

## Schools

### Move to Charlotte and CJP were His Birthday Gift

By Jason Stooenke

John Dippold knew he'd remember that day. He probably assumed it was because he was turning forty. But, something else memorable happened.

He and his wife, Talli, sat at their kitchen table. They looked at each other and John said it first. Charlotte.

Then, Talli agreed.

"I was like, 'Me too,'" she says now. "It fit. It was perfect."

They wanted to leave Scottsdale, AZ. Talli says the

schools were struggling and so were her family's lungs.

"There's a black cloud that sits over the city," she says.

John and Talli spent months looking for places to move. They compared city after city. They narrowed it down to about ten choices.

They just didn't know Charlotte topped each other's list ... not until that moment at the kitchen table.

A birthday wish? Maybe. A birthday surprise? Absolutely.

They moved to the Queen City in March, toured the Jewish Community Center, and signed up their children — five-year-old

Anya, three-year-old Ethan, and two-year-old Sasha — for the Charlotte Jewish Preschool (CJP).

Talli says she was sold on CJP "the minute [they] met the director [Denise Abadi]."

Nine months later, Talli says the school is "even better" than they expected.

She's quick to mention safety, cleanliness, and rooms with "ample space."

But, that's only part of the story.

Talli and John are watching their children grow, especially as members of the Jewish Community.

"They teach us the blessings," Talli smiles. "They teach us the songs. They won't let us eat without saying 'Hamotzi.'"



Abadi says more than seventy new families enrolled at CJP this year. Many have similar stories to the Dippolds. Some say CJP is more like "mini-school" than "daycare." Others say it's easy to see why some families are willing to wait months to get their children into the program.

The Dippolds aren't surprised. They expected this. They wanted this. John may not have known this is where he'd spend his forty-first birthday. But, the way Talli sees it, chances are the family will spend the rest here. ☆

### CJDS: A Good Choice for All Jewish Children

When it comes to major purchases and decisions, most of us operate in a similar fashion — we research our choices on the Internet, talk to people, and try to get a feel for what we might be buying, whether it's a car, a house, a college education, or a vacuum cleaner. After all, we're going to be living with, and paying for, this decision for many years.

Susan and Stephen Hader were faced with a significant decision when they moved to Charlotte ten years ago and pondered where to send their eldest daughter, Sara, to school. "We went to the open houses at two private schools and then we went to Charlotte Jewish Day School and we never considered anything else after that," Susan Hader said. "We just felt comfortable."

Following in their sister's footsteps, the two younger Hader children also have grown up in the school. Lily is now a fifth grader

at CJDS and Kate is in the second grade. "I really wanted my kids to learn about Judaism from people who were joyful about it," Susan said. "Religiously, my kids are comfortable being Jewish. Their identities are strong and they couldn't have gotten that anywhere else."



Of course, the academic component weighed heavily in their decision as well. "The school is able to tailor learning to each individual student because of the class size and because of the structure," she said. "People who have had kids in both CJDS and another school have told me that it's more individualized at CJDS."

One common misunderstanding about CJDS is that it is a school only for observant Jewish families. The fact is that more than half of the 145 children who attend the school belong to Temple Israel and Temple Beth El, the Conservative and Reform synagogues in Charlotte.

"There are some things that I notice that my kids learn that kinds of surprised me because we belong to the Reform movement. But the types of things that you do at home influence your child, and parents just need to keep that in mind," said Ivy Saul, Sisterhood President of Temple Beth El.

The Sauls' son, Ben, now a

Providence High School student, attended CJDS through fifth grade and their second son, Isaac, is a second-grader at the school.

"I like the Jewish component even though they come with ideas that are different from mine," she said. "I handle that by explaining, at least to Isaac, that there are different ways of being Jewish."

"CJDS is a community day school with the mission of educating any and all Jewish children in an environment that is safe and comfortable," said CJDS Director Mariashi Groner. "We teach the core values and traditions of our heritage that apply to all Jews, and instill children with confidence and Jewish pride as they function in society at large."

Stacey Selkin, the mother of a CJDS first-grader, Dylan, laughed when asked if the school is "too Jewish."

"I grew up in New York and had tons of Jewish friends and there was a lot of Jewish culture in New York. I didn't grow up religious, but I felt that my child needed to have a Jewish education because it's not as prevalent here," she said.

She is thrilled with her decision.

"I see what Dylan is learning in all of his classes, not just his Judaica classes, but in all of his classes, and I'm just blown away," she said. "It's quite amazing what they're able to offer. And when I look at the cost of tuition, we are getting an unbelievable deal."

To find out more about CJDS, call Cheryl Rabinowitz, Director of Admissions, at 704-366-4558. ☆

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### Israel at 60

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most other immigrant societies, this openness to immigration has remained consistent even in times of economic stress and crisis. As a result, Jews have continued to arrive from all over the world to settle in Israel. Naturally, the number of "sabras" or native born Israelis was relatively low when the state was established, reaching only 35.4% in late 1948. With time, the percentage of "sabras" in society increased, and in recent years it has leveled off at just under 61%. The effect of a large number of "olim" (immigrants)

on a small society has been highly significant socially, economically and culturally. The need to absorb the newcomers placed a heavy burden on the young state, although once integrated, the "olim" led to considerable economic growth.

Thus the Jewish population, while united by a common faith and history, is characterized by a diversity of outlooks and lifestyles, resulting in a society which is partly Western, partly Eastern European, partly Middle Eastern, but mainly Israeli. ☆