



בית הספר הקהילתי בשיקגו

# Chicago Jewish Day School News

## A Message from Our Head of School

As I am writing this, we are packing away our *Sukkot* decorations and as you are reading this, you are probably preparing for Thanksgiving. Both are holidays that celebrate the harvest of hard work. As we begin 5767, the 2006–2007 school year, it is an honor to take a moment and realize what wonderful things we have “harvested” over our 4 short years of hard work!



Judy Finkelstein-Taff, Head of School

Walking the halls of Chicago Jewish Day School this fall, I realize that we fill the entire second of floor of Congregation Emanuel! We have 51 incredible students in JK through 3rd grade. To meet such growth we expanded the size of our JK

and K classrooms. The double room set-up enabled us to open up large motor and dramatic play areas while still allowing for open spacious classrooms to learn and grow in. It is exciting to see the results of our refurbishing and remodeling. From the new ways we display our students’ work to the remodeled classrooms, the school is reaching to new heights.

The teachers have also much to be proud of this year. Our entire faculty from last year in combination with several new staff members (see insert) worked together over the summer to integrate the State of Illinois Education Standards with our core curricular units in each grade level. In working collaboratively with one another, our teachers enriched their units, moving even beyond the accomplishments achieved in our last three years. These additional days of planning have produced great results that are evident in each of our classrooms.

The Board also engaged in significant work over the last year including successfully kicking off our first Annual Campaign. Target goals were met and plans to launch our 2nd Annual Campaign are in place to begin in the next few weeks. In addition, through

the combined effort of parents, faculty and Board members we are continuing our Ambassadors Program, which has the mission to bring in 100 new visitors to our school each year. We surpassed our goals for last year and as a result we are increasing our targets for this coming school year. In addition, this year we are expanding this programming to include various lunch guests who will be hosted at a “roundtable lunch” with students during the school week.

In closing, let me encourage you to visit us yourself to experience the joy, excitement and stimulation of CJDS! We invite *everyone* to please call and arrange some time to visit during the school day to witness firsthand the wonderful learning community that is growing at CJDS.

*B'shalom,*

Judy



בית הספר הקהילתי בשיקגו  
**Chicago Jewish Day School**

*Educating our children in the richness of their past, the diversity of their present, and the possibilities for their future.*

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Chicago Jewish Day School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

# Welcome and Bruchim HaBa'im

We welcome our new families!

**Talia (JK)**

*Andrea & Daniel Alpert*

**Matan (JK)**

*Shira & Itai Brezis*

**Adam (K)**

*Amy & Michael Burke*

**Ariana (JK)**

*Max & Jacob Handelman*

**Molly (K)**

*Nina Black & Avery Hart*

**Eli (Grade One)**

*Sara & Jonathan Hartman-Seeskin*

**Nicole (JK)**

*Jill Kushnir LeVee & Richard LeVee*

**Seth (JK)**

*Anne and Brett Levy*

**Marc (JK)**

*Ann & Mike Luban*

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*Elisa Ecanow Mlotek & Avi Mlotek*

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*Scott Newberger*

**Dora (JK) and Joanna (JK)**

*Gayle Starr & Evans Poulos*

**Ben (K)**

*Rachel & Andrew Sollinger*

**Markus (JK)**

*Sheila & Aaron Tam*

We're also thrilled to welcome

new students from families already in our school!

**Zachary (JK)**

*Son of Tamar & Kent Genin, younger brother of Orly (Grade Two)*

**Eli (JK)**

*Son on Andi & David Stone, younger brother of Sarah (Grade One)*

This year we warmly welcomed the following new faculty and staff to our CJDS Community:

**Iris Bass**

*Director of Admissions*

**Dana Konstantine**

*Hebrew and Jewish Studies teacher*

**David Mascorro**

*Office support staff*

**Erin Murphy**

*Music specialist*

**Alexandra Schnitzer**

*Junior Kindergarten teacher*

We were also delighted to welcome back all of our teachers, specialists and administrative staff from last year.



Warm-up exercises on the grass overlooking the beach during P.E. with Coach Brian.



Ben (K) enjoying a P.E. soccer lesson.

# Excellence in Education

One hallmark of CJDS is our integrated curriculum. Each grade engages in units in which all of the subject matter is centered on the study of one major theme. Our Grade Three students began the year learning about author Bill Peet and what inspired him to write children's literature. Peet's books discuss important values such as friendship, cooperation and sharing, environment, self-esteem, understanding, tolerance and acceptance. Each story has a moral that allows our students to engage in meaningful and engaging conversations. This unit was timed to coincide with the High Holidays during which the students discussed ways to better themselves for the New Year, integrating the concept of *teshuvah*, looking inward and making better choices. The students also wrote and published their own books based on this writing style.

Later this fall our Grade Two students will study in-depth about the Pilgrims and their struggles for religious freedom. As they study the story of the Pilgrims leaving their homeland, they will also study the *parsha* (weekly Torah reading) of *Lech Lecha* in which God tells Avraham to leave his homeland and set off for the land of Israel. As they prepare for and set sail for the New World, the students will investigate the properties of water and calculate ways to make boats float and carry cargo (science & math), record their experiences in their journals (language arts), learn relevant Hebrew vocabulary and express themselves through music and art. Come visit our 2nd grade classroom in November and set sail with us on the Mayflower!

