

Schools

JPS, My Community Connection

By Allison Arena, JPS Parent

Two years ago, my family and I moved to Charlotte from the Triangle for my husband's job. We didn't know anyone or have much information about the local community. My first priority was to ease the transition for our two young children. It was late December and we had to find a place for them to continue their Jewish preschool education. Luckily, we found a wonderful match at the Jewish Preschool on Sardis (JPS). The staff welcomed us with open arms and smiling



Allison Arena and son Charlie will have fond memories of JPS.

faces. Since many of the children at JPS had been classmates since they were toddlers, I was concerned about the adjustment for my own children. Imagine my surprise when my daughter was invited to a classmate's birthday party two weeks after we moved here. I was so happy. I knew then that I had made the right choice.

I spent many afternoons on the JPS playground, talking and enjoying the company of other mothers. I was able to gather important information and recommendations -- the best pediatricians, pizza, and so on.

It was also there on the playground that I revealed my former corporate life in sales, marketing, and event planning to a new friend. The next thing I knew, this friend signed me up to solicit for JPS' silent auction, the school's biggest fundraiser. I figured it would be a fantastic way to meet new people and use my "retired" skill set to benefit this new community. This was just the beginning of my involvement at JPS. Last year, I was "promoted" to Decorations Chair, and this past year, I co-chaired the auction.

If I had said "no" to getting

involved, I would have missed out on so many wonderful memories and opportunities at the school. Volunteering also served as my tzedakah - my real heartfelt contribution to our life here.

Now with my youngest nearing preschool graduation, I will be

forever thankful JPS -- the wonderful place that nurtures my son, nurtured my daughter, and helped me belong. The school was the catalyst for connections, the foundation for our family, and the beginning of our journey here in Charlotte. ☆

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Making the Passover Seder Fun

By Rabbi Faith Cantor and Susan Hoffman-Shure

The central commandment regarding the Exodus from Egypt is to teach our children. We are obligated to assure they know our story of slavery and God's role as our redeemer. Parents and teachers all know it is not so easy to "tell our children" anything. Here are some suggestions to make the retelling of the Passover story more engaging in your home this year.

* Become a haggadah collector. Have different haggadot at your table. Encourage your guests to look for similarities and differences and enjoy the myriad of commentaries available.

* Celebrate the Seder in a tent. Push aside your family room furniture, put up some sheets, throw pillows on the floor and conduct the first part of the Seder on the floor. Move into the dining room for the meal.

* Adopt a new custom from another part of the world. During the singing of *Dayeinu*, Persian Jews hit each other over the head with scallions, remembering our days of slavery.

* Make the plagues come to life. During the recitation of the ten plagues, use props such as puppets, fake bugs and/or colored water.

Finally, ask your children what

they have learned in preschool, religious school or day school and make them active participants in your Seder.

Chag V'Kasher Sameach ☆



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