13 questions every Jewish student should ask prospective colleges

By Dr. Yvette Alt Miller

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 virulently condemnations of Israel, seen professors refuse to write denouncements of Israel, seen 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 is there 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, Hiddurim? 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 meet 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 Shabbat at the 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?

Rabbi Avi Ahava Schachter-Zemberski, the OULIC Se-

sor 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?

“Jewish students should be involved in Jewish organizations. They inspire, can serve us for a lifetime,” 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.”

6. Are there residence halls that 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—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. At 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?

“Is there a local Jewish community? Are there Jewish religious groups or Jewish cultural life in the area.”

9. Are there Jewish services on campus?

Are there Jewish religious services and the Associated 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.”

10. What is Shabbat like on campus?

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11. How does the university administration respond to anti-Semitism?

Anti-Semitic incidents can happen on many campuses and it’s crucial that you find one that is responsive and has sensitivity and reassuring students. It’s a good idea to ask about the university’s relationship with Jewish organizations overall.

12. How big is the Jewish student population?

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For more information contact the Synagogue at 407-298-6650, www.jfsorlando.org or email info@jfsorlando.org. Like our Facebook page—Ohev Youth and Family.
Israel education not advocacy belongs in the classroom

By Dr. Tal Grinfas-David

The Rosen JCC’s Early Childhood Learning Center provides children a balanced program that at once fosters creative hands-on learning experiences. It is designed to guide children in their development of social-emotional, intellectual, cultural, and physical skills so that they embrace a love of learning and gain confidence.

The program creates a safe, comforting environment for children to grow and develop. The classroom is 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 Rosen JCC. Educators should not use children as props for political views or launch pomelics. It is not to tell students what to think, but rather to train them how to think, to question, and to be informed by incorporating as many primary sources and as many voices as possible.

Taking that apolitical approach and focusing on the classroom at the threshold, is an empowering approach for the educators to teach for teachers and students. Educators can explain to parents that their job is to teach students to think critically for themselves, to access 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, imperfect.

Jensen offers the following recommendations for parents to raise children with compassion and empathy.

Children learn by example, so let them join you inда. Ask them to turn on the TV or that get involved in age-appropriate volunteering. Children learn by hearing and are the long-term future of our community. Small children who can engage with difficult, complex and imperfect things, as long as the discussion is truly an investment in the future of the country.

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

Amanda Jacobs

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Preparing A Future With No Limits

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Preparation and No Limits

IN PERSON TOURS
Available:
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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. ShabbatShabbat series take place several Saturday mornings a year and are geared toward families with children through 5th grade. Sing, dance, pray and story is followed by all 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 ed is making a return after being on hiatus. Vicky Count
tness 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 garden ing! 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. Mish pacha 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 interest besides parenting.

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 where families of all ages including PK-7th graders will be from 9-11:30 a.m. and then the children will join the main service for a family friendly meal.

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

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

Kids In the Kitchen: A kosher culinary journey through the Jewish year!

JOIN Orlando kicks off two new programs

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

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 students 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 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 Chasids 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-boxway.” Some Chasids clubs taking place this year are: Chanukah disco and Glow in the dark cupcake making, Tu b’Shevat Fruit Shuk visit and mini IDF training, Shul Jr & Candaland, a shabbat shul experience for kids by kids, Purim bake-off with proceeds going to Chabad. “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 the Hebrew school year. “Par ticipants are here for our Jewish students, helping them live, learn, and engage with our fabulous Orlando community while making Jewish friends to last a lifetime.”

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.

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The Jeffrey & Diane Ginsburg Central Hillel

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For more information or to set up a personal tour, please contact Jacqui McGrail at jacqui.mcgrail@centralfloridahillel.org.
**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 ways to boost girls' interest in math and science:

- Celebrate female scientists: Throughout history, women have helped change the world, although sometimes they did not get the proper recognition. From Rosalind Franklin whose work -- though largely forgotten at the time -- was critical in the discovery of the double helix, to astronaut Mae Jemison, who is the only woman to travel in space.

- Give them the right tools: Give girls the best chance for success by inspiring them to learn math and science. Graphic calculators that allow for a more comprehensive learning environment.

- Make a home learning environment: Don't force them just for the classroom. Make your home a learning space by providing your child with science and robotics kits.

- Provide access to online learning: Free online resources that can help kids get a leg up in their early education. We advocate everything from early education. We advocate learning basics Class. We offer private lessons for ages 4-18 in math and science fun and determination.

- Allowing them to experience challenges: They will need to face these challenges and learn how to overcome them. Encourage them to participate in events that involve socializing with friends and meeting new people.

- Growing Community: 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 attend enrichment classes by equipping adults. Throughout the year, members attend events and meet executives from some of the company’s top corporations, through which many members form connections and receive recognition for their hard work.

- Civic Responsibility: Giving back is a primary goal for 4-H and FFA. Members of these organizations are often required to attend events, and during fair season, members have the opportunity to be actively involved in these events. In the case of 4-H, this is presenting animals to a panel of judges or giving a speech. Many of these opportunities are being surrounded by a variety of adult role models. Through involvement in the high-stakes world of projects and competition, students will continue to advance, it’s essential that youth agricultural programs, and related organizations, are not just for the classroom. Make your home a learning space by providing your child with science and robotics kits. From students to leaders: We value our community and our local environment, the value of the farmers and ranchers, invest in that. From the food we eat to the health of the communities we live in, the importance of agriculture is boundless. But for agriculture to continue to advance, it’s essential to educate and inspire young minds to continue that generation, and turn today’s youth into tomorrow’s agricultural leaders.

