

Schools

CJDS Board of Directors Plans To Go from "Good to Great"

In his number one bestseller, "Good to Great," Jim Collins presents the results of five years of analyzing twenty-eight elite companies. His research has yielded a set of explanations of how companies have become great after starting out as mediocre or good.

This school season the Charlotte Jewish Day School (CJDS) Board of Directors will study Mr. Collins' book in depth with the help of a corporate trainer. The goal is to make an already good board into a great one that will guarantee the stability of

Charlotte Jewish Day School. This undertaking is in line with Director, Mariashi Groner's motto that "Good enough is never good enough." Her ongoing commitment to excellence must be supported by a highly focused and energized board.

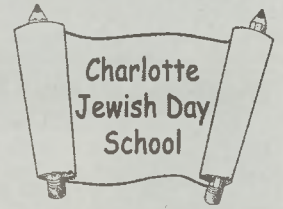
This dedication and rejuvenation will have huge payoffs for the greater Jewish community. These exercises will re-affirm the school's long-standing mission to provide an outstanding academic environment interwoven with Judaica values; to help students and

their families to see the Torah as a blueprint for their lives; to realize the importance of unity among all Jews; and to establish a positive Jewish identity. The board's strategic direction will provide vision for all those whose lives are touched by this mission ... now and in years to come.

So how will the CJDS Board of Directors go from "Good to Great"? Collins' ideas are vast, but a few seem to ring out. Collins suggests first having the right people who can share their unique set of skills and talents and who strive

for excellence for excellence's sake ... then decide where to go and what to do. He also suggests confronting the brutal facts facing an organization, yet never losing faith.

Introspection is also vital. Portions of the board meetings in November, January, and March will be devoted to this book study. The Board of Directors' focus and tenacity will create this transition from goodness to greatness. Their diligence will bring about tremendous rewards as their fervor catches on. Imagine ... all those associ-



ated with CJDS who are good will become great...making tremendous contributions to this world while serving God.

Happy New Year! ☆

In the Director's Words

What Does a "Lubavitch Preschool" Mean?

By Jen Lahn, M.S.W., Director of the Jewish Preschool on Sardis

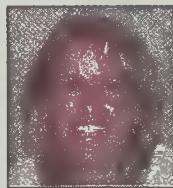
Recently, I received a phone call from a mother who was moving to Charlotte with her family and wanted information about registering her three-year-old for our program. She grew up as a Reform Jew and her husband grew up in a Jewish household, but was unaffiliated. Labeling her family as "not very observant," the mother expressed concern about the fact that the school was a subsidiary of the Orthodox, Lubavitch Synagogue. She had not chosen that lifestyle and was concerned that it would be in conflict with her family. Since I know that question bubbles up often, I decided to share my response to her uncertainty in hopes that the Charlotte community gains a clear picture of the wonderful philosophies and teachings that happen inside our building:

"The families at JPS come from all different religious backgrounds. All of our families are Jewish, however some may be Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, practicing in their own way or not practicing at all. When I first looked at the preschool as a parent eleven years ago, the 'Lubavitch' aspect was foreign to me as well. Growing up, my parents were very active at my Reform synagogue and my husband grew up in an observant Conservative home. I never imagined that we'd be considering what I thought was going to be such a serious religious setting for my child. But soon I realized that I had some misconceptions.

"At immediate glance, the day-to-day mirrors other quality preschools. Children play at various centers in their classrooms, such as housekeeping and blocks; laugh with each other; swing and slide on the playground; sing

songs; and get encouraging hugs from their teachers. The natural feeling of warmth, friendliness, openness, and just plain fun is the norm at JPS. But when you look a little closer, you realize that JPS has something special to offer. Rabbi Yossi and Mariashi Groner founded the preschool based on their love of children and Judaism. Their hope is that each child not only loves learning, but also loves being Jewish. This is the incredible, unique vision that guides the preschool.

"I've been entrusted to continue the highest standard of both secular and Judaica education for our preschoolers. Our one- and two-year-old classes become familiar with the *brachot* and jump for joy when Morah Pessie, one of our Judaica instructors, comes for a visit. The three- and four-year-olds at JPS eagerly line up to go to Judaica class every day, where they learn about Jewish holidays, give tzedakah, and learn, act out, read, and live the common Torah stories, such as Noah's Ark. Our students also look forward to other special events that celebrate Judaism, such as Shofar blowing, the matzah bakery, and our Friday Shabbat send-offs. The teachings result in confident children who are genuinely enthusiastic about their religion. Overall, an education at JPS successfully provides a strong Jewish foundation, yet also prepares students for the academic challenges they face upon entering elementary school, whether they continue onto a public or private education—secular or a Day School education. In fact, recently I was told by many principals and directors of area private and public elementary schools that they look



Jen Lahn

forward to gaining our graduates as students because they come prepared and ready to learn."

Personally, the conversation reinforced what an unbelievable feeling it is to be at the helm of a school with such a high standard of excellence. As for the parent I was speaking to, she was surprised that she wasn't "expected to become Lubavitch" and she was comforted by the warmth she felt throughout our phone conversation. Confident that her daughter would be enveloped in that same feeling as a student at the preschool, the mother happily enrolled her child for the fall. ☆

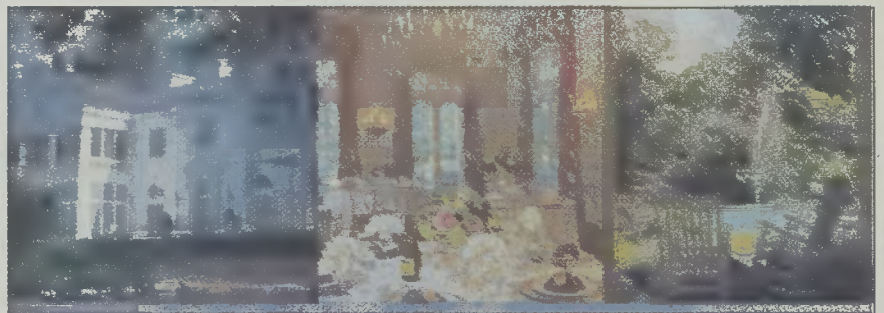
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"Hear my voice, Ever-Present, when I call; be gracious to me and answer me. My heart has said, in Your name, "Seek my face"; Infinite Source, I do seek Your face. Show me Your way, Great Teacher, and lead me on a level path, because of my ever-alert enemies."

Psalm 27: 7-8, 11