

## Elyssa Gorelick Tell Us "Why JPS"

By Dedee Goldsmith, director, Jewish Preschool on Sardis

When people ask "Why JPS," I enjoy leaving it to our dedicated family and alumni to tell their story. Our first spotlight alumna is Elyssa Gorelick.

Q: When did you attend JPS and what are some memories you have?

A: I attended JPS from the 2s-4s. It's been a long time, but I definitely remember being happy at preschool. I remember how much fun it was to learn Hebrew vocabulary and to sing Hebrew songs. We also began to learn about the various Jewish holidays and the attendant rituals, foods, etc. Some of my oldest friends were at JPS with me.

Although I am told that I'm quite outgoing now, my parents like to remind me of how very shy I was. Apparently, I was quiet, easy to get along with, and I absolutely adored every one of my teachers.

My mother remembers that my favorite classroom "activity station" was the dress up bin of costumes. She says that I loved spending time in the school's outdoor play area, especially on the swing set.

My father recalls fondly how I "brought home" what I learned about the various Jewish holidays each year. He remembers crafts, costumes, food, songs, and lots of smiles, as I explained what I had learned to my family. He says that

we both looked especially forward to him visiting my classroom during Hanukkah every year for "Dreidels with Dad."

Q: Why did your parents choose JPS for you?

A: My parents chose JPS for me and my siblings, because it offered a uniquely nurturing and loving environment, where we could develop an educational foundation which included both Jewish values and first class secular programming. They considered multiple preschools before making this very important decision.



Elyssa with her friends in preschool

Q: Tell us where you are in your life currently.

A: Ever since second grade, all I ever wanted to be when I "grew up" was a teacher. Believe it or not, my favorite Hanukkah gifts over the years were a huge dry erase board, a chalkboard, numerous teacher's workbooks, and my own (small) overhead projector.

During elementary school (at CJDS), my free time was consumed with "teaching" my

younger sister, Madeline (also an alumna of JPS and CJDS). We would play school, with me as the teacher and her as the only student. Sadly for Maddie, she rarely got to play teacher.

Currently, I am a sophomore in the School of Education at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. My goals include obtaining my education degree, becoming a licensed teacher, possibly obtaining a graduate degree in education, and teaching until I get married and have my own children to "teach." Once my kids are old enough, I hope to return to teaching full time. Of course, one of my dream jobs would be to teach at JPS or CJDS.

Q: How does JPS fit into your life now?

After my final exams last May, I returned home to Charlotte for the summer. I offered myself as an unpaid intern at CJDS. It was a marvelous experience. I was able to assist and teach at all grade levels, meet current CJDS parents, speak to prospective CJDS parents, and work side by side with my former teachers.

As the CJDS school year came to a close, I was asked to consider being a counselor at the JPS summer camp. It sounded like fun, and it was a real paying job. What I did not expect was to fall so much in love with the preschoolers. I definitely got more out of the experience than the campers did. The kids are absolutely adorable, and their parents are so devoted to their well-being. How-



Elyssa today.

ever, I was truly impressed and fascinated, as I watched these little people develop their social, behavioral, and intellectual skills at such a rapid pace.

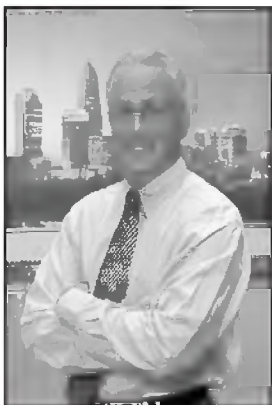
I was also able to babysit for a few of the campers during the summer. I am so deeply grateful to JPS for embracing me and teaching me how to teach preschoolers, albeit in a "camp" setting. It was because of this experience that I changed my major from Elementary Education (3rd thru 6th grade) to Early Childhood Education (Pre-K thru 3rd grade.)

My summer spent at CJDS and JPS was both remarkable and life-changing.

