

## The "4s" at JPS: More Than Just Preschool

By Jill Halverstam

I am really not sure where the time has gone and how I went from leaving the hospital with a 7-lb., 11-oz. baby to dropping him off in carpool line at the Jewish Preschool on Sardis to start his fourth and final year. Immediately after that first day of school in September, we began to look at all of our options for next year. As much as I wanted to sit back and savor the moment of our son's last year at JPS, I knew that I needed to look at what the future would hold for his education. I have now been to six open houses, taken four school tours, and scheduled countless upcoming interviews. In Charlotte, we are fortunate to have many marvelous options for educating our children, but too many choices can also be overwhelming. I have no idea where we will end up, but what I did learn from this process is that I am fortunate to have my son spend his final year of preschool in the 4s class at JPS.

After squeezing into teeny tiny chairs in many kindergarten classes around town, I realize that the JPS 4s teachers are going to make my son's transition painless and relaxed. Students in the 4s class have already started learning to write their letters and are working on basic math concepts. The pro-

gram JPS uses to teach the children is similar to the curriculums that are found in many junior kindergarten and kindergarten classes around Charlotte. JPS, like many schools, uses an effective program called "Handwriting Without Tears." My child entered Ms. Beverly's class in September barely knowing how to hold a pencil, but by the first of December he brought home the most beautiful Hanukkah card with his name signed on the bottom. Of course his proud mama put the card front and center on the mantle.

Ms. Beverly and Ms. Erica make it their mission as 4s teachers at JPS to help the children focus on the basics. The teachers and assistant teachers make learning age-appropriate and enjoyable, while understanding the importance of perfecting the children's fine and gross motor skills. We often find my son and his classmates drawing letters of the alphabet on each other's backs, using their bodies to form letters, or eating special foods and meeting puppets that reinforce and encourage the knowledge of a special letter each week. JPS Director Jen Lahn has explained to me on several occasions that you cannot



read until you start with your basics, and our children are definitely learning some fantastic basics.

While the 4s at JPS get all of those above mentioned basics, there are additional aspects of the curriculum that help create an unforgettable experience. Every day, the children are engaged in Judaica lessons with Morah Rochel and Morah Leah. The children also get to experience yoga, music, tae kwon do, fine motor fun, cooking, sports and so much more. I am not sure what I did when I was four, but my days in preschool were definitely not as focused or enjoyable as a typical day at JPS.

I figured out that the only thing that makes JPS different from junior kindergarten is that in preschool our children receive extra hugs and additional time to learn to communicate with friends. JPS is fostering social skills to help our children become independent

and strong little people. It is easy to forget that emptying a backpack, cleaning up your own lunch, and helping a friend on the playground are skills that are taught and encouraged by patient, loving and caring teachers like Ms. Beverly and Ms. Erica.

I went into JPS 4s thinking that

it was just "preschool" but I have quickly learned that the educational foundation is spectacular and the social and emotional encouragement that my child receives will make him an incredible student once he graduates and heads out into the real world...aka kindergarten. ☆

## CJP Thrives Through Partnership

By Elka Bernstein,  
Director

I have always been taught that we are partners with God. God created this beautiful world. It is our job to work with God to maintain and continue God's beautiful work. From the very beginning, we are taught the strength of partnerships. The Charlotte Jewish Preschool uses the strength of partnership to provide a school with an exceptional early childhood education program. As most people know, CJP is a partnership of Temple Beth El, Temple Israel and the Sandra and Leon Levine Jewish Community Center. Rabbi Murray Ezring, Rabbi Judy Schindler, Rabbi Faith Cantor and Rabbi Micah Streiffer provide strong guidance, creative programming, training and daily interaction with our students to ensure that the Judaic curriculum is fully immersed into the classroom curriculum. Phil Berman's strong team at the LJCC provides professional support to the administration and teachers of CJP, as well as excellent enrichment programming for our students.

The founding members strive with CJP each year to create a quality program for our young Jewish families. However, the support does not end here. CJP is infused with parents dedicated to providing their children with a loving, nurturing and educational environment. CJP's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is an internal partner making sure the needs of our students are met. CJP's PTO is not just a group of moms that get together every once



CJP's PTO Leadership Team – Caren Hill, Annie Lord, Ruthanne Effren, and Natalie Osman.

and a while to plan book sales, but play a vital and influential role in the success of CJP.

Our PTO is driven to provide social connections for our preschool community, as well as financial support. Many preschools have been hit hard in the last few years due to the current economic conditions. Many preschools were faced with laying off teachers, decreasing resources and cutting programming. Thanks to the PTO, the teachers have continued to receive classroom supplies and materials to enhance the quality of classroom instruction. The PTO's contribution also continues to allow CJP to have a minimum of two teachers per classroom; a lead teacher and an assistant teacher. For example, the state ratio of teacher to students in a three year old classroom is 1:15. Imagine one teacher managing to teach 15 three year olds. At CJP, the PTO support provides three teachers to a classroom with 15 three year olds; a 1:5 ratio. Quality is what drives our fabulous Parent Teacher Organization. Leading the PTO this year are: Annie Lord – President; Caren Hill – Vice President; Ruthanne Effren –

Treasurer; Natalie Osman – Secretary.

When walking through our halls, you can see the PTO committees and chairpersons hard at work. Some of the faces you will

(Continued on page 18)

**BrightStar** HOME CARE SERVICES  
LIFECARE | KIDCARE

Tel: 704.919.0955

Fax: 704.919.0998

scharlotte@brightstarcare.com

www.brightstarcare.com

- ✦ 24/7, Respite or Hourly
- ✦ Alzheimer's / Parkinson's Care
- ✦ Ambulation Assistance
- ✦ Bathing, Grooming, Hygiene
- ✦ Light Housekeeping
- ✦ Live-In Service
- ✦ Medication Reminders
- ✦ Meal Preparation
- ✦ Transportation, Errands
- ✦ Pediatric Care, Newborn Care
- ✦ CAP Provider

**Yours Truly Needlepoint  
and Knitting**  
Handpainted Needlepoint Canvases

All New Canvases — Free lessons  
— Unique Gift Ideas —  
New and Old Customers Very Welcome  
Best Selection in Charlotte

All Proceeds Go to Local Charities

3802 Columbine Circle  
704-366-6765

Open Thursdays  
9 a.m.-5 p.m.

## ARE YOU PREPARED FOR LONG TERM CARE?

Find Out

- ◆ What long term care is and why you and your loved ones are at high risk for needing care at home or in a facility.
- ◆ Why the limited benefits from Government (Medicare or Medicaid) are not a good choice for your long term care needs.
- ◆ At what age should you consider buying long term care insurance. You will be surprised to know why and how buying at a younger age is better for you.

**If you don't want to put the burden of long term care on your family then contact me for alternative solutions.**



**Milton Goldstein, CLTC**  
Certified Long Term Care Specialist

Charlotte, NC: (704) 442-5618  
Birmingham, AL: (205) 907-0670  
E-mail: miltgold@bellsouth.net

Visit my Web Site: [www.goldsteinltc.com](http://www.goldsteinltc.com)