



13 questions every Jewish student should ask prospective colleges

By Dr. Yvette Alt Miller
Aish Hatorah Resources

A helpful guide for Jewish high school students checking out various universities. While Jewish life on many college campuses today is thriving, there are challenges as well. Some campuses have experienced vitriolic condemnations of Israel, seen professors refuse to write letters of recommendation for students contemplating studying in the Jewish state, and even been the site of anti-Semitic vandalism and attacks.

Here are 13 questions every Jewish student should ask when visiting colleges to help them get a sense of what lies in store.

1. How big is the Jewish community on campus?

Note that even smaller Jewish communities can be dynamic and welcoming. “A bigger observant community doesn’t always equate with a ‘better’ experience for students,” observes Dr. Rebecca Cypess, an Associate Professor and the Associate Director at the Department of Music at Rutgers. “Smaller communities can prompt students to develop leadership skills that they might not otherwise find in themselves. Those skills, and the self-confidence that they inspire, can serve us for a lifetime.”

2. What Jewish organizations are there on campus?

Is there a Hillel on campus? How about a Chabad, Aish, Meor? Ask about Jewish clubs and organizations, then make time to visit. See what the buildings are like

and meet the staff. Are there students hanging out in the Hillel or Chabad? Take a look at their weekly schedule or, better yet, attend an event. If you can, arrange to eat a meal or attend Shabbat services on campus to get a real sense of what it’s like.

“I would want to speak with the Hillel Director and arrange a meeting and a private tour with a current Jewish student,” explains Jake Kaufman, Director of the Hillel at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo.

3. Are there Jewish fraternities and sororities?

If you think a frat might be for you, ask to visit some of the Jewish sororities and fraternities and speak with members too.

4. What kind of diversity

is there in the Jewish community?

Rabbanit Ahava Schachter-Zarembski, the OUJLIC Senior Educator at the Hillel of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, suggests prospective students ask where Jewish students come from and the different ways they express their Jewishness. Do Orthodox Jews participate in the same activities as non-Orthodox Jews? Be sure to speak with current students and the administrators in Jewish organizations.

5. How can I become involved in Jewish campus life?

“We know that people who get involved in building community make their own personal university experience more enriched,” explains Rabbi Aaron Greenberg, Director of the Orthodox Union’s Seif Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus – Canada. See if you’ll have the chance to get involved and how easy it is to adopt leadership positions.

Some Jewish organizations even offer formal internships. Ask if these exist on the campus you’re visiting too.

6. Are there residence halls which typically have larger numbers of Jewish students?

Check out where Jewish students live to get a sense of what it would be like to be a student. Take a look at rooms and common areas. Ask to speak with current students and spend time with them hanging out if your schedule allows.

7. Where can I get kosher food?

Is kosher food available in university dining halls—or do you have to go off campus? Is kosher food available at each meal? Every day? If you want to truly sample a college’s kosher options, ask to have a meal on campus. As an added bonus, you’ll get to meet current students and see what a typical meal is like.

8. Is there a local Jewish community nearby?

There are times when you might feel like getting off campus. Ask about synagogues, kosher restaurants or Jewish cultural life in the area.

9. Are there Jewish services on campus?

Are there Jewish religious services on campus? Find out where and when. Whether you’re not a big synagogue-goer or you never skip a day in shul, it’s important to know when and where services are for those times you want to tap into them and pray as part of the Jewish community.

10. What is Shabbat like on campus?

Consider asking to spend a Shabbat on campus. Nothing beats experiencing a Shabbat to give prospective students a sense of what it’s like to live on campus as a Jewish student. Contact the local Hillel, Chabad or the university itself to help arrange a Shabbat meal or even a complete Shabbat.

11. Has there been anti-Israel or anti-Semitic activity on campus?

Which groups were responsible and how active are they today?

12. How does the univer-

sity administration respond to anti-Semitism?

Anti-Semitic incidents can happen on many campuses and it’s crucial that universities handle them with sensitivity and reassures Jewish students. It’s a good idea to ask about the university’s relationship with Jewish organizations overall: are they broadly supportive? If not, what are the areas of tension?

13. How many students went on Birthright from this campus last year?

Also consider asking if there be a set Birthright bus from this school? That requires that 40 students sign up together.

Finally, as you tour prospective colleges, keep in mind that not only are schools interviewing you to see if you are a good fit with their student body, you are interviewing them! That means you shouldn’t worry about expressing your Judaism – nor any other part of your personality. As Rabbi Aaron Greenberg notes, “Jewish students should be proud of who they are and use these years, not just to study their academic courses, but also to grow as a person and as a more knowledgeable and active Jew.”

Yvette Alt Miller earned her B.A. at Harvard University. She completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Jewish Studies at Oxford University, and has a Ph.D. in International Relations from the London School of Economics.

Elegant Printing



Custom Printing
Digital & Offset Printing
Direct Mail Services
Envelopes

Invitations & Announcements
Brochures & Booklets
Forms & Letterheads
Business Cards

407-767-7110

205 North Street • Longwood, FL 32750
www.elegantprinting.net
Bring in this ad and receive 18% Discount

CONGREGATION
OHEVSHALOM

YOUTH, EDUCATION & FAMILY

**We are ready to reconnect and rebuild our
Kehillah Kedoshah Holy Community**

August 8th—Meet the teacher from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Coffee & Juice Bar by our Men’s Club.

August 11th—Sweet as Honey Family Program at 5:00 p.m.

August 15th—First day of School followed by Back to School Carnival
& BBQ sponsored by our Men’s Club.

Families with young children—Mishpacha Sheli on selected Tuesday
mornings, Shabbatlettes on selected Shabbat mornings.
Sipur (Story) Sunday with Shula on selected Sundays.

Kibbutz Ohev Family Edition one Wednesday a month at 5 p.m. geared
toward families with children in preschool through grade 1.

Shabbat Morning Experience for families K-5th grade on selected
Saturday mornings.

Parent Discussion Groups on Jewish Parenting.

Vibrant and Active Youth Groups, Olim 3rd-5th grade, Kadima 6th-8th
grade, USY 9th-12th grade.

DDD: Dinner, Daber and Dvar - Formal Jewish educational program
for all Jewish 8th-12th graders. This year’s theme is Israel.
First class is August 18th.

Gear up for the High Holidays with a series of programs and events
beginning in the Hebrew month of Elul through Simchat Torah.



For more information contact the Synagogue at 407-298-4650,
www.ohevshalom.org or educator@ohevshalom.org.
Like our Facebook Page—Ohev Youth and Family

Kobrin Family Scholarship helps students reach college goals



The Kobrin Family established the Kobrin Family Scholarship Fund in 1990 for qualified students in the Central Florida area. The scholarship has helped many students and their families make the financial transition to college easier over the years.

“Thanks to the Kobrin Family Scholarship my family was not overly burdened,” shared Jacqui, the 2020 scholarship recipient. “I am excited to share that I finished my first full year of college at UCF, and I have gotten very involved on

campus (as much as COVID allowed) and am now a member of the AEPHI sorority and a frequent attendee at Hillel among other Jewish-related organizations. I am so thankful to the Kobrin Family Scholarship and JFS Orlando for helping me achieve my college goals!”

Get a jump-start on your scholarship search and apply to the 2022 Kobrin Family Scholarship. This college scholarship is awarded to a qualified, full-time, graduating high school student in the Jewish communities of

Orange, Osceola or Seminole County who will be attending the University of Central Florida. The scholarship is available in the amount of \$2,500 per year for a maximum of four (4) years.

