

Schools

Jewish Preschool on Sardis Will Always Be a Part of Our Lives

By Elise Kosofsky

I remember when we were preparing to bring our first child home. There were so many things that we were certain we needed; a beautiful crib, a leather highchair with built-in vacuum, the bouncy seat that vibrated, oscillated, and could even change a diaper. Wow, weren't we surprised after a year had come and gone that the only thing our precious baby wanted was to play in the dog's water bowl and smash the buttons on our most precious piece of technology. Well, like many experiences with children, sometimes what you think is important, or what you think you need, you don't realize until much further into the parenting journey.

Eight years ago my husband and I began the search for the "perfect" preschool for our daughter Abby. We knew we wanted her to attend a Jewish preschool, but we wanted to make sure that we found the best school possible. We had a ton of ideas about what we felt a preschool should have to provide our uber intelligent two-year old. We examined classrooms, asked about curriculum, met teachers, and spoke with par-

ents attending the schools. In the end, what we found was that the only thing that really mattered to us was that when we walked in the door - we felt like we were home.

Home - that is what JPS has been for our family. There was the time the director, without judging me, gave me books to read and parenting philosophies to follow so that I could get my daughter to leave the playground without kicking and screaming. There was the time the teachers, with such kindness, explained to me that learning how to read wasn't nearly as important as learning how to share and be kind to a friend. Even today, Ms. Beverly, who has taught all three of my daughters in the 4s, called just to let me know that my youngest daughter Molly was having a great day and really connecting with her friends.

Of course we all have different needs at different times. Though our family's needs have changed over the past seven years, JPS has been a constant. When I chose to go back to work, JPS was there for us with enrichment programs and extended day programming.



The Kosofsky family.

When my youngest daughter started pre-care and extended day, I felt good about my decision to return to work. I knew she wasn't at a daycare, but was at JPS - still receiving the same high quality education and care we had come to expect. The enrichment programs have offered my children the opportunity to explore and develop interests in different sports, cooking, and education.

Because the size of a preschool does matter, we were looking for a school where the teachers and staff could really connect with my children. Due to its size, JPS has the opportunity to be flexible and accommodating to all of its students and families. When a family's needs change or a child has a hurdle to overcome, the whole

school is there to provide support. I remember when one of my daughters was having trouble with potty training. I came to pick her up from JPS expecting to see her in the extra pair of pants I sent in case she had an accident. Instead, I walked into the classroom and found her in the bathroom with Ms. Kate. Ms. Kate was sitting with my daughter in the bathroom reading a book. My daughter was at ease and able to achieve something that was challenging because she felt safe and comfortable. And to think that Ms. Kate wasn't even her teacher that year.

As our youngest child is about to graduate this year, and our family prepares to move on from JPS,

we realize that JPS will forever be a part of our lives. JPS has created a love of learning and confidence in my kids. You see most preschools can prepare kids for kindergarten, and yes, all my kids were rock stars in kindergarten. But what JPS offers is so much more. It is a nurturing home for your children while they are away from you. Our family, like so many other JPS families, feels that being at JPS has been a gift that will last a lifetime. ✧



Sequencing the Pesach story.



Washing the hands (Rachtzah).



Building the pyramids.



Making the Hillel sandwich.



Eating the Hillel sandwich (Korech)



Eating the karpas without using any hands.



Breaking the matzah and hiding the Afikomen.



Opening the door for Eliyahu



Pesach at the Charlotte Jewish Day School

As always, Judaism comes alive at CJDS each holiday. In fact, our alumni always comment on their warm, joyous memories they have of the Jewish celebrations. Each year we try top anything we have done in the past. So, for this year, we decided to have a Montessori Style Model Seder. Fifteen tables represented the fifteen steps of the Seder. Each step had a different twist to the experience. Each student was given a hagaddah (Pesach Passport) that they would complete as they advanced through each step. Some of the pictures above will give you an idea of the fun the children had while learning and experiencing our traditions.

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