

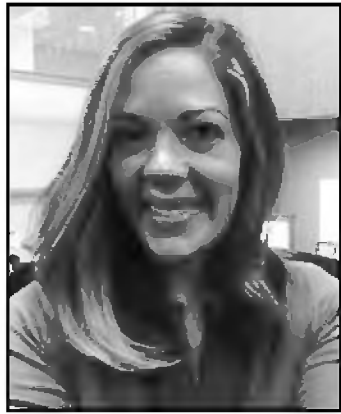
Learning and Reflection for All through the Holiday Season

By Emily Snyder

The Jewish month of Tishrei is traditionally a month of new beginnings. We see it in our neighborhoods, as children gather on the corner and hop on the big yellow school bus. We see it as we drive to work or school, and notice more cars on the road. We see it at home during bedtime and wake up — new routines and new schedules. We see it in our Jewish lives as we get ready to say, L'Shana Tova to our family and friends. We order a round challah and shop for special yummy treats that happen only at the beginning of the year.

As we welcome all our families into the building, we see new beginnings too. We have 64 new families joining our community, we have 13 new staff members, and we even have two additional classrooms. September is special a month where our students get to start fresh and continue their Jewish preschool journey.

At The Charlotte Jewish Preschool, we look at all things through Jewish values. The value of *limud*, learning, is something we focus on all year, especially during the days leading up to the Jewish New Year. It is a time for learning by reflecting on our past year, and making goals for the New Year. Our students, families, and staff focus on *limud* as they too reflect and look forward.



Emily Snyder

Our students are given the opportunity to practice *limud* through provocations set up in the main lobby and in the classrooms. Provocations provoke thoughts, discussions, questions, interests, creativity, and ideas. Over the past year, we have been exploring open ended activities that elicit creativity and individual thought, as well as how to set up intentional provocations. Many of our staff members had the opportunity to attend the Paradigm Project Conference in Pennsylvania last spring, where experts in the field of early childhood education lead workshops that trained our teachers to be fluent in making the classroom environment and center activities as meaningful as possible. If you walk into our main lobby you will see an invitation for our families to learn about themselves and the

coming year as they experience "Rosh Hashanah on a table."

Last month, as we learned about Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we asked our students to notice their feelings, say "I'm sorry" when we make mistakes, reflect on the year we've had, and make goals for the year ahead. This year we are asking our staff to do the same. This month at Collaborative Team Planning, a time when age-alike teams of teachers get together with the Curriculum Coordinator to plan for the month of instruction, our staff members took time to reflect on their year, and think about what they would like to change for the year ahead. Using the Hillel International "Ask Big Questions" guide, our staff read a poem by Marge Piercy and were asked to discuss what images the poem conjured, what resonated with them, and most of all, what the world needs from them this year.

At the end of the day, we as adults are no different than children when it comes to identifying our feelings and challenging ourselves to think about the future. It is hard to look inside ourselves and make big changes. While we may be busy running around classrooms setting up centers, typing lesson plans and inputting them into Himama, giving out nutritious snack and making sure they don't interfere with any al-

lergies, and all the countless tasks preschool teachers do throughout the day, it is worth it to stop, think about our personal and professional lives, and make promises to ourselves about the upcoming year. ✨



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A New Year Begins at JPS

Our school year at JPS, which has experienced 35% enrollment growth, started off with a bang, with many new children and staff members to welcome to our ever-growing family. School has been filled with the sounds of children learning and playing and we are so excited for what this year has in store for them. With Rosh HaShanah arriving the same time as the new school year, we spent the first week of school pre-

paring by listening to the shofar, baking sweet round challah, and tasting apples and honey - yum! We just know that this year will be a sweet one.

From the JPS family to yours, we wish you a sweet new year. ✨

Shout out to Paige Rabinowitz, JPS alumnus, who filmed and produced our Orientation video! Check it out at jpskids.org.



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