

# Making the World a Little Bit Smaller at JPS

By Dana Meiselman

When twins Noya and Ori Kaelter walked into their classroom at the Jewish Preschool on Sardis on the first day of school, neither girl spoke a word of English. The three-year-olds had moved with their family from Israel to Charlotte just days before. Lead teacher Jayme Kreitman knew there would be some challenges, but was excited to welcome the new students.

Morah Jayme says it didn't take long for the twins to learn the English words for different colors and numbers. In just weeks, they mastered simple phrases too. Often, the girls now combine Hebrew and English into the same sentence as in "Yesh li apple" (I have an apple). They eagerly participate in all activities, and especially love doing art. Morah Jayme takes

great pleasure in watching their eyes light up when the twins make a connection between their native language and the new one that surrounds them.

And it's not just Noya and Ori who are on the way to becoming bilingual; assistant teacher Terri Roth says their classmates have started asking questions throughout the day like "how do we say this in Hebrew?" The group is learning other important skills too. "The children have developed ways that they can communicate with the twins using their hands, or they can pare down a long sentence into something really short," says Morah Jayme. Both teachers enjoy seeing the children break down the language barrier. "One little boy wanted the twins to play

and they didn't understand, so he patted the ground to say 'come over here and sit down.'"

Noya and Ori's mom, Nurit Kaelter, wanted to ensure the twins continued to develop strong Jewish identities and believed right away JPS would be the perfect fit. "I had a very good feeling from the beginning. It was important to them [the teachers, staff] that we felt good and the girls felt good." Kaelter says her girls talk



Noya and Ori Kaelter

constantly about their new friends. Although she wants the twins to continue speaking Hebrew, the family - including the girls' five-year-old brother Yoav and father Dror - is now speaking both languages at home. Kaelter says the entire Charlotte community has welcomed them, and even total strangers are taking notice. "Someone in a store heard me talking and said 'I hear you speaking Hebrew, I am Jewish too, welcome to Charlotte.'"

Both teachers who spend their mornings with the Kaelter twins affirm it's been a wonderful experience. Ms. Terri says "we're learning Hebrew from them as they're learning English from us, and we're making the world a little bit smaller." ☆

# Talmud Torah Introduces "JAMS"— Jewish Activity Mitzvah Seminar

As we are constantly looking for ways to improve our educational programs for our young teens, we are proud to introduce a "Jewish Activity Mitzvah Seminar" program that will serve our Bar Mitzvah-aged boys in grades 6-8.

"JAMS" will incorporate several educational opportunities which will be taught by a rotating group of Ohr HaTorah rabbis and faculty. This "JAMS" program will embrace great learning and vibrant interactive activities which will give your children a deeper understanding of Jewish basics and infuse them with a positive Jewish experience. Each learning session will focus on a special Mitzvah in a hands-on way and will include a multimedia presentation and an engaging activity.

Following are examples of some of the "JAMS" sessions: Tefillin Workshop, Kosher Meat Demonstration, The Israel 3D Experience, Journey through the Jewish Life Cycle, Welcome to

Hollywood - Applying Practical Lessons for Modern Society, Mezuzah Project, Bikur Cholim -Community Service, and a new Hebrew Reading Series.



"JAMS" meets every Sunday morning from 10 AM-12 noon. For more information or to register your child for "JAMS," please visit [www.TalmudTorah.net/JAMS](http://www.TalmudTorah.net/JAMS) or contact Bentzion Groner at 704-366-5983. ☆

# The CJP Experience

By Brian Bernhardt

My wife, Glenda, and I, along with our son, Jake, moved to Charlotte about a year ago. Since Glenda and I both work full-time, one of our first priorities was finding day-care for Jake, who was just turning one. After too many tours of day-care centers to count, along with a false start at one of them, we finally sat down with Elka Bernstein, Director of the Charlotte Jewish Preschool.

Although Jake was a little young to start at CJP, Elka sensed that we desperately needed the things that CJP offered: a place where Jake could receive full-day care while we worked, where he could grow and learn as a toddler, where he could begin to understand and live the Jewish life we led, and (most of all) a place where we would always know he was safe and loved. It has been almost a year since Jake started at CJP and our experience has been successful beyond our wildest expectations.