The application deadline for the 2022 Kobrin Family Scholarship is April 28, 2022. To learn more and apply, visit www.jfsorlando.org/kobrin-family-scholarship.

For more information on JFS Orlando and its other programs, visit www.JFSorlando.org or follow them on social media @JFSorlando.

A new year with a new director at the Rosen JCC’s ECLC

By Sandy Miller

The Rosen JCC’s Early Childhood Learning Center provides children a balanced program with the best, most creative hands-on learning experiences. Its mission is to guide children in their development of social-emotional, intellectual, creative, cultural and physical skills so that they embrace a love of learning and gain confidence. The program creates a safe, caring, nurturing educational environment for children to grow and develop. The pro-

gram is rich in Jewish culture and values, while embracing diversity and being inclusive of families of all backgrounds. The Rosen JCC’s ECLC offers:

- State-of-the-art new facility includes 14 classrooms, enrichment room, gymnasium and auditorium for school-wide celebrations
- Low staff-to-child ratios
- Continuous staff training and professional development throughout the year
- Full-time and part-time options available
- Music, physical education, Spanish and Judaic

culture studies integrated into schedule

- Outdoor playgrounds designed for each stage of development
- Florida Voluntary Pre-K provider
- Winter, spring and summer camps

The ECLC is available for children from 2 months old to Pre-K. They also offer kindergarten to provide children with the skills to move on to public or private elementary school. The Rosen JCC is delighted to introduce Amanda Jacobs as the new director of Chil-

dren’s Programs. Jacobs has a bachelor’s degree in Speech/Language Pathology and a master’s degree in Exceptional Student Education. Jacobs comes to the Rosen JCC from New Jersey, where she was the preschool director at Temple Har Shalom. More recently, Jacobs served as the principal for UCP of Central Florida. Jacobs’ 10 years of experience has prepared her for the opportunity to continue the Early Childhood Learning Center’s excellence while growing its children’s programs in new and innovative

ways to align with the rapid growth of the southwest Orlando community. In her own words, Jacobs states, “My hope is to provide a second home for our youngest members; A place where they feel safe to play, explore and navigate. I hope to build a trusting relationship with our parents to help foster the growth and abilities of their children.” To learn more about the Rosen JCC ECLC or Kindergarten program visit <https://www.rosenjcc.org/early-childhood/> or call 1-407-387-5330.



Amanda Jacobs

Israel education — not advocacy — belongs in the classroom

By Dr. Tal Grinfas-David

I’ve dealt with all kinds of conflicts as an Israel educator the past 25 years, from the mad parent who storms in and says, “Why do you have that map on your wall and not this map?” to the parents who get into fights in the carpool line because they don’t agree about something taking place or what somebody posted on Instagram. Israel education could face even more pitfalls and political pressure this fall after May’s conflict in Gaza and a new survey of American Jewish voters that found 22 percent of all respondents believe that Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinians and that 20 percent of respondents under age 40 don’t believe that Israel has a right to exist. It’s challenging to make

the classroom a safe environment for such conversations if the home and community are not. That’s why it’s important to take the stance we have adopted at the Center for Israel Education: Educators should not use their podiums to spread their political views or launch polemics. Our job is not to tell students what to think, but rather to train them how to think, an effort best accomplished by incorporating as many primary sources and as many different voices as possible. Taking that apolitical stance, checking your biases at the classroom threshold, is an empowering approach to the education of Israel for teachers and students. Educators can explain to parents that their job is to enable students to think critically for themselves, to assess sources,

to understand the differences between history and narrative and between competing narratives, and to appreciate the ideals of a Jewish state and its realities, which are messy, complex and imperfect. Israel educators should establish a tone of respectful discourse incorporating listening and critical thinking at the beginning of the school year. It’s OK to disagree with somebody else’s opinions and ideas, as long as the discussion is based on the sources. That’s how we teach every other subject. A literature student, for example, who wants to assert that Nietzsche or Sartre was a nihilist has to provide evidence from texts, not just cite a parent, a teacher or a social media influencer. Educators also must help students understand the vagaries of vocabulary: What

words are laden and to whom? “Occupation” means different things to different people, and there are reasons some people talk of Judea and Samaria while others speak of the West Bank. Understanding vocabulary is a skill that needs to be taught, as are map reading and literary analysis. When we teach students these skill sets, we enable them to reach and defend conclusions based on documents they’ve examined themselves. That educational approach is far different from the advocacy model: “If you hear X, you should say Y.” My two kids, who are now in college, would have rebelled if I had told them that. They would have done the opposite just because they were teens. We can’t engage, empower and prepare students for those tricky conversations by teach-

ing them automatic answers or avoiding the complexities altogether. That path leads to students concluding that their teachers lied to them and to believing the worst accusations against Israel. Instead, we educators must tackle those difficult topics by modeling respectful, informed conversations regardless of personal opinions about, say, whether Israel used disproportionate force in Gaza in May. We must provide historical context and complexity to equip our students with resilience and help them become critical consumers of information so that the slogans they encounter on campus and social media don’t resonate. This endeavor can’t be limited to one Judaic studies classroom; it has to be embedded into the daily consciousness and experiences

of everyone in the school. It requires support from non-Jewish educators and those teaching science and math, literature and social studies. It involves school administrators, board members, rabbis and parents engaging in those same respectful, informed conversations and accepting that the best practice in Israel education is to treat it as education. That’s how we avoid the pitfalls and politicization of teaching about Israel and produce thoughtful Jewish adults who can engage with difficult questions rather than drown in competing narratives. Tal Grinfas-David is the vice president of outreach and pre-collegiate school management initiatives for the nonprofit, nonpartisan Center for Israel Education in Atlanta and is a former Jewish day school principal.

It’s never too early to teach compassion and empathy to children

(BPT) — The news is filled with articles about the opinions and attitudes of the millennial generation and now, Generation Z. But what about the youngest generation — youths 4-9 years old? These children are growing up in a time of unprecedented access to information, when civility, kindness and compassion have taken a back seat to bullying and violence. Experts say it is more important now than ever for parents to seek learning moments in which

children can experience compassion and empathy. The Jensen Project is a program designed to foster compassion, inspiration and courage in young people as a path to avoiding the bullying and sexual harassment prevalent on college campuses. The program examines the attitudes and opinions of young people with the goal of inspiring a gentler, kinder, more empathetic dimension in their lives. Janet Jensen, founder of The Jensen Project, says,

“Children are at their most vulnerable when they are forming their social skills. They are a reflection of what they see and hear around them. Parents, educators and media influencers need to take extra care to teach compassion and courage at an early age.” Recent research conducted by YouthBeat and commissioned by The Jensen Project, asked youths ages 4-9 if they thought the world would be a better place when they grow up. Forty-one percent said yes,

while 38 percent felt the world would be the same or worse. In an alarming statement about what stresses them the most, death and bullying each rose to the top third of concerns after family and school issues. Experts agree bullying is becoming a critical issue at a younger age and must be addressed proactively if future generations will be able to reduce the incidents of harassment and sexual abuse in colleges and beyond. Jensen offers the following

recommendations for parents to raise children with compassion:

- Children learn by example, so let them join you in volunteer projects or encourage them to get involved in age-appropriate volunteering.
- Actively engage them in conversation about behavior that is troubling to you, whether it be playground taunting or headlines in the news. Ask them why that behavior is hurtful.
- Inspire children to select friends of all races, creeds and economic status - not just friends who look like them. Exposure to cross-cultural families and friends teaches tolerance and understanding.
- It’s been said before, but is worth emphasizing, that monitoring a child’s exposure to video games, live streaming and television time is one way

to reduce exposure to bullying and violent behavior in entertainment. Newscasts are filled with broadcasts of murders, robberies, fires, war, and political corruption. Small children are taking this in and processing it, along with their visions of superheroes. Today’s youth are the long-term future of our country, Jensen says. Watching how the world influences their thinking at a young age is truly an investment in the future of the country. “Adults must become agents for positive daily behaviors that can lead to long-term change,” Jensen says. “The Jensen Project is committed to providing the inspirational resources to help make this happen.” For more information about The Jensen Project, go to www.thejensenproject.com.

