

Schools

The Charlotte Jewish Preschool: Twenty-Five Years in the Making

On July 29, The Charlotte Jewish Preschool opened the 2013/2014 school year. Though every new school year is special, this year, CJP is celebrating our 25th anniversary.

CJP began in the 1950s as Temple Israel's nursery school. In 1988, Temple Beth El joined with Temple Israel to more formally create The Charlotte Jewish Preschool. The school naming and partnership are noteworthy because CJP was one of the first preschools in the country to be jointly owned by two differently affiliated synagogues. CJP's ability to successfully bring together different religious traditions continues to make our school distinct. In 2002, The Sandra and Leon Levine Jewish Community Center joined the synagogues as a partner in CJP to strengthen and enhance community resources.

CJP has seen many changes over the last 25 years, but with all the changes the tradition from which we came from remain the same. After 25 years of teaching, we know at CJP that play is the work of a preschooler. We know that play is a crucial ingredient for learning and life skills that serve as a foundation to a child's success, and provides children with the opportunity to develop in many areas. Our teachers use play to develop children physically, so-

cially, emotionally and academically.

Carol Klein has been a member of the CJP faculty for 26 years. Carol also served as The Charlotte Jewish Preschool's first director. As Carol reflected back on the last 25 years, she had this to say.

"Looking back 25 years to the beginning of CJP, I can't help but smile, thinking how far we've come. We had only been at Shalom Park for two years, operating as the Temple Israel Preschool when The Charlotte Jewish Preschool was born. We were much smaller in size with approximately 135 students.

"When we moved to Shalom Park, it was exciting to be in a new facility. We were able to offer families in our community the first Jewish full day program. When we became CJP, we added a Pre-K program and a Judaic class.

"After 15 years of sharing classroom, storage space, and even administrative staff, CJP became a beneficiary of the Shalom Park expansion project and we were able to move into our current space. During this expansion, we even had our playground in the middle of the parking lot. We have been fortunate to have been able to move

into a newer larger facility, with a larger office space and rooms for all of our Specials. We have also been fortunate to have been able to add on a beautiful addition to our playground area. While we continue to teach through play, we have changed, not just the physical part, but also the depth and quality of the programs provided by our dedicated staff to our families. I am very proud to have been a small part of all of the wonderful changes over these past 25 years."

After 25 years, former CJP students are now parents with young children in our program. Also, some of our CJP alumni have returned after many years as part of our faculty. Lindsay Comen will enter her seventh year of teaching at CJP and is well loved by her families.

Becca Weiner returned as a teacher in 2010 as our amazing Judaic Specialist. Twenty-five years later we can enjoy the multi-generational participation in our school and community.

For more information about becoming part of our community or enrolling your child in the current year, please contact Alyson Kalik, CJP registrar, at 704-944-6776 or akalik@shalom-charlotte.org. ✨



Education in the Twenty-First Century

In times of change, it is the learners that will inherit the earth while the learned will find themselves beautifully equipped for a world that no longer exists.

—Eric Hoffer

Twenty-first century education continues to be the challenge of the day. We cannot ignore the fact that the way we have schooled our children is not and will not be effective. Our children are already living in a world that demands a different way of thinking and doing, but are also growing into a world that is moving faster than anyone ever imagined.

At CJDS we approach the needs of our students so that they are ahead of the game when they continue on to their new schools and the expectations of this century. The kids are naturals and the challenges that we put before them are really not challenges at all, rather they are opportunities to finally use the skills and thought processes that they intrinsically have.

The challenge that we encounter is that 21st century educational methodologies are simpler to incorporate in the middle and high school classrooms, because of the independence that is developmentally innate. The skills for this type of classroom and learning are taught during the elementary school experience. Professional development opportunities and the books and articles on this topic also focus more on the older student.

But, this will not discourage us because the students surprise us daily when demonstrating their understanding and grasp of what is around them. Naturally, technology inspires engagement and forward thinking. It has to. It's exciting. It's like a treasure box of goodies. Think like a kid and you'll understand. The reading responses that our students write for their nightly reading are so much more engaging, relevant and real when they are on the Kidblog, where the teacher and students can respond immediately as they read it. The communication on Skype with the students from India or Israel allows for the children to see that the world, as large as it is, is really right at their fingertips, and there isn't anything that is beyond their reach.

CJDS is well known for its graduation performances where the school motto of the year is expressed through song, dance and drama. However, this year, it became clear that our graduates' creative potential would not be adequately expressed through the typical drama experience. So, encouraged by the outstanding video animation skills of one of our graduates, Saul Vitner, we charged the fifth grade to create a video using Claymation to share four of Maimonides' principles of faith (the topic we have been studying all year).

Twenty-first century education encompasses and demands collaboration, creativity, communica-

tion, and critical thinking. We saw it all.

The collaboration between the general studies teacher, the Judaic classroom, art, and technology teacher was at its best. The students shared the responsibility and advised each other using their specific expertise on the formation of the clay characters, executing the narration, projecting their voice and using the proper inflection, and creating the animation and video to properly communicate the message of these four principles. You can imagine that expressing an abstract concept such as belief took lots of critical thinking. The integration of the Judaic Studies with General Studies also fulfilled a goal we have. So, all the "c's" were implemented beautifully. Creativity, Communication, Collaboration, and Critical Thinking.

The video is posted on the school website at www.cjd-school.org. Enjoy!

Once again, the children are the focus and the center of all of CJDS decisions and choices. Our children will always have the opportunity to take advantage of all that our world has to offer. ✨



CORRECTION

On the list of donors to our new playground in the June issue of *The Charlotte Jewish News*, **Marcelle Gorelick** was incorrectly identified.



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Applications for the 2014 Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte Impact and Innovation Fund are now available.

The Jewish Federation's Impact and Innovation Fund distributes grants that are intended to inspire individuals, organizations, synagogues, and agencies to provide innovative and impactful engagement opportunities for the greater Charlotte Jewish community.

For more information or to receive an application, please contact the Federation office, 704.944.6757
www.jewishcharlotte.org