Every day when we pick up Jake, we are amazed at what he has learned. He has learned colors, numbers, shapes, letters, numbers, how to draw, write, paint, and how to play well with others. He has made friends, celebrated birthdays, and discovered how much fun he can have without realizing that he is learning.

At the same time, CJP has given Jake the sense of Jewishness, Hebrew, and Israel for which we longed. CJP does not separate Jewish education from secular education. When Jake learned

about colors, he learned the Hebrew words for the colors. As he learns songs, he sings "The Wheels on the Bus" with a round of "Bim Bam." This fall, Jake learned about Rosh Hashanah using fruit, their colors, and the changing seasons, all while making pictures describing the many aspects of the holiday he was learning.

We are constantly amazed at how much CJP has helped us create a Jewish life for Jake. One evening, for example, he turned to us and counted to three - in Hebrew. On Friday mornings, in anticipation of celebrating Shabbat at CJP, Jake says "Shabbat Shalom" to everyone he sees. At Shabbat dinner, he covers his eyes when Glenda lights the candles and sings the Kiddush and Hamotzi. At night, as we get ready for bed we sing the Shema - and imagine our surprise the night when he sang it himself, in Hebrew and English. Best of all, he has made an entire Temple Beth El Kabbalat Shabbat service break out in laughter by yelling "Amen" at the top of his lungs after the Kiddush.

Glenda and I are also so fortunate that CJP allows us to both work all day without having to worry about Jake. We drop Jake off by 8 AM every day and pick him up between 5:30 and 6 PM. It is a long day for Jake but he is always excited to arrive in the morning and almost never wants to leave in the evening. And when I do manage to convince him that we have to leave, it's like walking



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around with a politician - he says hello to everyone who walks by and, since all the teachers know Jake by name, they all say hello to him.

One of my walls at work is covered with art that Jake has made this past year. So much of it reflects the beauty and wonder of CJP - a picture of a tree under the heading "Tu B'Shevat," a crown for Queen Esther, a drawing of apples next to a Shofar, a collage of me (well, it has eyes, a nose, and lips!) described as "abba," Hebrew for father. Every time I look at that wall, I not only fill up with pride and love for Jake, but happiness that Glenda and I found Elka and CJP.

Glenda and I just had our second child. This time, there will be no day-care center tours, no calls around town finding out where there are open spaces, and no false starts. As soon as he is old enough, our new son will go to CJP and, like Jake, we know he will have an experience better than any we could have expected.

Come join us at the Charlotte Jewish Preschool Open House on Friday, January 14 at 9 AM. To find out how your family can Learn.Grow.Connect contact Alyson Kalik at 704-944-6866. ☆

# WOMEN'S NEWS

## Hadassah Mah Jongg Marathon Time

Mah Jongg players, it's that time again. Charlotte Hadassah and the LJCC are proud to offer our 6th Maj Marathon on Sunday, January 16, at Gorelick Hall, Levine Jewish Community Center, Shalom Park, 5007 Providence Road. This wonderful afternoon of fun begins at 12 and ends around 4:30, and is open to the community.

This year, we will have three

different groups: experienced (timed rounds), novice (untimed rounds), and learners, for people who have just begun to play and want to participate in a group tournament. Judy Kaufmann will be our coach for this group.

The top winners will receive cash prizes. The cost is \$20 for Hadassah members, and \$25 for non-members, and snacks will be provided.

Your check (sent with the coupon below) is your reservation. Please send it to: Robin Fine, 11908 Bridgeview Ln. Charlotte, NC 28277.

Since mah jongg is number specific, we cannot accommodate walk-ins.

Any questions, please call Sandy Hoagland, 704-543-6338. ☆

**Yes! I want to play in the Mah Jongg Marathon on January 16**

Name.....

Phone.....

E-Mail.....

Level of Play  
Novice (untimed):..... Experienced (timed):..... Learner (untimed):.....

Check Enclosed: \$20 (Hadassah member)/\$25 (non-member) payable to Hadassah

..... I promise to bring my 2010 mah jongg card (extras will not be available)

..... I will bring my mah jongg set labeled with my name (you will stay at the table with your set)

..... I have \_\_\_1\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_3\_\_\_ card tables Hadassah can borrow. I will label them with my name before Hadassah picks them up.