School choice is a big decisions

(NewsUSA) — Maybe it was a sleek, reusable water bottle. Whatever it was, most of us probably bought or received a gift last month that was marketed as eco-friendly, ethically-sourced, or giving back to the community. I believe in the wisdom of giving gifts that have multiple beneficiaries. But if there’s one area where bringing ethics and intentionality into a consumer decision can have the biggest impact, I’d focus on K-12 education. Education is a choice — such as what car or groceries to buy, but with higher stakes. America’s 56 million students, and their parents, are the consumers. The more that parents can select schools based on values and needs — without income or zip code restrictions — the more we’ll see the power of

parent consumers in action. That’s a positive power. And during a school year disrupted by COVID-19, we need it more than ever. A few years ago, I heard this power described by the principal at a magnet school that had just been ranked the nation’s best high school by U.S. News & World Report. The principal spoke of the school’s academic excellence in tandem with the idea of families being conscious consumers who “bought into” their education choice. She said that when families and students actively choose a school, learning becomes something students want to do rather than have to do. In other words, when families actively invest in an education choice, it advances the entire school community. In my work as president of

National School Choice Week, I’ve consistently seen that to be true, at traditional public schools, public charter schools, public magnet schools, online schools, private schools, and home-school co-ops. When parents are education consumers, it encourages schools to be transparent, creates more opportunities for kids, and forges innovative bonds among teachers, parents, and community organizations. Choice also allows families to match education to their personal learning values. For instance, in Florida, Arizona, Idaho, and other states with flexible open enrollment laws, families can select the best school fit from an array of free public options. This allows families to choose from various locations, school

cultures, and extracurricular offerings — the very non-test score factors that parents care just as deeply about as academics. This January 24-30 is National School Choice Week, a weeklong public awareness effort that encourages families to learn about all types of education and truly engage in their school choice. You can join the effort and learn about your state’s options at schoolchoiceweek.com. After all, making a school decision, and staying involved in it year-round, is one of the most powerful consumer decisions you’ll ever make. Andrew Campanella is president of National School Choice Week and the author of “The School Choice Roadmap: 7 Steps to Finding the Right School for Your Child.”

Judaic Studies programs this fall

The University of Central Florida Judaic Studies Program is pleased to be offering several exciting courses in the fall semester, 2021. Beyond the general academic community, these are also open to senior citizens, free of charge. They include: Contemporary Jewish Ethics and Morality (JST3620) The Dead Sea Scrolls (JST3144)

The Hebrew Scriptures (JST3120) The History of the Holocaust (JST3701) The Jewish People in Antiquity (JST3401) Judaism and Science (JST3600) Feel free to contact the UCF Registrar’s office for further information at registrar@ucf.edu or call 844-376-9160.

Opportunities for families to reconnect at Congregation Ohev Shalom



COS Kadima Glow in the Dark Dance party in the parking lot during COVID.

the children invited on the bimah for chocolate. Families are always welcome to stay for Kiddush lunch.

Watch for details of Friday night family experiences!

Kibbutz Ohev Family edition is making a return after being on hiatus. Vicky Countess returns and welcomes Ziva Kurlansky to the team. Geared toward families with Toddlers through 1st grade, Kibbutz Ohev focuses on loving each other, the earth and Israel through art, story, cooking, games and gardening! Kibbutz Ohev Family Edition meets one Wednesday a month at 5 p.m. and pizza dinner is included.

Mishpacha Sheli geared toward families with toddlers and preschoolers kept meeting throughout the pandemic at first virtually and then a combination. Nina Fine brings her love of Judaism and music to this morning of fun. Mishpacha Sheli takes place on selected Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m.

New to the line up at Congregation Ohev Shalom for families with children Toddlers through Preschool is “Sippur(Story) Sunday with Shula. Shula Levy will bring a Jewish book to life each session. It could involve art, drama, cooking, dancing,

singing all depending on what the book is about! Sippur Sunday will meet on selected Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

In the works is the opportunity for parents to come together and discuss various topics of being a Jewish parent.

The fall line up of programs for families of all ages includes “Sweet As Honey” at 5 p.m. Aug. 11 where families will learn how honey is made and enjoy dinner together. On Aug. 15 there will be a Back to School Carnival and BBQ sponsored by Men’s club at 12:30. Sept. 26 will be Pizza in the Hut at 12:30 p.m. On the second day of Rosh Hashana there will be in person preschool family service at 9:30 a.m. and a school age family service at 10:30 a.m. On First day or Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur the children’s program for PK-7th graders will be from 9-11:30 a.m. and then the children will join the main service for a family friendly musaf.

All programs will be face to face with guidelines for keeping all who attend safe. For more information about any of these programs, please contact Amy Geboff educator@ohevshalom.org or call 407-298-4650.

Preparing A Future With No Limits

Now Available:
IN PERSON TOURS
Book yours today!

Serving students of all faiths from kindergarten to 5th grade.
407.647.0713

 **JEWISH ACADEMY OF ORLANDO**
www.myjao.org



Jewish education isn’t just for kids. It is for the whole family. Congregation Ohev Shalom offers opportunities for the entire family to learn, celebrate and pray together.

Shabbat is the center of the Jewish week. Once a month there is Shabbat Morning Experience geared toward families with children K-5th grade. Start the morning at 9:30 with continental breakfast and then join together for an interactive, participatory service that includes prayer, song, story, games and usually a few other surprises.

Shabbatlettes take place several Saturday mornings a year at 11 geared toward families with Toddlers through 1st grade. Sing, dance, prayer and story is followed by all



Always fun in the pools at Machaneh Ohev!

JOIN Orlando kicks off two new programs

JOIN Orlando is pleased to announce two new programs for its JOIN Youth and Family Divisions.

Kids in the Kitchen

A kosher culinary journey through the Jewish year!

Kids In the Kitchen is a great way for families to experience the joy of preparing for Jewish holidays together—in what’s become JOIN’s trademark warm & fun environment. Families who participate in this 8-part series will make special Jewish-themed crafts and cook/bake/decorate some food or pastry for each Jewish holiday. Parents do not need to attend, but we strongly encourage parents to join & make this a family activity whenever possible. The program is for ages 4 to 12.

JOIN Wilderness Academy

Sign your child up for JOIN’s 5-part exciting, intensive wilderness skills academy, where we use our newly developed skills to create sophisticated Jewish themed crafts. All sessions take place outdoors with a trained guide & coach. Each 90-minute session is uniquely themed, includes a mini-lesson, a thrilling activity and an impressive self-made craft to bring home. Your child will gain a range of skills, friends, confidence—all while enjoy an exciting environment working with his or her peers. This program is for ages 8 to 14.



