

Choosing A Jewish Preschool

By Becca Weiner, CJP Judaica Specialist

As a Jew growing up in Charlotte, it seemed like a no-brainer for my parents to enroll me at The Charlotte Jewish Preschool. Even back in 1989, the CJP provided excellent secular and Jewish education for students and families.

Simply put, it made sense for a Jewish girl to go to a Jewish preschool. Then and now, the CJP provides a foundation of Jewish learning for children, including the following:

Judaica themes and classes. When a Jewish holiday is approaching, our classroom themes

revolve around that holiday. As you walk down our hallways you'll see decorations and boards that reflect our holiday unit. Similarly, our Judaica curriculum is holiday-driven. When there isn't a Jewish holiday, I focus on a Judaic value such as *derekh eretz* (the way of the world) or *tzar ba'alei chayim* (taking care of animals). Students talk about these seemingly secular values and learn about how they are Jewish.

Shabbat. Shabbat is a time for rest and reconnecting with your family. At the CJP we invite our parents to come spend Shabbat with their son or daughter, especially when it is their child's birthday. At every Shabbat, we call up our students celebrating a birthday to lead the school in Kiddush and Hamotzi. It gives families a time to observe Shabbat together and celebrate a birthday in a Judaic way. Our parents are involved in our Shabbat and other holiday-based celebrations like our Passover sederim or our Purim parade.

Music. Miss Patty leads our students in song during our music classes. Along with traditional preschool songs, like a rocked out version of the A, B, C's, our students also learn Jewish songs. For example, around Passover our students learn the Frog song and at Chanukah our students sing songs about dreidles and latkes.

Nowadays, if you were to look at the demographic of The Charlotte Jewish Preschool, you will find that while we are, indeed, a Jewish learning institution, not all of our students come from Jewish families.

As a Jew in our community, I know why I would choose the CJP - I've come full circle, from student to teacher.



two year old would be doing in her upcoming three year old classroom, we were not only impressed by the 'curriculum' but also by the fun that the kids and teachers seemed to be having in their rooms.

During our visit, several classrooms were working on art projects displaying events in the Old Testament. We discussed the Jewish teachings during our visit, and were very happy with the way that it was both discussed and on display. We really believed that our shared Judeo-Christian values were first and foremost in the teachings, and we still believe that today.

"We know that our daughter will be extremely prepared for Kindergarten next year as she's already begun writing and reading after her experience in the full-day fours last year, and will be even more prepped with writing, mathematics, and language this year. We know our

son will continue to thrive, learn letters, shapes, colors, ideas, and continue to grow and discover his own unique person. But besides that the great academics, the wonderful facilities and the extra-curricular events, it is the CJP staff, front office, teachers, parents, families, children, and CJP community that continues to remind us of the great decision that we made to send our children to the Charlotte Jewish Preschool."

Come join our community. For information about our preschool, please contact Alyson Kalik at 704-944-6776 or akalik@shalom-charlotte.org. ✨



CJP kids all ready for Shabbat in their kippot.

But, I wondered what the pull was for non-Jewish families to experience this education. I reached out to Beth and Brendan Putz, parents of two of our students, who do not identify as Jewish. When they were enrolling their two children in preschool, they had many options available to them, but ultimately that chose to come here. I asked them why, as a non-Jewish family, would they choose a religious-based education and as a family, they constructed their response below:

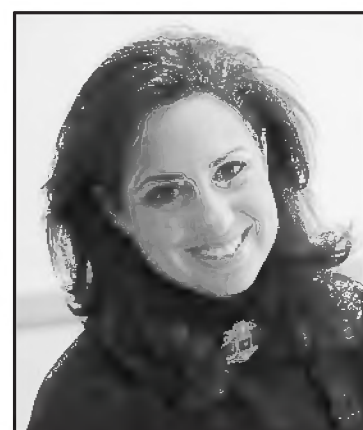
"As we toured the classrooms and were given a thorough run-down of the activities that our then

Kosher by Design Chef Susie Fishbein Comes to Charlotte November 5 and 6

Food is always an important factor as we celebrate the Jewish holidays. Whether it is the traditional Shabbat meals or the challenge of making the eight days of Pesach as tasteful and manageable as possible, food factors into the discussion of almost every Jewish holiday. Fortunately, renowned kosher chef Susie Fishbein will be in Charlotte next month for two cooking demonstrations exploring the world of gourmet kosher cooking. Tickets are available for dinner November 5. There will be a wine reception with appetizers,

followed by a three course cooking demonstration and meal, finishing with dessert. Lunch on November 6 will include a three course cooking demonstration. Contact Gale Osborne for reservations and availability. Seating is limited.

So as we approach the holiday of Sukkot we wanted to share a perfect fall side dish great for Sukkot or Thanksgiving. These muffins take just 10 minutes of Prep time and cook for 45 minutes. This is from Susie Fishbein's cookbook, "Kosher By Design Short on Time."



Susie Fishbein

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Lake Norman

Pumpkin-Cranberry Muffins

3 c. bread flour or all-purpose flour

3 c. sugar

1-½ t. ground cinnamon

½ t. baking powder

1 t. baking soda

1 (15 oz.) can pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling)

1 c. canola oil

3 lg. eggs

½ c. sweetened dried cranberries, such as Craisins

shelled pumpkin seeds

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line 3 (6-cup) muffin tins with paper muffin liners or set 16 panettone cups on a parchment-lined cookie sheet. Set aside. In

the bowl of an electric stand mixer, mix the flour, sugar, cinnamon, baking powder, and baking soda. Add the pumpkin, oil, eggs, and cranberries. Mix on med. speed for 2 minutes. Pour the batter into the prepared muffin tins or panettone cups. Each cup should be filled 2/3 of the way. Top each muffin with a few pumpkin seeds. Bake uncovered, 40-45 min. or till a toothpick inserted into the center of one of the muffins comes out dry. If you are using the parchment cups, which are higher it will take a few more minutes; go by the toothpick test. Serve hot or at room temperature. ✨