



# Beth Emeth Early Childhood Center

Robin Cohen, Director (robin@bethemeth.org)

**“THESE LITTLE CHILDREN AT BEECC,  
WE’RE GONNA LET THEM SHINE . . .”**

What do these three things have in common: gluten free cupcakes, fire alarms and wrappers? Give up? All three of these things emerged as topics of interest due to genuinely honoring and bringing to light children’s thoughts and ideas.

What’s so special about a gluten free cupcake? For the Dalet (pre-K) Siyum last month, the celebration of their completion of their time here at BEECC, I asked the children how they wanted to celebrate this big milestone – after all, this celebration was in honor of them, so their thoughts and opinions mattered to me. When it came to the food part of the celebration, I compiled all of their ideas the best I could and when I revisited with them, I suggested combining all of their ideas and having an array of assorted flavored mini cupcakes with different frostings along with a bowl full of chocolate. They were delighted with this suggestion, recognizing how their thoughts were valued, and upon checking one last time that this worked for everyone, one boy raised his hand. He said, “We need to have gluten free cupcakes for my Grandma, because she is gluten-free.” I told the boy how thoughtful it was to think of his Grandma, and upon confirming with mom that grandma would indeed be coming and needed gluten-free, we ordered them. This is a perfect example of how when you respect children enough to invite them to be a part of the process, things you may never have thought of emerge. Not only did this child bring to my attention some dietary mindfulness that in my haste I had overlooked, he left feeling that much more empowered

knowing his voice was heard, his thoughts mattered and his compassion for his grandma was visible.

Speaking of feeling like your voice is heard and your thoughts matter leads me to the fire alarm. Upon dropping her three year old son off one morning, a parent came to me and mentioned how he has been crying before coming to school, petrified that the fire alarm was going to go off. Apparently this had been going on ever since the last fire drill a week earlier even though we saw no trace of this at school. I was thankful she shared this with me and reassured her that I would speak with him and try to address his concerns. I approached him on the playground later that day, explained what his mom had shared with me and invited him to go for a walk with me. Immediately a nearby friend who overheard the last part said “I want to come too!” For whatever reason my initial reaction was to keep this experience between me and this one child, however before I could say anything, the boy jumped off the dinosaur where he had been sitting, grabbed that child’s hand, and told her to come along! This caught another child’s attention and before I knew it there

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We are seeking dynamic and passionate Early Childhood Educators to join our educational team at our Reggio-Inspired synagogue preschool. Our preschool program serves children ages 1-5 in a vibrant learning environment focused on supporting social-emotional development through play-based learning and emergent curriculum. We value children’s thoughts and ideas and pride ourselves on our caring sense of community.

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**Beth Emeth Early Childhood  
Center Parent’s Association**

## **BEECC** *(Cont'd from p. 9)*

were three excited children embarking on this walk with me. I showed them the first red fire alarm light box we came across and explained that is where the loud sound comes from, and that they are all over the building to keep everyone safe in case there was a real fire. I asked if they wanted to go on a hunt for more alarms and they could hardly wait! We went down each hallway at BEECC searching for the fire alarms – as they discovered each one they squealed in delight: together. I brought them to the front office and introduced them to James and Melissa sharing how they help me decide when we choose to make the loud noise happen to test the fire alarm and practice getting out as fast as we can! This experience seemed to not only comfort this child, but it also genuinely helped me! By extending his hand to that girl in that moment inviting her to come along, it helped remind me of the power of having shared experiences – it wouldn't have been the same otherwise. It has also inspired me to think very intentionally this summer about how we are going to introduce this concept of fire drills to the children, hopefully involving these three children as “ambassadors” alongside me in that process.

I need to “wrap” this up – so I will have to save wrappers for another time – but hopefully this gave you a sense of how children truly do make a difference if you give them the time, respect and opportunity to let their hearts and thoughts shine through.

*Enjoy the sunshine this July!*

*-- Robin*