JOIN ORLANDO
JEWISH OUTREACH INITIATIVE
www.joinorlando.org

JOIN Youth & Family programming allows parents and children to learn side by side about our meaningful Jewish heritage, through intensely fun, interactive programming. While dropping your kids off for a fun event, parents could also join concurrent adult programming or participate together in the event with their kids. JOIN gives you and your family opportunities to meet other Jewish families and connect with our heritage in a meaningful way for you and your children. Come be a part of the JOIN Family! For more info, please contact the JOIN Youth and Family director, Leora Estersohn, at LEstersohn@JoinOrlando.org or 305-343-2924 (texting welcome).



ALLERGY & ASTHMA
ALLERGY & ASTHMA ASSOCIATES OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Treating patients in Central Florida for over 25 Years
Treating Allergic Diseases of the Ears, Nose & Throat

Our physicians are Board Certified
Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
&
Board Certified Pediatrics



Steven Rosenberg, M.D.
Carlos M. Jacinto, M.D.
Harleen Anderson, M.D.



Winter Park
407-678-4040
Altamonte Springs
407-331-6244

Orlando
407-370-3705
Viera
407-678-4040

www.aacfonline.com

Find Us On



Chabad Hebrew School of North Orlando launches ‘Israel Quest’ and ‘Super You’ curriculums



Ezra Harel, Sebastian Tabatabai and Itzik Riley acting out the story of Passover.

In time for their 11th school year, Chabad of North Orlando is launching two new curricula for the coming Hebrew school year.

Now, more than ever before, there is a vital and immediate need to engage Jewish children with a deep connection and pride for the Holy Land and its central role in the Jewish past, present, and future.

Israel Quest is an immersive and transformative curriculum that will enable our children to form deep attachments to Israel on practical, emotional and spiritual levels.

Using educational tools such as Virtual Reality, topography, theater, filmmaking, STEAM activities, and more, students will relive the journey of the Jewish People in the Land of Israel, from the time the Jews entered the land led by prophets and kings, until the untimely destruction of the Holy Temples. They will discover the secret to our eternal survival as a nation with

tools that were established to keep Judaism thriving in the Diaspora. By the end of the year, we will have empowered Jewish children who are proudly connected to Israel's heritage, history, and future.

"More than ever, kids today need to know their strengths and talents so they can be confident to shine and strong to stand up to challenges in life," said Chanshy Majesky, director of Chabad Hebrew School of North Orlando. "Our second new curriculum for this year does exactly that. Titled 'Super Jew, Super you,' the lessons bring out the best in each student focusing on ways to bring out our best character. Real heroes are people who find the strength to act positively. Students will understand that they can find tools in the Torah to be the heroes of today. The lessons will include visual arts, STEAM, experiential learning and culture.

Of the new programs,

Majesky said, "Education is at the core of everything. What we teach children in their formative years creates an indelible impact and foundation for their entire adult lives. And not only are the students themselves transformed, but the positive impact of their learning extends to their families, friends, classmates, communities, and beyond."

"One of the highlights at CHS of North Orlando is our popular Ckids clubs said Rabbi Yanky Majesky, co-director of Chabad of North Orlando. These clubs take place on six days throughout the Hebrew school year. "Parents, siblings and children from the broader community are invited to join the program as we celebrate Judaism in an out-of-the-box way." Some Ckids clubs taking place this year are: Chanukah disco and Glow in the dark cupcake making, Tu bshvat Fruit shuk visit and mini IDF training, Shul Jr & Candyland, a shabbat shul experience for kids by kids, Purim bake-off with proceeds going to charity and more.

"Students who participated virtually last year are especially excited to be coming back in person to Hebrew school," said Chanshy. "We are seeing more interest than ever before. Many families had time to think about core values in their lives and what role religion plays amid the chaos. "

"My two teenage daughters remained cautious yet mentally calm throughout the height of the pandemic," said Joy Stricter. "I attribute this to their education and sense of faith they got from Chabad Hebrew School of North Orlando."

"Children who graduate our program want to keep coming back," said Rabbi Majesky.

"Hebrew school gave me the opportunity to explore what it means to be Jewish. Now, I've watched it all come full circle as I pass on my knowledge to the next generation of Jewish children," said Zoe Carmi, who now comes back each week to volunteer and assist students with Hebrew Reading.

CHS of North Orlando students ages 5 – 13 gather each Sunday from 10 a.m. to noon.

Chabad of North Orlando is a proud affiliate of The

Chabad Children's Network (CKids), which has chapters worldwide (26 countries) and engages 25,000 children each year with vibrant, life-

changing Jewish education and experiences.

To find out more or to register visit JewishNorthOrlando.com/CHS

Nina Oppenheim, M. Ed.
Tutoring in MATH
Elementary through H.S. Algebra II and Geometry
Science too!
MATH YAYS, NO "MATH NAYS"
One-on-one instruction, all the time!
Tutoring in my Maitland residence
or Virtual
No pre-testing expense!
Call 407 647-6627 or e-mail
ninaopp1@gmail.com
for more information

The Jeffrey & Diane Ginsburg
Hillel
Central Florida

Central Florida is a home away from home for college students in Central Florida. Whether you are looking for social, travel or networking opportunities, or are just looking for a place to hang out and meet other Jewish students, Central Florida Hillel is the place for you.

Orlando is a great city, and Central Florida Hillel makes it feel like a community. We are here for our Jewish students, helping them live, learn, connect and succeed.

For more information or to set up a personal tour, please contact Jacqui McGrail at jacqui.mcgrail@centralfloridahillel.org.

www.centralfloridahillel.org • 407-382-2658
info@centralfloridahillel.org

Chabad of South Orlando's Hebrew School

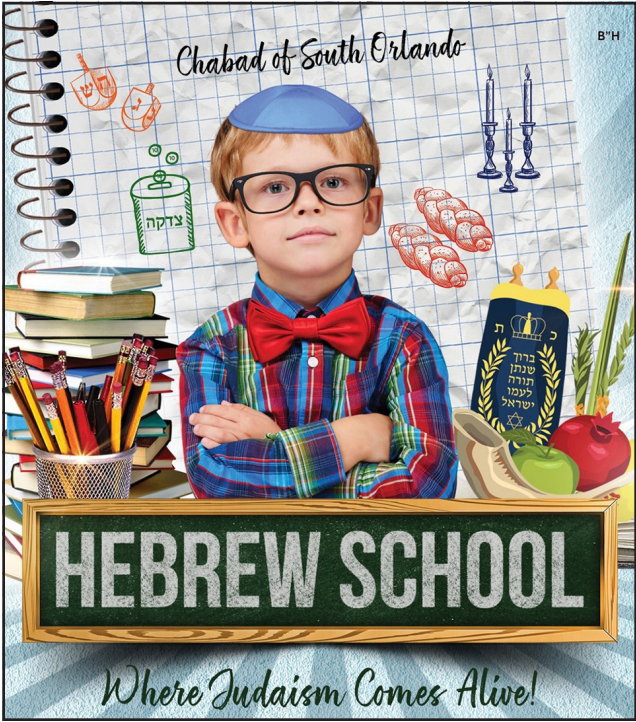
The amazing Hebrew School program that kids love, is open for 2021-22 registration at Chabad of South Orlando. No membership, affiliation or knowledge required. Hebrew School offers Aleph Champ Hebrew reading program; cooking, drama and art; Jewish history and culture; bar/bat mitzvah preparations; and holiday programs.

