

Schools

Jen Lahn Named Assistant Director at JPS

By Sarah Fligel

When the doors of The Jewish Preschool on Sardis open this school year, a familiar face will be waiting. But instead of greeting children in her classroom, "Ms. Jen" will welcome them from the school's office.

Jen Lahn has been named assistant director of the preschool. In

mid-February, longtime Director Fern Sanderson will retire, and Lahn will become director. It's a role that Lahn is well-qualified for. She knows the school from nearly every angle: first as a parent, then as a teacher, and now as an administrator. Her three children, Sam, 10; Max, 8; and Emma, 7, all attended JPS. As a parent, she

served as president of the Parent Teacher Organization, vice president in charge of fund-raising, auction chair and as a member of the preschool board. When Emma began going to the school five days a week, Sanderson suggested Lahn — who has a master's degree in social work from Columbia University — join the JPS staff and teach a three-year-old class. That was four years ago.

"I loved being in the classroom and watching the children learn new things," Lahn says. "I loved seeing their faces when they mastered a new skill that they had been working on. And I loved working with the parents, listening to them and helping them move through difficult transitions. I am a strong believer that the early, formative years are the most vital in a child's development and what better way to be a part of that then to be in the classroom."

But when Sanderson announced she would retire as director in mid-February, Lahn felt ready to take on a new challenge, leading the school's 145 students in its 22nd year. "I'm hopeful that JPS will continue to serve Jewish children and their families and make positive connections to their Judaism," she says. "A child's education begins in preschool, and I plan on JPS being that part of their life. I will continue on the path that Fern has begun, building strong educa-

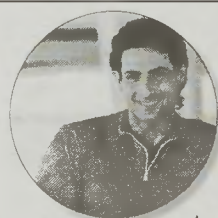
tional foundations in a place that allows children to express themselves creatively and to develop feelings of self-confidence and accomplishment."

For Sanderson, Lahn's creativity, friendliness, intelligence, love and respect for all children made her the perfect choice to help lead JPS. And after 21 years at the school — she was its first lead teacher — knowing JPS is in good hands will help make her decision to retire a bit easier. "In some ways, I feel that the preschool is my baby," Sanderson says. "I take the change of leadership very



Jen Lahn

much to heart. JPS has attained a wonderful reputation in and out of the Charlotte area, and Jen will continue to enhance that reputation. It's with a great deal of enthusiasm that I look forward to working with Jen in her new roles." ☆



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High Holidays: Lessons for a Diverse Student Body

Charlotte Jewish Day School takes pride in its ability to provide meaningful Jewish education to a diverse Jewish student population. The High Holiday season is a perfect time to present the children with information that is meaningful to all, regardless of level or lack of synagogue affiliation.

Following are several examples of the lessons that our Judaica staff has developed to encourage critical thinking that leads to understanding and appreciation of Rosh HaShanah.

The shofar: At a basic level the children are familiar with the

sounding of the shofar and with its association with the binding of Isaac. The teachers take the shofar to a deeper level by posing these questions:

- Why must the shofar be bent? The answer is a concept that we have named "bendables." We explain that the shofar teaches us to bend ourselves, to not be rigid in our dealings with others. One child applied his own experience on the tennis court, when his opponent violated a rule. As an argument ensued, the student remembered to be "bendable." He pro-

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