

## Levin Middle School and CJDS Support Israeli Soldiers

Purim Operation 2008 is a worldwide project where Jewish schools adopt Israeli Army units by sending letters and Purim baskets to each soldier. At \$10 per soldier, \$500 is needed for a typical 50-person unit.

Andrew Klein, a Charlotte native who served in the IDF, was kind enough to come to school and offer several touching stories



Andrew Klein talks to CJDS 4th and 5th grade students.

about how encouraging it was to receive letters from Jewish students during his tour of duty.

Our middle school students, along with 4th and 5th graders of Charlotte Jewish Day School, wrote 50 letters of encouragement, in Hebrew, for the soldiers. This project became part of Morah Donna deGroot's classroom curriculum.

The main fundraising event was a bake sale by 4th and 5th grade

that made it possible for the entire student body to support the soldiers while enjoying tasty treats. They raised more than \$200. The students raised the remaining funds by doing odd jobs at home.

The students are looking forward to receiving a picture of their soldiers holding their Purim baskets. The school will also receive a commendation from the IDF for its participation in the Connections Israel project. ☆



Brianna Weitz and teacher Channie Weiss display their baked goods for the sale.

## Top Ten Reasons Not to Send Your Children to a Jewish Day School

We would like to share with you an article from a recent edition of *The Jewish Advocate* by Judy Bolton-Fasman, who is a member of the boards of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Boston and Temple Emanuel in Newton, MA. While her "list" refers mainly to the Solomon Schechter School, she addresses issues that parents face in all Jewish day schools.

Grocery lists, wish lists, to-do lists: I'm into lists. I particularly like David Letterman's "Top Ten Lists." This week, I'm poaching Letterman's concept to bring you my "Top Ten Reasons Not to Send Your Children to a Jewish Day School."

Let's start with reason number 10 and work our way up.

**10. Your children will be excited to go to synagogue.**

Harbor this illusion and you will be very disappointed. If you ask your children to attend synagogue with you on Saturday morning, they will say things like, "I already prayed at school." But just as you are despairing that you have invested in their Jewish education the equivalent of paying for a second home on the Cape, they spontaneously sing a beautiful rendition of "Adom Olam" in the shower, and it will be worth it. This is what Abraham Joshua Heschel calls "radical amazement" – a poignant, exquisite moment that restores your faith in the world.

**9. Your children will log less classroom time on secular subjects and therefore lag behind in the three "Rs."**

I heard that some ambitious parent once figured out that kids at Schechter actually had only a couple hours less instruction a week in secular subjects than their public and private school peers. I don't know if that's accurate, but it's irrelevant. Even when my children are in Hebrew classes, I'm reassured that they are learning to use a full complement of analytical and interpretive skills. And they're doing it in a second language.

**8. Your children will be better behaved.**

Sorry, kids are kids. The salutary effects of integrating Jewish values into a grade-school curriculum may not be immediately noticeable. But like a photograph developing in a chemical bath, those values will gradually emerge in your children's lives.

**7. Your children will not be with a diverse group of kids.**

Your children will go to school with Jewish kids. But at Schechter alone there are nine foreign languages spoken among the parent body. Parents and children there come from five continents. You do the math.

**6. Your children will be sheltered from the real world.**

Again, not my experience at Conservative Jewish day school that makes a point of giving kids a 21st century education in both secular and Judaic subjects. Your children will almost certainly become empathetic and very aware of their responsibility to engage in "Tikkun Olam" – repairing the world. They may interview Holocaust survivors for a social studies project one week and then participate in a day of community service the next.

**5. Your children are with the same group of kids from kindergarten through eighth grade.**

And the problem with that is what exactly? Forming life-long friendships? Having more sibling-like relationships during the hormone-laden middle school years? And there's a payoff for parents, too—the time to build solid community.

**4. Your children will become more religious than you.**

It's more accurate to say that your children will probably know more Hebrew than you do. Children will also engage in deeper text study than many of their parents have. But, that's a good thing. I think, in the end, Judaism will be organic to their lives and in the process you'll learn something, too. You may even want to expand your knowledge of Hebrew or Torah through adult education courses. Imagine that.

**3. You'll go broke trying to pay tuition.**

I'm not going to fool you, like any private school, sending kids to day school costs money. But on the other hand, no day school that I know of turns a family away because they can't come up with the full tuition. That being said, I'm of the "if you build it, they will come" mindset. If you decide to send your children to day school, you'll find a feasible and comfortable way to do it.

**2. Your children will have a difficult transition into a public or independent school.**

The anecdotal evidence I have collected over the years emphatically disproves this point. In fact, I've heard kids say that they feel well-prepared academically as well as socially to move on. It's

not perfect—sometimes it takes a while to find a comfortable niche. But that's life in any high school, Jewish or otherwise.

And the number one reason for not sending your children to a Jewish day school.

**1. It will be a breeze to bring up my children if they attend a Jewish day school.**

More than any other school, a Jewish day school will support you in raising a compassionate, ethical, and literate Jew. But you still have to do the hard work of parenting. Sending your children to day school does not preclude them from having the same complicated emotional lives of kids everywhere.

Please note that I brought nine years of hard-earned yet subjective wisdom to producing this list. And like Letterman's lists, it is not what it appears to be at first glance. But then again, we parents know that most things never are. ☆

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