Starting Aug. 22, Hebrew School will be offered in two locations:

Doctor Phillips — Sundays, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at the Chabad Center, located at 7347 W. Sand Lake Rd.

Winter Garden — Sundays, 11 a.m.-1p.m. at Stonybrook West Town Center.

For more details and to sign up: JewishOrlando.com/hebrewschool or call 407-354-3660.



Tips to boost girls’ interest in math and science

(StatePoint) — The global challenges of the future will require kids today to have a strong STEM foundation. Unfortunately, girls are not always expected or encouraged to pursue these fields of study. Here are some great ways to boost girls’ interest in math and science:

- Celebrate female scientists: Throughout history, female scientists have helped change the world, although sometimes they did so behind the scenes, from Rosalind Franklin whose work -- though largely unrecognized at the time -- was critical in the discovery of the double helix structure of DNA, to doctor, engineer and NASA astronaut Mae Jemison, the first African American

woman to travel in space. Highlighting the vital contributions female scientists have made can show young girls what is possible for themselves.

- Give them the right tools: Give girls the best chance of success in their high level math and science classes by equipping them with the latest tools. Graphing calculators that bring mathematics to life allow for a more comprehensive learning environment in any classroom. The fx-CG500 from Casio, for example, not only offers a high-resolution touch-screen LCD display with over 65,000 colors, but its expanded features and improved catalog function supports math exploration. Using quick commands and

a wide range of features, students have the ability to easily draw three dimensional graphs, such as planes, cylinders and spheres, and view them from various angles, and a cross-section option with a special zoom function enables them to further examine the graph for deeper analysis.

- Make home a learning lab: Math and science are not just for the classroom. Make your home a learning environment too by providing your child with science and robotics kits. You can also check out free online resources that can help kids get a leg up in the classroom, like the Casio Education website. Found at casioeducation.com, the site features tons

of resources to assist with remote learning and helps incorporate technology into mathematics learning.

- Go the extra mile: Extracurricular programming can make the challenge of math and science fun and engaging. At a young age, enroll your daughter in coding and science camps, as well as STEM-related after school activities. When she is older, encourage her participation in groups like the astronomy club and math team. Starting in high school, look into internships in STEM fields.

Promoting early development of math and science skills for girls and young women will go a long way toward building their confidence and setting them up to succeed.



From students to leaders: How today’s youth are preparing for the future

(BPT) — You don’t have to grow crops or raise livestock in order to understand the vital role both play within society, nor do you have to reside in rural America to understand the value of the farmers and ranchers that do. From the food we eat to the health of the local environment, the importance of agriculture is boundless.

But for agriculture to continue to advance, it’s essential to educate and inspire young minds, invest in the next generation, and turn today’s youth into tomorrow’s agricultural leaders.

That’s where youth agricultural organizations come in.

According to Phil Reiter, vice president of marketing at Tractor Supply Company, the nation’s largest rural lifestyle

retailer and a longtime supporter of AG-centric programs like 4-H and FFA, members of these organizations are not only learning invaluable life skills but they’re also having a great time while doing it.

“These programs were designed to be a fun and effective way for students to explore a critically important industry,” said Reiter. “Aside from learning about responsibility and leadership, members also have the ability to form strong, long-lasting relationships with peers that share similar interests and passions.”

Through involvement in youth agricultural programs, students can look forward to the following:

Good Friends

Agricultural organizations give students the

opportunity to be actively engaged in projects and events that involve socializing with friends and meeting new people from across the country. From attending local fairs to competing in contests and career development events, members have the opportunity to travel and work alongside classmates that have similar interests as them.

Growing Confidence

Group meetings provide a fun setting for members to interact with both peers and adults. Throughout the year and during fair season, members are often required to address large crowds. Whether it’s presenting animals to a panel of judges or giving a speech, high-pressure situations like these teach students

about preparation, poise and public speaking.

Leadership Opportunities

Both 4-H and FFA focus on empowering young people to take on leadership positions within their respective organizations. While in FFA, members elect their own officers and are responsible for planning and conducting activities throughout the year.

Civic Responsibility

Giving back is a primary component of 4-H and FFA, and throughout the year members spend ample time coordinating various fund-raising campaigns to benefit their communities.

Recognition

Participating in youth agricultural organizations means being surrounded by a variety

of adult role models. Throughout the year, members attend events and meet executives from some of the country’s top corporations, through which many members form connections and receive recognition for their hard work.

Tractor Supply frequently recognizes individuals who have displayed exemplary service and commitment to their community. Last year, the retailer presented dozens of hardworking 4-H and FFA members with commemorative certificates during special ceremonies at state and county fairs.

From June 8 to October 22, the company will send its Mobile Fair Tour to 19 fairs across the country where they will continue to acknowledge members of both organiza-

tions. This year, honorees have been selected as winners of Tractor Supply’s first ever “Great Neighbor” Essay Contest, which encouraged 4-H and FFA youth to submit a short essay detailing how their participation in these organizations has empowered them to be a better neighbor.

Tractor Supply’s Mobile Fair Tour will offer visitors the “Out Here” experience. Attendees will have the opportunity to lasso a “runaway pig,” test their strength on the high striker bell-ringing game, and attend the special recognition ceremonies.

To stay up to date on the tour or learn more about the interactive experience, follow Tractor Supply Company on Facebook and visit www.TractorSupply.com/FairTour.

Thrive this fall @ The Roth Family JCC

As we enter into Fall 2021 we are focusing on an abundance of wellness, fitness, and happiness.

Your one-stop-shop for convenience, simplicity, and excellence.

Experience a culture where your family thrives! We’ve created a variety of opportunities for families to participate in enrichment activities, recreational sports, and social events all in one place.

We value our community & their well-being and are committed to providing innovative experiences that delight, intrigue and connect one another.

When it comes to our youth, keeping our kids ac-

tive, engaged, and safe is a top priority.

The J is THE destination to find everything you need. Visit The Roth Family JCC open house on Aug. 8, from 10 a.m. – noon, and 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Early Childhood Learning Center

At the ECLC we pay close attention to your child’s growth including social, emotional, creative, and character development. We offer a variety of programs for different ages to help your child reach their full potential. We are working on creating good global citizens who provide community care in all aspects of early education. We advocate for our students to become

independent thinkers who approach life with curiosity and determination.

Enrichment:

What do group swim, soccer, cheer, karate, dance, mindful play, and happy hour (for kids) all have in common? If you guessed that your kids can participate in these enrichment classes at the J, then you are correct! Enrich your kids with the best that Greater Orlando has to offer.

4 Reasons Preschoolers Need Enrichment Classes:

- Exposing your child to new experiences
- Helping them develop social skills
- Allowing them to experience challenges

- Stimulating their mind

Aquatics:
“Learning to swim at an early age is one of the most important skills that we can teach our children,” said Olympic Gold Medal swimmer Dara Torres. “Learning to swim not only saves a life, but it is a great recreational activity that many Florida residents can take part in year-round.”

Our Junior Olympic-sized swimming pool is the hub for Aquatics activities for everyone from preschoolers to adults. The pool is heated to 82 degrees for year-round enjoyment! Get in your daily workout with lap swimming or sign up for a Water Aero-

bics Class. We offer private swim lessons for all ages and group swim lessons for ages K4 and Pre-K. All JCC teachers are certified American Red Cross Water Safety Instructors who teach and coach Red Cross swimming techniques.