# Meet Our New Director of Admissions

CJDS is thrilled to welcome Iris Bass as our new Director of Admissions. Iris holds both a B.A. from University of Wisconsin, Madison and a M.A from Northwestern University in Speech-Language Pathology. She has 9 years of experience in Day School Admissions, having worked previously at Solomon Schechter Day Schools of Metropolitan Chicago and the Ida Crown Jewish Academy. Iris lives in Lincolnwood with her husband of 21 years, Barry, her three children: Marisa, 20, Jordan, 17 and Elana, 13, and their dog Gracie.

We talked with Iris on her second day at Chicago Jewish Day School and below we share some of her thoughts:

## What attracts you to Jewish education?

I'm passionate about Jewish Education because of the experience my own family has had educating our own children in the Jewish Day School system. I see that my children have a strong sense of who they are and how they fit into the world as Jews and citizens that I did not experience in my own public school education.

## What brought you to Chicago Jewish Day School?

I'm attracted to the energy and excitement of a growing community. I'm impressed with the level of academics and professionalism that permeates the whole CJDS environment.

Willa (Grade 2) and Tim (Grade 2) demonstrating with the *Shofarot* they made with our Art Specialist, Ellen Gradman.



## Tell us about your vision for yourself as our new Director of Admissions.

I hope to become an active member of the CJDS community, helping the school grow by reaching out to new families and increasing the scope of admissions efforts in the Greater Chicagoland area.

We thank you Iris for sharing your thoughts and we look forward to a wonderful year together!

To contact Iris call the school office at 773 271 2700 or email her at [ibass@chicagojewishdayschool.org](mailto:ibass@chicagojewishdayschool.org)

## New IRA Charitable Rollover

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 (H.R. 4) allows individuals age 70½ and older to make charitable donations up to \$100,000 from an IRA without having to count the donation as taxable income. This provision will be in effect for two years, allowing the charitable community to demonstrate its value as an incentive for increased giving, but could be expanded in the future. Please speak with your accountant about your personal circumstances, and enjoy charitable tax incentives while greatly assisting Chicago Jewish Day School.

## Kabbalat Shabbat

Our school community celebrates *Kabbalat Shabbat* together every Friday morning. Each week we welcome a special guest who reads a story, sings songs or teaches our students something new. Our guests are Rabbis, Cantors, Youth Directors, Camp Directors and Educators from across all the denominational movements. *Todah rabbah* to all of our Shabbat guests both last year and this year.

## An Opportunity for Increased Funding for Day Schools

The Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago recently launched a major funding innovation to raise significantly larger gifts for its Jewish Day School Guaranty Trust, an endowment benefiting Chicago Jewish Day School and the other 14 day schools that receive Federation allocations each year.

Interest on the Trust — the money designated to the schools — will be “front-loaded” so the schools receive the full benefit of the contributions right away. The distributions, based on enrollment, are in addition to each school’s annual Federation allocation.

Large contributions to the Trust may be paid over 10 years. However, the Federation will treat the first \$50 million in pledges made by Oct. 31, 2006, as fully paid as soon as the commitment is made. Interest will be calculated on the full amount, making more money available sooner. To make that possible, the Federation is borrowing up to \$40 million. The increased payments to schools are expected to continue in perpetuity.

We thank the Jewish Federation for all of its support and appreciate our relationship as a grantee school.

For complete details on the Jewish Day School Guaranty Trust program, contact the Federation’s Legacies and Endowments Department at [legacy@juf.org](mailto:legacy@juf.org) or at 312-357-4853.



Meitav (Grade 1) and Benji (Grade 1) excited about their new Hebrew texts.

## Yasher Koach!

We’re thrilled to share with you some of the wonderful accomplishments of members of our CJDS community:

**Cortney Stark Cope** (*Parent of Noah, Grade One, and Recruitment Chair*) on being selected as a Wexner Heritage Fellow.

**Ann Luban** (*Parent of Marc, JK, and Board Vice-President*) on publishing a chapter in the book *When Professionals Weep: Emotional and Countertransference Responses in End-Of-Life Care*.

**Michael Robins** (*Office Administrator*) on publishing his poems through North Texas Press and on receiving an award for his poetry.

**Seth Meisler** (*Parent of Ilana, Grade One, and Board Treasurer*) on passing level III of the CFA exam and becoming a CFA Charterholder.

**Dr. Ismar Schorsch** (*Grandparent of Livia, Grade One*) for many years of Jewish leadership in the national arena, as he

retired from his post as Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Dr. Schorsch leaves a legacy of scholarship for which he will always be remembered. As he continues his work writing and lecturing we look forward to the next chapter.

**Chana Zelig** (*Parent of Ayelet, Grade Two*) on having been selected to design ten stained glass windows for Congregation Am Shalom in Highland Park.



