, Tufts University, Tulane University, University of Alabama, University of Colorado Boulder, University of Maryland, University of Toledo, Wagner College, Wake Forest University, Wesleyan University, Western Michigan University.
Hillel alum works to fight COVID

during the COVID-19 pandemic, her work was focused on vaccination projects and studying emerging infectious diseases in low- and middle-income countries, primarily the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Gadoth found her passion in the field of public health "when I stumbled upon it in my undergrad career, I kind of instantly knew it was what I wanted to do for a living," Gadoth told the Detroit Jewish News. "All those cheesy things everyone tells you about how you'll take a class in college and it'll all just click and make sense actually happened for me." The class was a freshman seminar at the University of Michigan called Emerging Infectious Diseases. "I loved everything about it," she said. Public health "combines my love of biology and also foreign relations and government and politics and human behavior. I loved all of it," Gadoth is now researching the impact of COVID-19 and trying to figure out how to create and run a public health study during a global pandemic.

Special thanks to the Detroit Jewish News.

OLIVIA BRODSKY (CLASS OF 2007)

As a child, Olivia Brodsky developed a deep love and appreciation for song. Following her Bat Mitzvah, she joined the Temple Israel Ten Tifillah Team and was an original member of Shaarey Zedek’s “Music & Motzi.”

Over the years, Olivia flourished into the role of soloist, leading Shabbat services, and joining both Cantors Michael Smolash and Neil Michaels at Temple Israel, as well as Cantor Meir Finkelstein at Shaarey Zedek, for High Holiday services. Once she realized her dream was to become a cantor, Olivia created her own high school work-study program at the Frankel Jewish Academy, where she trained weekly with Cantor Smolash and Cantor Finkelstein to learn liturgy, prayer, and music.

Olivia followed her passion to the Tufts University/New England Conservatory of Music dual-degree program. Olivia was accepted to the Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion’s Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music, providing her with a prestigious designation as one of six members of the cantorial class of 2021. She honed her craft even more while interning at Congregation Beth Yam in Hilton Head, South Carolina, and at the distinguished Rodef Shalom synagogue in New York City. Olivia has now been called to the pulpit of Temple Beth Rishon in New Jersey. Housed just outside of New York City, this beautiful synagogue will be the spiritual home for Olivia as she transitions into her position of Jewish leadership.

RACHEL LUTZ (CLASS OF 1994) AND ZACHARY BERG (CLASS OF 1998)

competed for Detroit Demo Day’s People Choice Awards worth $25,000 each. They won!