Cultural Arts:

One of the leading ways to build self-confidence while letting one’s creativity soar is through the arts. This year, the Roth Family JCC has an abundance of innovative programming to meet the needs of every budding artist and explorer. Not only do the kids get to participate in the fun but parents too. Our family programming

this year includes culinary workshops, community theater, dance, and much more. We are the destination for book lookers with our ongoing author/literary series! Stay tuned for our upcoming events (which will be a mix of in-person and virtual appearances) highlighting best-selling authors in conjunction with South Florida JCCs and other local partners.

Our approach can be viewed as family-wholistic. Our efforts are focused on enriching our community members’ lives, meeting consumers where they are at while providing them with great experiences!

Leadership comes through Stetson Hillel

**By Sam Friedman
Hillel director**

Well ... let’s not do that again. After a year of zoom meetings, programs, services and speakers, I for one am looking forward to being back together, full time, in person. Looking ahead, I cannot help but be excited about the opportunity to come back, bigger, bolder and better than before and I want to celebrate by highlighting a

few students that your community support has helped develop.

First, I want to celebrate the selection of Stetson senior, Lana Kolchinsky, to the Hillel International Student Cabinet. Kolchinsky is the first student from Stetson (only the second from Central Florida) to be selected and was chosen because of her incredible impact on Stetson Hillel. This year in addition to serving on the

Student Cabinet, she will be the president of the Stetson Student Government Association (replacing Longwood native and Stetson Hillel Board Member Joshua Finckelstein), and will serve as a vice president of Stetson Hillel (Kolchinsky spent the previous two years as Hillel president).

Joining Kolchinsky on a Hillel International student cabinet, is Orlando native and Stetson Junior Maddy Ward,

who will begin her term as Stetson Hillel president and will represent Stetson on the Hillel President’s Cabinet. Ward will join the Hillel president at Rollins Hillel in representing Jewish life on campus for Central Florida on the international stage.

Finally, I want to call attention to Rudy Rosenthal, a Stetson senior from Palm Beach Gardens who will continue as the editor-in-chief of the Hatter Networks, and as

the vice president of Communications for Stetson Hillel.

I could continue for columns on the impact that Stetson Hillel has on our students. Whether it is Rebecca Hett (a senior from St. Augustine) who is not Jewish but was selected by our partners at the Jewish National Fund for the Caravan for Democracy, a free 10-day Israel experience for campus leaders. Or Reed Barkowitz (a senior from Orlando) who is serving as

the Stetson Bonner Student coordinator. Or any number of the remarkable Hillel students volunteering, interning and leading their communities around the state.

At Stetson University, leadership comes through Hillel. Stetson Hillel students are bold, brave and creative. Their impact and commitment is the guarantee of the Jewish future, and your support is what makes them successful. So join us!

Want your kid to excel in college? After high school, try a break in Israel

By Ben Harris

Within months of graduating from a Jewish high school near Boston in 2017, Asher Dale had an internship that he “absolutely loved” at Forter, an Israeli technology startup that sells online fraud protection services.

The company, which processes more than \$50 billion in transactions annually for a global network of retailers, was growing rapidly and the 18-year-old Dale was in the thick of it. He regularly put in 10-hour days during his four months at the company’s Tel Aviv offices and worked on two major software products.

For the aspiring computer scientist who had decided to put off college for a year to spend a “gap year” in Israel, it was a dream job.

But that was hardly the highlight of Dale’s time in Israel. Rather, he says, the highlight was the personal transformation he saw in himself over the course of a year spent living abroad.

“I’ve always been so ambitious and so focused on my future,” said Dale, now 19 and a computer science major at the University of Illinois. “But over my gap year I realized that’s not all that life is about. Life is so much more about living in the present,

as cliché as it sounds. It was kind of big for me.”

That kind of personal development is one of the major selling points of gap years, defined as a semester or more of experiential learning usually taken between high school and college.

Proponents of gap years point to data suggesting that gap year students perform better in college and exhibit greater academic motivation and higher reported levels of job satisfaction. But it’s the potential for personal growth and enhanced self-knowledge that is often touted above all else.

“It’s a unique opportunity to look into themselves,” said Liran Avisar Ben Horin, the CEO of Masa Israel Journey, which annually brings some 12,000 young Jews from around the world to Israel for a wide variety of gap year experiences. “You’re going to grow up and mature significantly, understand what you care about and what you want to do, and come back home with skills that you’re not going to get in college.”

Founded in 2004 as a joint venture by the Jewish Agency for Israel and the Israeli Prime Minister’s Office, Masa is the leading provider of gap year experiences in Israel. Since its founding, Masa has brought more than 150,000

Jews to Israel from over 60 countries. The organization helps match young Jews with an array of programs run by a large network of providers and provides \$40 million in scholarships each year to help subsidize the costs.

Gap years in Israel long have been a rite of passage among Orthodox Jews, with some religious high schools sending upward of 90 percent of their graduates to study in Israel for a year, typically at religious seminars. But the trend is also catching fire beyond the Orthodox world.

“It’s a growing phenomenon in America,” said Shalom Elcott, Masa’s North American CEO. “More and more parents are realizing that our children today, they’re graduating college, they’re getting degrees and they’re not exactly sure where to go. Or they’re finishing high school, they have the pressure of applying to colleges, but they’re not really sure about what they want to study or exactly what their path is.”

In fact, academic burnout is the principal reason cited for taking a gap year, according to Ethan Knight, the founder of the American Gap Year Association, an Oregon-based nonprofit that promotes gap years. About 40,000 Americans take gap years annually,

and the average yearly growth rate clocks in at 23 percent over the past 10 years, according to the association.

“In our country, the running joke is that most students take a gap year: It’s called their freshman year of college,” Knight said. “Most people laugh when they hear that, but the reality is there’s at least as much educational value, potentially at a much lesser cost, by taking a quality gap year.”

Masa’s program offerings cover a vast range of possible gap year experiences. Participants can experience Israeli army life, work in development towns helping to close achievement gaps between native Israelis and recent immigrants, or pursue college credit from more academically oriented programs. Others work in hospitals, volunteer with Israel’s emergency medical services, such as Magen David Adom, or teach English.

The participants live independently, typically in apartments with others in the programs. They are exposed to Israel generally through tours of the country and other educational opportunities. Several hundred of the 12,000 annual participants are selected to participate in a special leadership training track that grooms them to

assume positions of Jewish leadership in their home communities.

But for many Americans, career development opportunities in Israel’s fledgling startup culture is the biggest draw of a gap year in Israel.

“Israeli culture allows you to be a talent regardless of your title or experience,” Avisar Ben Horin said. “It’s just about what you can do. If you’re good at what you’re doing, you find yourself more and more in the center of things. It’s a sink-or-swim experience. You’re not going to find yourself making copies.”

One of Masa’s offerings is a gap year run by Big Idea, a 12-year-old Israel company that began as a technology summer camp for teens. Big Idea’s program begins with a four-month training course in computer coding or graphic design in the southern Israeli city of Beersheba, followed by a month of applying that knowledge to build a technology solution for an Israeli nonprofit. For participants who choose Big Idea’s full nine-month program, this is followed by an internship with an Israeli technology company.