## Our Parent Committee

Under the leadership of Tilly Dushman and Rachel Treister, our Parent Committee is off to a wonderful start following an extremely productive and successful inaugural year. Already this year parent committee members welcomed each new family with a phone call the night before the first day of school, hosted a coffee welcome for all parents after drop-off on the first day, prepared *Shabbat* welcome gift bags for all of our new CJDS families, hosted a “Coffee with Ms. J.” for JK parents and planned the second annual Parents Night Out. Fundraising efforts, chaired by Chava Alpert and Tilly Dushman, are continuing to raise money this year through many projects, including Jewel/Osco scrip days and our first ever *Rosh HaShannah* honey sale. Finally, the *Chesed* Committee chaired by Neera Kaufman and Rachel Lopatin continues to be a support for families in times of sorrow and times of joy.

*Left:* Kindergartners enjoying apples and honey.

*Right:* Chava Alpert (mom of Sarah, K) and Rabbi Asher Lopatin (dad of Shayna, K) are some of the many parents who blew shofar each morning during the month of *Elul*, leading up to *Rosh HaShannah*.

## Maya Rebecca Hirsch, z”l

The Chicago Jewish Day School community continues to mourn the loss of Maya Rebecca Hirsch, cherished daughter of Danit Steinbach and David Hirsch. Though the shadow cast upon us by Maya’s untimely death last Spring is long, Maya’s spark shines ever so brightly. May her memory be a blessing.

The Maya Rebecca Hirsch fund has been established in Maya’s memory.

*If you would like to make a donation to this fund, please make checks payable to Chicago Jewish Day School.*

### A Message from Danit Steinbach and David Hirsch

*Reprinted excerpts from a letter written by Danit and David*

To our dear friends at CJDS,

We want to let each of you know how much we appreciate the outpouring of support extended towards us over the past months. We wish we could personally acknowledge each of you. Each day we were touched by your kindness and genuine expression of heartfelt sadness.... Our hearts are heavy with the loss of Maya. We are still struggling to find our way without her....

Maya’s absence is profound and it has changed us as individuals and as a family. However, at our core, we are still sustained by the tremendous love we have for Ben, Gabriel and each other, the support of our extended family and friends and by our hope for the future; a future that includes our connection to CJDS. We know that as we continue to grieve for Maya, an extraordinary community of caring and supportive friends surrounds us.

With sincere gratitude and warmth,  
*Danit and David*

# Thank You!

We greatly appreciate the generosity of all of our donors.\*

*Contributions from August 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006*

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Eli (JK) and Alana (JK) sharing their *Tzedakah* box.

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Chana Zelig

## Recruitment for Fall 2007

The year has just begun and already it's time to start looking to next year. We are accepting applications for JK through Grade Four for September 2007.

Please call Iris Bass, our Director of Admissions, at 773-271-2700 to request an application and/or to schedule a tour.

## Celebrations/Memorials

Send a CJDS tribute card in honor of a *simcha* or in memory of someone who has passed away by sending a minimum \$18 donation to the school. Or, you may purchase 10 cards for \$150. Please call the school office at 773-271-2700 for more information.

## Grandparents and Special Friends

Wednesday, November 22nd is Grandparents and Special Friends Day at CJDS! Grandparents and Special Friends are invited to join our students in a special program from 10:30am to 12:00pm. This is the first event for our newly formed Grandparents and Special Friends Group called "L'dor v'dor."

## Thank You!

Chicago Plant and Flower generously delivered flowers to our teachers on the first day of school. What a wonderful and heartfelt surprise!



In our year-long "Reading Buddies" program, older students are paired with younger students. "Reading buddies" read and make *challah* together every Friday and forge a wonderful bond. Above, Sarah (Grade 2) reads to her "buddy" Michelle (K).

*\*This includes donations to the Maya Rebecca Hirsch Memorial Fund.*



בית הספר היהודי בשיקגו  
**Chicago Jewish Day School**

5959 North Sheridan Road  
Chicago, Illinois 60660

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## **Give Your Family the Gift of Jewish Music for Hanukkah — Join Us for a Concert with Rabbi Joe Black and The Maxwell Street Klezmer Band** *Supporting Chicago Jewish Day School*



**For details and tickets, e-mail [hanukkahconcert@aol.com](mailto:hanukkahconcert@aol.com) or call 312-738-8340. Be sure to spread the word to family and friends!**

### **Wednesday evening, December 20, 2006**

*The Sixth night of Hanukkah*  
Temple Sholom of Chicago  
3480 North Lake Shore Drive

### **Family Concert**

*Featuring the students of CJDS*  
6:00 pm

### **Community Concert**

7:30 pm

*Doors and concessions open  
1/2 hour before each concert.*

### **Tickets**

\$12 advance/\$15 at the door  
Children 3 and under free  
Family Maximum \$50 advance/  
\$55 at the door

### **Be a Maccabee!**

For \$250 you receive a reserved parking space in the Temple Sholom lot the night of the concert, reserved concert seats for up to 6 people, a Rabbi Joe Black CD and a Maxwell Street Klezmer Band CD. Maccabee spaces are limited!

*Both concerts will be recorded live for an upcoming CD.*

**Come early, stay late! One ticket price for one concert or both!**