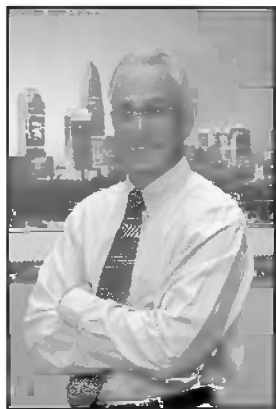


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Schools

Is It Already November?

Now that we are in November, we smile at the thought of Thanksgiving and Chanukah occurring at the same time, what some have now referred to as “Thanksgivingukkah.” This combination of two popular holidays, one secular and one religious, have challenged Jewish educators to approach teaching about both holidays at the same time. As we juggled the benefits of teaching them separately versus together, we realized that while this circumstance is certainly once-in-a-lifetime, it is nothing new at the Charlotte Jewish Preschool for us to combine religious and the secular ideas in our classrooms.

CJP teachers are continuously working on implementing Jewish values in the classroom that apply to the child’s everyday lives and happenings. Children are being praised for their good deeds on the Chesed Tree through acts of kindness and being a mensch at school. We hope that acts of kindness for a preschooler, such as helping a friend who has fallen, or sharing a snack translate into more significant acts of performing mitzvot.

Our teachers plan cooperatively by age level. This team planning involves all of the teachers collaborating their thematic ideas and weaving them through our school academic concepts. For example, we might be teaching about the farm as a thematic unit but will be covering the concept of number sense and animals and their habitats. Invariably we will always take the opportunity to ask the question “What is Jewish about this theme or concept?” This question alone ensures that we are staying true to who we are and what we want our children to become.

Our specialist teachers also work diligently to incorporate the ideals from both religious and sec-

ular curriculum to our preschoolers. For the past several years, Morah Becca has been teaching Thanksgiving as a Jewish holiday in her Judaica classroom by emphasizing the Judaic value *hachnasat orchim*, or welcoming visitors. Thanksgiving is a holiday when we invite friends and family to our table to share a meal and be together, and we teach our children the proper ways to welcome and treat visitors. Our students also make signs that read “*Bruchim Haba'im!*” which means “Welcome!” so that guests are warmly invited into our Thanksgiving feast. These values also spill over into other special days at the preschool. For example, we welcome parents and grandparents into our classrooms for Bagels and Blocks, Tea for Two, Grandparents Day, and our weekly Shabbat services. Our students are frequently reminded to practice *hachnasat orchim* and welcome their friendly visitors into our school.

Our science teacher, Miss Marcie, merges Judaism with science in her lessons. When students were learning about the phases of the moon Miss Marcie also taught them about the connection between the moon and Rosh Chodesh, our celebration of the new month. Miss Patty, our music specialist, teaches our students traditional Jewish preschool songs that bring joy and familiarity. Additionally, she warms our Shabbat services with her music and enthusiasm, conveying to the students that Shabbat is simultaneously a place of prayer and a place of fun. At the library, students listen to stories dramatically retold by Miss Debby. She brings to life Jewish stories, characters, and themes for our children to enjoy.

In our monthly Judaica newsletter, we encourage parents to practice being Jewish every day



Charlotte Jewish Preschool
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with their children and suggest a Judaic value for them to focus on that month. Parents are encouraged to incorporate their Judaism into their seemingly secular everyday lives so they can see that we are not just Jewish when we attend synagogue or say a prayer. We are Jewish when we live Jewishly. When we studied Noah’s Ark at the CJP parents worked on *tzar ba’alei chayim* with their kids, teaching them how we take care of animals. For our tzedakah project families sent in old towels and blankets and animal treats to take care of animals at Spay Neuter Charlotte. Families were encouraged to teach their children proper care of household pets, and for those families without pets we suggested they take their children on a nature walk to observe God’s creatures.

The Charlotte Jewish Preschool takes pride in our strong curriculum that has successfully intertwined both religious and secular concepts. As we light the menorah on Thanksgiving night we are reminded that we are not only Americans or only Jews – we can successfully intertwine our cultures and traditions, as we do on a daily basis at the Charlotte Jewish Preschool.

Learn. Grow. Connect. with our staff and families at the Charlotte Jewish Preschool. For further information on how to enroll your child into our wonderful world of learning, please contact Alyson Kalik at 704-944-6776 or alik@shalomcharlotte.org. ✨

Havurat Tikvah Celebrates 25th Anniversary

(Continued from page 8)

led the services.

In its 10th year, the congregation made the decision to affiliate with the Reconstructionist movement. This was seen as a natural fit since its precepts matched many of the principles of Havurat Tikvah. One of the greatest achievements was when the havurah purchased its own Torah.

Other havurah members shared additional memories. Bill Gross spoke of the life-long friendships he had made at Havurat Tikvah and said, “I am in deep wonderment at what grew out of the havurah: meaningful religious observances, lessons on Jewish tradition and the emergence of my personal practice of tikkun olam.”

Gathering and supporting its congregants has always been the cornerstone of how the congregation functions. He remarked that Havurat Tikvah was there when he got married and when he lost his mother.

Pam Crown commented, “I treasure my time with the havurah community The warmth of the members toward newcomers is outstanding and makes the times of prayer more meaningful.”

Lainey Millen shared, “For the first months that we gathered and prayed together, I was deeply moved because I felt that I had found my religious home.”

Havurat Tikvah, a community of hope, has been lay-led and

egalitarian since its beginning. It continues to hold to its original commitment of providing members and visitors with an engaging and spiritual experience. The havurah holds monthly Shabbat services and holiday observances, adult study, an Israeli film series, as well as a number of social action projects including Room in the Inn and Project Linus.

A community Shabbat service will be held on November 16, 10 AM, at Avondale Presbyterian Church’s Aitken Classroom, 2821 Park Road. Future plans also include adult education programs in early 2014.

For more information about Havurat Tikvah – contact Membership Chair Brian Feinglass by email at membership@havurattikvah.org, or call 980-225-5330 or visit www.havurattikvah.org. Havurat Tikvah and Havurat Teens Charlotte groups are also on Facebook. ✨



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