“A lot of them come with no experience of living away from home, with no real vision of what can they do with this kind of knowledge or tools,

and you see at the end of the program how they become confident,” said Dotan Tamir, Big Idea’s founder and CEO. “They stand on the stage presenting their app that they developed and speak with so much confidence on things that they had no clue about just five months ago.”

For Dale, the experience effected a significant shift in his career goals. A self-described “ambitious kid,” Dale as a high school student aspired to found a company and become a billionaire “like Steve Jobs.” He even released a mobile app on Apple’s app store while still a senior in high school.

By the end of his time in Israel, Dale had come to realize that success in the technology world wasn’t the only thing he cared about.

“I want to start a company that would actually do good for the world,” he said. “I’m much more focused on relationships, my family, friends, having a really positive experience in college, and kind of more living where I am and not always being stuck in the future.”

This article was sponsored by and produced in partnership with Masa Israel Journey, a leader in immersive international experiences in Israel for adults ages 18-30. This article was produced by JTA’s native content team.

Increasing access to computer science education for students

(BPT) — For today’s students, learning how to code is becoming just as important as learning how to read. The Bureau of Labor Statistics says computer science is the fastest growing profession within the science, technology, engineering and math field. They also project that, by 2020, there will be 1.4 million computer science-related jobs available and only 400,000 computer science graduates with the skills to apply for those jobs.

Historically, access to computer science education and skills training has been absent in the curriculum for many underrepresented and underserved communities, despite research showing that exposure to these subjects at a young age makes students more likely to

pursue computer science in college. The new childhood-to-career program, Amazon Future Engineer, is working to change that with a four-step process to ensure access for all students.

K-8:

First, the program has after-school computer science workshops, coding camps hosted at schools and various locations, and online computer science courses like Coding with Kids and Code.org’s Hour of Code: Dance Party - all designed to encourage students to explore computer science.

“Without Amazon Future Engineer funding this coding camp, my son would not have had such a wonderful opportunity because I simply could not afford it,” explained Kelly Garcia, whose son Pierce at-

tended a Coding with Kids camp in Seattle, Washington.

High school:

The majority of public elementary and high schools, particularly in low-income communities, do not offer computer science classes. Each year, Amazon Future Engineer provides 2,000 schools across the country (totaling about 100,000 students) with Intro to Computer Science and AP Computer Science classes through trusted curriculum providers. All students participating in this program also receive a free membership to AWS Educate, which provides them with free access to computing power in the AWS Cloud for their coding projects, and content to learn about cloud computing.

Jennifer Tulipano, a teacher who is using the course in her classroom at Monsignor Scanlan High School in the Bronx says, “It’s exciting to see the significant increase in my students’ creativity, logical thinking skills and confidence levels, since learning to code, and there is no doubt in my mind that we have paved the way for them to head down very successful career paths in the field of computer science. I truly believe our students, particularly our female students, have been empowered by the computer science courses.”

College:

As students head off to college, the program offers new resources to support continued education in the field. The program provides 100 students from under-

represented and underserved communities committed to studying computer science in college with a \$40,000 college scholarship - \$10,000 per year. For many students, this financial aid is the catalyst that allows them to pursue post-secondary education and a career in computer science. “This scholarship is very important because it means when I go to college, I won’t have to constantly worry about money,” said scholarship recipient Leo Jean Baptiste, from Orange High School in Orange, New Jersey.

Internship:

Amazon Future Engineer also offers the 100 scholarship recipients a guaranteed, paid summer internship after their first year of college. Interns partner closely

with a technical mentor and manager, as well as their fellow interns, to innovate and create.

“I not only witnessed but was immersed in what it’s like to be a software development engineer,” explained Nari Johnson, a sophomore at Harvard University studying computer science. “I left my internship feeling more confident in my ability to transform a vision for a service or product into reality. As a woman in computer science, Amazon’s commitment to diversity and early computer science education has been especially meaningful to me.”

Students, teachers, school administrators, and parents can learn more and apply at www.amazonfutureengineer.com.

6 back-to-school tips for parents of kids with allergies

(BPT) — For kids who live with allergies and asthma, back-to-school can spell trouble with symptoms.

Late summer/early fall is the height of ragweed season. When you add in exposure to environmental factors found in school classrooms, playing fields and eating areas, you have the perfect recipe to jump start your child’s otherwise-under-control allergy and asthma symptoms.

These six steps from the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology can help get your child off on the right foot for the school year. Feeling as good as possible means being able to stay focused on learning.

1. Schedule an appointment with your child’s allergist

Before the first bell rings, make an appointment with a board-certified allergist. Allergists have the best training and medical expertise to offer the most effective treatments for your child’s allergies and asthma. Your allergist can work with you to create an allergy action plan to help your child’s teacher understand your child’s triggers, as well as how to control allergy flares. According to ACAAI, children who see an allergist have fewer missed school days! Use the ACAAI Find an Allergist tool to locate an allergist in your area.

2. Be aware of potential problems in the school building

As anyone who lives with allergies can attest, a school building can be a minefield of allergens. New carpeting can release volatile organic compounds, open windows let in pollen, classroom pets can release dander and bathrooms can harbor mold. It can be helpful to take a tour of the school ahead of time and discuss your child’s triggers with their teacher or school administrators. They can work with you to minimize the impact on your child.

3. Make sure ragweed doesn’t cut your child’s game short

Even with allergies or asthma, your child should be able to enjoy the activities they love - on the playground, in the gym and on the playing field. The key is to follow your allergist’s advice. For seasonal allergens like ragweed, it’s especially important to think ahead to avoidance and treatment, so if your child has a reaction, your child’s coaches and teachers know what to do.

4. Know how the school responds to allergy emergencies

Knowing how the school handles allergy and asthma emergencies can bring peace of mind. What happens if your child can’t find their rescue inhaler? Does the school

keep extra supplies of asthma medications? Which teachers are trained to respond to a severe allergic reaction like anaphylaxis from a food allergy or bee sting? Who calls 911 and when? Review your district’s policy and, if needed, set up a meeting with the school nurse. Who knows? You may be the one to call attention to a critical missing step!

5. Consider long-term treatments like allergy immunotherapy

Many kids with moderate to severe allergies can benefit from allergy immunotherapy - regular treatments delivered through shots and under-the-tongue tablets. These

treatments gradually “train” the body’s immune system to become less sensitive and reactive to the things that make your child wheeze and sneeze. Talk to your child’s allergist to learn more and find out if it’s a good option for your child.

6. Don’t have an allergist for your child? Find one!

A board-certified allergist can set your child on the right track, for the long term, to handle their allergies or asthma in school and at home. To find one, visit the ACAAI allergist locator. For more information and to find relief, visit Allergy and Asthma Relief.org.