It renewed and deepened both my career and personal goals. And I learn so much every single day. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Do you have a JPS alumni story to share? Email dedee@jps-sardis.org to schedule an interview, we can't wait to hear from you. ☆


**WORK WITH A LEADER IN CHARLOTTE REAL ESTATE**





**RE/MAX**  
EXECUTIVE REALTY

**704-926-2544 office**  
**704-975-8500 cell**  
[www.LepowRealtors.com](http://www.LepowRealtors.com)



**STEVE LEPOW**  
LEADING THE WAY TO YOUR SUCCESS

## Come Get Warm at CJP

By Becca Weiner

There's no doubt about it – the winter months are upon us and the weather is getting colder. Our students are coming to school bundled up in their warmest clothes,

their cutest hats, and the tiniest mittens we've ever seen. But, even though the temperature is dropping outside, inside the walls of the Charlotte Jewish Preschool things couldn't feel warmer. Here at the CJP we are full of warm fuzzies all winter long, from the bright candles we light on Shabbat and Havdalah, to the loving education of our students and the warm community built by our families - we are staying warm.

Each Friday at Shabbat, we welcome in the Sabbath by lighting our two candles for Shabbat. As we light each candle our students acknowledge that we light the first candle so that we keep Shabbat in our hearts, and we light our second candle to remember that Shabbat is special. Then we all raise our arms and pull in the light and warmth of Shabbat three times before we recite the bracha. Everyone covers their eyes as Miss Patty leads us in chanting the prayer, and when we uncover our eyes and gaze at the light of the Shabbat candles, we feel the warmth of Shabbat in our hearts.

On Shabbat, we do things differently at the preschool. When the kids are arriving at school they enter their classrooms and in addition to their regular centers, there are special centers pertaining to Shabbat. Students are tracing images of Shabbat at the art station and setting their Shabbat dinner table in the housekeeping center. After our Shabbat service, students enjoy challah and grape juice during snack time. Even in the coldest months of the year,

Shabbat remains the warmest day of our week. On Mondays, we begin our week by saying "shalom!" to Shabbat with our Havdalah service. Teachers light the Havdalah candle and our students are in awe of how high the flame climbs. Our week begins with the warmth and light of the Havdalah candle, and the warmth and love of our classroom community.

As we welcome in Hanukkah this month, the warmth of the CJP will be felt even more as we light the Hanukiyah. During the Festival of Lights each classroom will be illuminated by the brilliantly burning candles. But this Hanukkah, it's not just the candles that will be keeping our hallways warm. Throughout November, we ran a toy drive for Jewish Family Services for our monthly tzedakah project. Our CJP families bought toys and gifts for families in need so they may enjoy the holiday season. This is in addition to the constant giving of coins for our weekly tzedakah collection at our Shabbat service. Our students

(Continued on page 14)

## AFTERNOON ENRICHMENT CLASSES FOR JEWISH STUDENTS

Beginning in January, Temple Beth El Religious School will offer afternoon enrichment classes for Jewish students, both members and non-members.

### TERRIFIC TALES FROM THE TORAH!

Grades K-2; 4:45-6:15 PM  
Mondays, January 7, 14, 28; February 4, 11  
OR Wednesdays, January 9, 16, 30;  
February 6, 13  
Dumas Activity Center, Bernstein Education Building  
Cost: \$100 TBE members, \$130 non-members

### SHALOM CHAVERIM! HELLO FRIENDS! MODERN CONVERSATIONAL HEBREW

Grades 6-8, 4:45-5:45 PM  
Thursdays, January 10, 17, 31;  
February 7, 14, 21, 28; March 7, 14, 21  
D118, Bernstein Education Building  
Cost: \$130 TBE members, \$165 non-members

### HANDS-ON JEWISH HOLIDAYS

Grades 3-5, 4:45-5:45 PM  
Thursdays, January 10, 17, 31;  
February 7, 14  
Dumas Activity Center, Bernstein Education Building  
Cost: \$70 TBE members, \$90 non-members

Register at: [www.beth-el.com/rsvp](http://www.beth-el.com/rsvp)



**Charlotte Jewish Preschool**  
LEARN • GROW • CONNECT