

# Charlotte Jewish Day School Welcomes Our New Families

Remember the anxiety of starting your first real job — the anticipation of being on your own; the unease of not knowing where or with whom you would eat lunch; the worry over making a mistake; the idea that you might not get along with all of your colleagues?

That's often how students feel

when starting in a new school — a stew of apprehension and expectation.

Despite being a month into the school year, we are still welcoming students, their families, and teachers who are new to CJDS.

The start of school sets the tone for the entire year, so we dedicate

the first six weeks to making everyone feel welcomed, to making each class gel and work as a village within our larger school community.

Just like team-building exercises at work, icebreakers at school have helped ease the tension, especially for new kids. Those activities have helped the students get to know each other, according to Robin Zimmerman, a teacher who is new to the school herself. She is teaching fourth-grade students. "I introduced myself as being new also," she said when asked about the exercises. "We talk about building new friendships and we talk about how to get along."

Ethan Jackowitz is one of three new students in the fourth grade.

His mother Lori said that he was anxious about the first day of school in late August. "He was very nervous," she said. "But on the first day, when he walked in, there were boys there who greeted him and that really helped. So from the very start he has felt like a part of this school."

Lori echoed the sentiments of his teacher, Robin Zimmerman, regarding the icebreakers. "They've been doing a lot of icebreakers for the whole class to get to know each other. I think the fact that the class is so small has made it a great transition for him."

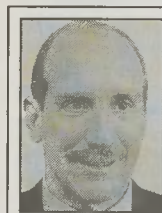
Linda Stewart, CJDS Social Worker, offers the following suggestions for welcoming new students: Returning students can include them by asking the new child to play with them on the playground or to sit with them at lunch. During this time, children can be encouraged to ask the new child about where he/she comes from, his/her interests, how many

pets the family has, etc. Parents can also model welcoming behavior by inviting a new parent and child over for a play date and adult get-together.

Mariashi Groner, CJDS Director, adds "We have been told by many newcomers—students, parents, and teachers alike—that as soon as they walked into our school, they could actually touch the warm, welcoming feeling. One of our major goals is to serve as models and to teach our students how important it is to reach out to those who might not yet feel as comfortable in their new surroundings as we do and to welcome them as honored members of the CJDS family."

Writer Maya Angelou once said "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

At CJDS, we always strive to make people feel welcome. ☆



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## Book Fair at CJDS

Shop early for holiday gifts, buy books to donate to a child's classroom or look for yourself at Charlotte Jewish Day School's annual book fair, October 22-25. All proceeds will benefit the school. Picture books, chapter books, novels, cookbooks, parenting books and more will be available for purchase daily from 8 AM until noon and from 2-4 PM. For more information, call the school at 704-366-4558

## CJDS Receives PEJE Grant

Boston — The Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE) [www.peje.org](http://www.peje.org), a national collaboration of philanthropic partners committed to strengthening Jewish day school education in North America, has announced the recipients of its 2007-2008 Challenge Grant program.

The 2007-2008 PEJE grants, totaling \$1 million, were recently distributed to 33 schools, including 17 new recipients and 16 schools that received grants last year. The schools represent 23 communities throughout North America, including the Charlotte Jewish Day School in Charlotte. Individual awards ranged in value from \$16,000 to \$95,000. Recipient schools include elementary, middle and high schools.

"The Challenge Grant program is a major PEJE initiative to help Jewish day schools increase enrollment through vital assessment and coaching to attain the highest standards of academic excellence for Jewish and general studies," said Rabbi Josh Elkin, executive director of PEJE. "Since the grants program began ten years ago, we have seen significant growth in enrollment which is a tremendous accomplishment for the day school movement and the families it serves."

When PEJE was founded in 1997, the Challenge Grant program was designed to help establish new Jewish day schools. Today the program helps Jewish day schools across North America to increase enrollment and build their capacity. The expanded program includes three types of grants that accommodate schools at various stages of development:

- School Improvement Journey Grant: The two-to-three-year grant includes support for a "whole school" assessment and coaching in the first year, with the opportunity for further support in the second and third years.

- Pipeline Grant: The grant promotes relationship-building

between the day school and early childhood education programs in order to increase recruitment and enrollment of students.

- New School Grant: This grant is for groups planning to establish new Jewish day schools and to existing schools that are ready to add a new division or branch (e.g. a middle school or a high school).

A key component to each PEJE grant is the opportunity for recipients to work with a coach, a consultant with expertise that matches a school's needs. These professionals assist school leaders in developing plans for sustainable growth.

"As a new head of school, I look forward to the opportunity this New School grant provides to review Ramaz's mission and to develop a strategic plan that builds on our strengths to enhance key areas," noted Judith Fagin, dean of the Ramaz School in Manhattan. "More families in the Tri-State region are expressing an interest in a day school education for their children, and we're embarking on a major construction project to provide an upgraded and expanded Early Childhood Center and Lower School for a growing student body."

### About PEJE

The Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE), founded in 1997 by Michael Steinhart and Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, is a national organization of visionary Jewish philanthropists seeking to establish a vibrant and sustainable Jewish future through strengthening the Jewish day school movement in North America. In its first ten years, PEJE's model of making grants, providing expertise, and advocating for the day school movement reached over 150 elementary, middle, and high schools and invested a total of over \$20 million in the field. PEJE has contributed to the opening of over 60 new Jewish day schools. ☆

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