JAO begins school year with new leadership, technology, and new curriculum



Amy Polacek

There are a lot of new things happening at the Jewish Academy of Orlando as the school welcomes students back. Amy Polacek begins her first year as the recently-appointed JAO principal. A 14-year veteran of the school, Polacek is focused on supporting the school's high level of academic excellence. After transitioning out of the classroom last year to the critical role of remote learning coordinator, Emily Watson was named to the newly created position of curriculum coordinator and director of Jewish Life. Morah "Fanny" Sernik, who has taught Hebrew and Judaics at the school for years,



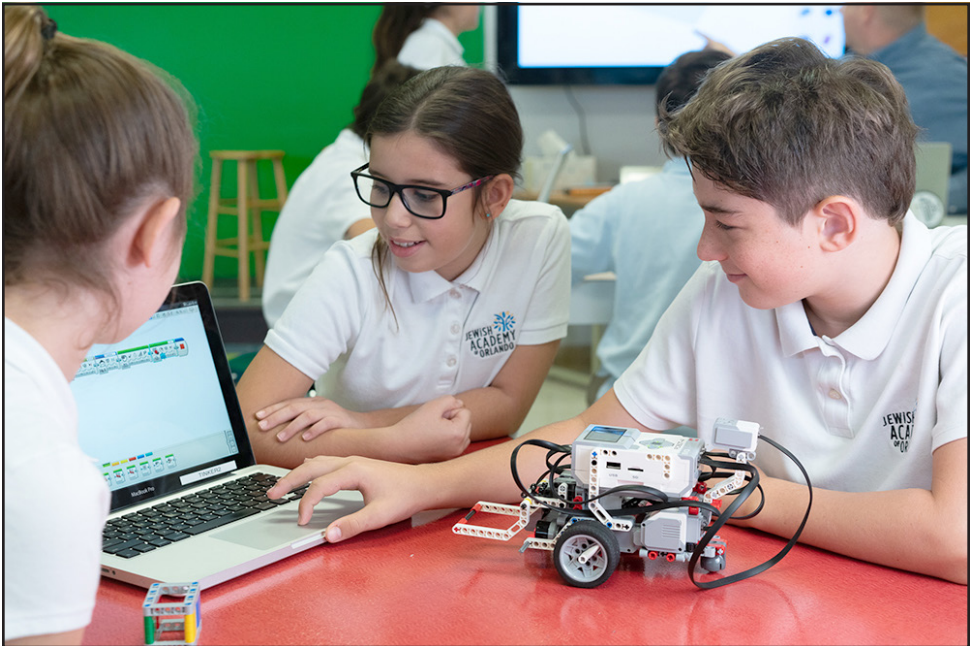
Emily Watson

will begin the role of Hebrew/Judaics academic coordinator. Polacek stated, "We are delighted to have Ms. Watson and Morah Sernik working collaboratively in these roles. Their partnership will ensure that our students will continue to excel in the learning of Judaism and of Hebrew as a second language with pride and embrace the warmth and ruach (spirit) of Jewish holidays and traditions as a community." In addition to the leadership changes, the school will complete its rollout of upgraded technology. All students will be provided the latest Apple M1 MacBook Air.



Fanny Sernik

Director of Technology, Michael Hughes stated that, "JAO is the first school in Florida to provide these breakthrough devices on a 1:1 basis. The laptops feature next generation silicone and are the fastest, most secure computers in education today." JAO will be rolling out a new elective program for the upper grade students. The curriculum is designed to enrich their interests and is the first time JAO elementary families will have an option to choose an academic program that is most meaningful to them. "Building off the momentum of introducing Positive



JAO students coding in the school's Innovation Lab.

Education in 2019, the elective program is the perfect advancement of our curriculum as it supports our core values of academic excellence, differentiated learning and educating the whole child," added Polacek. "Allowing students to choose academic offerings that most speak to their individual interest will continue to spark their curiosity and enhance their love of learning." Elective offerings will range from foreign lan-

guages to performing arts to coding and will change each trimester. JAO Board of Directors President Rob Gebaide said, "With our new leadership, technology and electives in place, we are all extremely excited to start the school year with such incredibly positive momentum." Jewish Academy of Orlando serves Central Florida students of all faiths from kindergarten through fifth

grade. The school delivers a whole-child education fostering academic excellence and character education rooted in Jewish values. Jewish Academy of Orlando is accredited by the Florida Council of Independent Schools. To learn more about Jewish Academy of Orlando, please visit: [jewishacademyorlando.org](https://www.jewishacademyorlando.org) or follow the school on Facebook <https://facebook.com/JewishAcademyOrlando>.

Reconnecting at Congregation Ohev Shalom Hebrew school is a priority



Seventh grade graduation class 2021.

Congregation Ohev Shalom Religious School, Family and Youth groups together create a Kehillah Kedosha, a holy community where each student, teacher, madrich/a, parent, youth staff and teen is valued. Creating connections and relationships is the basis for our work to create this holy community. The curriculum and the programs are the tools

to accomplish this. This became even clearer during the pandemic when the school was virtual. Interactions that most would consider secondary such as recess, snack, arrival and departure of the school day and activities such as Shabbatonim were greatly missed. These offer the opportunity for relationships to form and connections to be made.

The staff and leadership look forward to returning to face to face learning with guidelines in place to keep all who enter the building safe. The teaching staff is adapting pieces of educational theory of Social Emotional Learning, the concept of Chevruta study, small group learning and the definition of education as engaging students in their

learning, to guide how they teach. This enables teachers to look at the whole child and in turn better meet their educational needs as well as help foster their social needs and Jewish identity. Learning at Congregation Ohev Shalom is interactive and hands on. The core of the curriculum is Torah, Holidays, Middot and Mitzvot and

Hebrew based in prayer. Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a stop along the way that says to the community that young person is ready to take on the responsibility of a Jewish adult. The foundation to take on those responsibilities is taught during Hebrew school but Hebrew school itself is not just to become Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In addition to the core subjects, 4th grade focuses on Jewish heroes, 5th grade on Israel, 6th grade has rotations of Torah, Hebrew and American Jewish history and 7th grade rotates between Hebrew, Anti Semetism/Holocaust, World Religions, Israel and Pirkei Avot. Every grade has milestone celebrations and opportunities for parents to participate. Kindergarten Pajama Havdalah, first grade Consecration and Holiness code program, 2nd grade Chesed programs, 3rd grade Siddur Dedication and Munch and Minyan, 4th grade munch and minyan and Jewish Heroes program, 5th grade Munch and Minyan and Kitah Hay Café, 6th grade other side of Shabbat, the true story of Chanukah and Passover prep and 7th grade Mitzvah trips, visits to different houses of worship and CPR training to name a few! Beginning in 3rd grade there are day long Shabbatonim and overnight Shabbatonim through high school. It is our belief that through the learning process students in the school will gain a sense of themselves and belonging within the Jewish Community while instilling in them Jewish

pride. At the end of their Jewish education at Congregation Ohev Shalom, students will have foundations for reading Hebrew, Jewish life, History, Bible, Israel, be able to comfortably participate in synagogue life and have a desire for continued Jewish learning. COS is affiliated with the United Synagogues of Conservative Judaism and is egalitarian. Interfaith families, same sex families, single parent families are embraced. Children in grades Geshet (PK)-Alef (1st) attend on Sundays 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Children in grades Bet (2nd) thru Zayeen (7th) attend 6 hours a week, Sundays, 9:00a.m.-12:30p.m. and Wednesdays, 4:00p.m.-6:30p.m. Each day of school builds on the next and therefore children need to be present both days. Children in Pre K-5th grade who are attending COS Hebrew school for the first time may attend as a non synagogue member and Families are still entitled to participate in just about every event. Meet the Teacher is Aug. 8 from 11:30-12:30. The COS Men's Club is sponsoring a coffee and juice bar so feel free to come at any time between 10:30 and 12:30. The first day of school is August 15 followed by a BBQ sponsored by Men's Club and a carnival. Prospective families are welcome! For information about COS Hebrew school or schedule a tour, please email educator@ohavshalom.org or call Amy Geboff at 407-298-4650. It is never too late to participate!