

# Youth Visions

## The Jewish Writing Project and Hebrew High

We all know our teenagers are very opinionated. Almost any subject can turn into a world class debate. And it isn't just opinions, it's passions. Their emotional attachment to their convictions is profound.

At the same time, as teenagers, they need to start thinking about how to express those opinions in writing. Not only will almost every college application require an essay, there is an essay portion of the SATs that they need to conquer.

Put these two things together, and we have Hebrew High's new class, "Writing for Good."

Mrs. Montoni, who is a professional writer and editor and long

time Hebrew High teacher, created the class to a) help students get past sticky grammatical and spelling errors that plague their writing; b) learn to write about what their passions are; and c) help them express their inner most feelings about being Jewish.

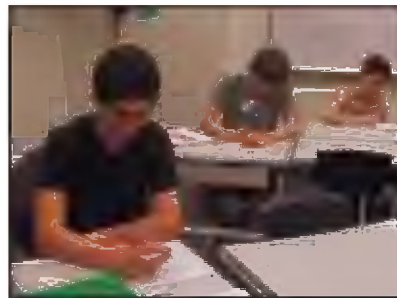
Each week, she teaches one grammar lesson. The first week, the students learned to distinguish possessive pronouns from contractions (e.g., your and you're; its and it's; whose and who's). The following week, they discussed the proper usage of me, myself, and I.

Then the class turned to discussion mode where they talk about a Jewish issue that is of interest.

Wherever the discussion leads, that's where Mrs. Montoni pulls out a prompt for writing.

The first week the prompt was "Date Only Jews or Play the Field?" The responses were surprising and interesting (and some students still confused their and they're).

After editing the essays, Mrs. Montoni contacted Bruce Black, web master of a blog called "The Jewish Writing Project." Here Jews from all backgrounds have submitted essays about their day-to-day experiences as Jews. The submissions that have been published are both interesting and thought-provoking.



Eighth graders Sam Friedman, Noah Tobias, and Leah Kwiatkowski write their essays for The Jewish Writing Project.

Black was thrilled to receive submissions from our teens and published our first set of essays. They can be found at: <http://jewishwritingproject.wordpress.com/2013/04/01/teenagers-and-interfaith-dating/>.

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Our next set of essays, "What is a Jew?" are currently being vetted by Black and will be published at the end of the month. The next set of essays, "What would the world be like if there had been no Holocaust?," are still being edited by Mrs. Montoni. Watch for notices when these essays are online. ☆



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## Another Friendship Circle Passover Experience

As you may know, the Passover Seder includes a lengthy amount of time spent on reading the Haggadah and retelling the story of the Jewish people's exodus from slavery and the land of Egypt. On Passover, a special effort is made to engage the children. We encourage questions and make sure the children are part of the Seder. For children

with special needs, however, the Passover Seder can be very difficult to sit through and can also be very overwhelming.

For the second time, Friendship Circle organized a Passover Seder to ensure children with special needs were also included in the Passover experience. From unique games and activities for the children to Passover stories and



discussions for the adults, our tailor made Seder was an uplifting experience.

This year's Passover Seder was dedicated to the memory of Jeremy Alpern (Cantor) OBM. ☆

## Friendship Circle Life Skills: Lessons for Life – Friendships Forever

A major key and critical part of working with children of special needs is getting them comfortable in the outside world. With Friendship Circle's Life Skills Program, we can help the children acclimate to basic life tasks such as: using a library, visiting the doctor, or

going shopping. With practice, they can become self-sufficient and unassisted individuals, giving themselves a sense of independence. Practicing life skills in a safe and welcoming environment can change what seems strange, overwhelming and unfriendly into something fun and easy to do.

Each Life Skills session will

run for one hour. Children will be paired with one or two volunteers so that each child receives one-on-one attention. Activities will include visits to the library, grocery store, and a restaurant.

For more information e-mail [Rochel@friendshipcircles.org](mailto:Rochel@friendshipcircles.org) or call Rochel at 704-366-5983. ☆

We take great pride in saluting our dedicated volunteers who bring smiles to children with special needs

<b>Friends@Home Volunteers</b>	<b>Program Volunteers</b>
Jessica Blackman	Cayley Coughlan
Josh Brand	Steven Mills
Mimi Brown	Marni Ransenberg
Hannah Danziger	Sydney Rusgo
Will DeLoach	Evelina Trost
Danny Gamlin	Benjamin Weinstein
Ian Goldberg	Talia Weinstein
Noah Goldman	<b>Mitzvah Volunteers</b>
Harper Moskowitz	Jacob Baumstein
NIKKI Rosenbaum	Yishai Berendt
Hayley Rusgo	Gabriella Catenazzo
Melanie Zimmerman	Olivia Dardis
	Anna Ditesheim
	Hannah Ross
	C.J. Torcellini
	Sydney Torcellini

May they continue to be a source of pride to their parents and our community.

The Friendship Circle of Charlotte  
704-366-5983 • [www.FriendshipCircleNC.org](http://www.FriendshipCircleNC.org)

## Donating an Old Cell Phone Can Save a Life

Shalom Bayit-NC, in conjunction with Safe Alliance's Victim Assistance, is collecting cell phones for victims – or potential victims – of domestic violence. Old, used and unwanted cell phones will be reprogrammed to call 911 and used in the event of an emergency. Donating is as simple as dropping the cell phone and battery charger (in a plastic bag or box, if possible) at the reception desks of the following locations: Levine Jewish Community Center, Ohr Hatorah Congregation, Temple Beth El, Temple Israel, Jewish Family Services

For more information check [www.shalom-bayit-nc.org](http://www.shalom-bayit-nc.org). ☆

## How Healthy is Your Relationship?

Do you feel controlled by your partner? Do you constantly experience insults, humiliation, threatening acts or gestures, bullying? Does your partner control the finances, isolate you from friends and family, treat you like a servant, make everything your fault. Is there violence?

Up to 25% of all Jewish women, teens, and even some men are currently in abusive situations.

Shalom Bayit-NC is working to end domestic abuse in our Jewish community by raising awareness, offering education and providing services to people suffering at the hands of intimate partners. Call 704-756-9209. ☆