**From students to leaders:**

**How today’s youth are preparing for the future**

As we enter into Fall 2021 we are focusing on an abun- dance of wellness, fitness, and opportunity. One of the key ways we do this is through our community and our local environment, and during fair season, members have the opportunity to be actively involved in these events. In the case of 4-H, this is presenting animals to a panel of judges or giving a speech. Many of these opportunities are being surrounded by a variety of adult role models. Through involvement in the high-stakes world of projects and competition, students will continue to advance, it’s essential that youth agricultural programs, and related organizations, are not just for the classroom. Make your home a learning space by providing your child with science and robotics kits. From students to leaders: We value our community and our local environment, the value of the farmers and ranchers, invest in that. From the food we eat to the health of the communities we live in, the importance of agriculture is boundless. But for agriculture to continue to advance, it’s essential to educate and inspire young minds to continue that generation, and turn today’s youth into tomorrow’s agricultural leaders.

According to Pirl Reiter, president of marketing at Tractor Supply Company, the nation’s largest rural lifestyle retailer and a longtime sup- plement of the company, the selections such as 4-H and FFA, members of these organizations are not just for the classroom. Make your home a learning space by providing your child with science and robotics kits. From students to leaders: We value our community and our local environment, the value of the farmers and ranchers, invest in that. From the food we eat to the health of the communities we live in, the importance of agriculture is boundless. But for agriculture to continue to advance, it’s essential to educate and inspire young minds to continue that generation, and turn today’s youth into tomorrow’s agricultural leaders.

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**By Sam Friedman**

**Hillel director**

Well ... let’s do that now. Again. After a year of zoom meetings, social media, and phone calls, and speakers and friends, I am ready to look forward to hearing back from the local community. Looking ahead, I cannot help but be excited about the opportunity for our students to come back, bigger, bolder and better than ever before. It’s time to celebrate by highlighting a few students that your community support has helped succeed.

First, I want to celebrate the selection of Stetson se- nior and Stetson University student-athlete Kolchinsky, who is the second senior from the best of the best to have been 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 Student Cabinet. The Student Cabinet will be the voice of the president of the Student Cabinet and the Student Government Association (replacing Longwood native and Stetson Hillel student president Colby Cornell, who has previously been two years as president of Stetson). Kolchinsky joined Kolchinsky on a Hillel International student cabinet, a role that Stetson Junior Maddy Ward, who will begin her term as Stetson Hillel president and Stetson Hillel Student President’s Cabinet, Ward will join the Hillel International leadership team, representing Jewish life on campus for Central Florida on a national level. Finally, I want to call atten- tion to Rudy Rosenfeld, a Stetson senior from Palm Beach Gardens who will continue to lead the Student Cabinet. As the new director of the Hatter Networks, and as the vice president of Commu- nications for Stetson Hillel, she can continue to col- laborate with faculty and students who make up the Hillel community.

**Thrive this fall @ The Roth Family JCC**

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First, I want to celebrate the selection of Stetson se- nior and Stetson University student-athlete Kolchinsky, who is the second senior from the best of the best to have been 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 Student Cabinet. The Student Cabinet will be the voice of the president of the Student Cabinet and the Student Government Association (replacing Longwood native and Stetson Hillel student president Colby Cornell, who has previously been two years as president of Stetson). Kolchinsky joined Kolchinsky on a Hillel International student cabinet, a role that Stetson Junior Maddy Ward, who will begin her term as Stetson Hillel president and Stetson Hillel Student President’s Cabinet, Ward will join the Hillel International leadership team, representing Jewish life on campus for Central Florida on a national level. Finally, I want to call atten- tion to Rudy Rosenfeld, a Stetson senior from Palm Beach Gardens who will continue to lead the Student Cabinet. As the new director of the Hatter Networks, and as the vice president of Commu- nications for Stetson Hillel, she can continue to col- laborate with faculty and students who make up the Hillel community.

**Thrive this fall @ The Roth Family JCC**

**By Sam Friedman**

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

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

Late summer and fall is the height of the ragweed season. When you add in exposure to environmental factors like mold and dust in your school and classroom, things can get even tougher for kids who have the perfect recipe to jump start your child’s otherwise-undremarkable colds and allergies.

These six steps from the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology can help get your child off the right foot for the school year. Feeling good as possible means your child can 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 experience to know which are the most effective treatments and therapies for your child’s unique condition. Your allergist can work with you to create an action plan to control 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’s free tool to locate an allergist in your area.

2. Be aware of potential problems in the school building.

As anyone who lives with asthma knows? You may be the one to call attention to a critical missing item.

5. Consider long-term school treatments like allergy immunotherapy.

Many kids with moderate to severe allergies can benefit from allergy immunotherapy — regular treatments delivered through the skin or under the tongue. These treatments gradually "train" the immune system to become less sensitive and reactive to the things that cause your child’s wheeze and sneeze. Talk to your child’s allergist to learn more and consider your child for this treatment.

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 takes a severe allergic reaction at school? Does the school keep extra supplies of asthma medications on hand for everyone? Are the school’s emergency contacts updated? What should your child do if they need help? Review the school’s emergency action plan so you’re prepared and know how to respond.

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

Even with allergies or asthma, kids can and 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 child’s allergist’s advice. For seasonal conditions like ragweed, it’s especially important to think through the timing of your child’s outdoor activities, so if your child has a reaction, your child’s coaches and teachers are aware of the situation.

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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, will begin the role of Hebrew/Judaic’s 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 Macbook Air.

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.”

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 Learning at Congregation Ohev Shalom Hebrew school is a priority

Reconnecting at Congregation Ohev Shalom

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 jaoacademyorlando.org or follow the school on Facebook https://facebook.com/JewishAcademyOrlando.

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 JOS Hebrew school or schedule a tour, please email educator@OhevShalom.org or call Amy Gehret at 407-298-4650. It is never too late to participate!

JAO students coding in the school’s Innovation Lab.