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Orangetown Jewish Center
The Dr. Richard and Jane Adelson
Campus
Shaliach
February 2019
Shvat—Adar Nefesh 5779



Students, Teachers, Friends

The Talmudic sage Rabbi Hanina said: "I have learned much from my teachers; and from my friends more than from my teachers; and from my students more than from all of them." (Taanit 7a)

Over the past 18 years, our synagogue has engaged almost the same number of interns, all but one from the Jewish Theological Seminary. Most of them have been rabbinical school students; some of them have been students at the Davidson School of Education. All of them have come to our community over the years to learn from us and with us, to have the experience of mentorship from our professionals, to serve our community as teachers, and to refine their own understanding of Torah in the broadest sense.

The experience of mentoring rabbinical school students, having a role in shaping future rabbis, has been among the most meaningful aspects of my own rabbinate. I have derived *nachas* (satisfaction? comfort?) from following my students' accomplishments, especially when I see them implementing lessons learned from our vision of community.

Above and beyond these rewards, I've learned that mentorship is a two-way relationship. With every intern I've been privileged to mentor, I've received a new mirror with which to see aspects of myself: answer my thought process, my teaching methods, my priorities. With every intern, I've gained insight into the students of today: their language, their worldview, their way of understanding Torah. With every intern, I've had an open and honest pair of eyes asking me to reflect on why I do what I do. From the professional to the personal, I am forced to function consciously and with intention. And what I've come to learn from my students is that *this is exactly the way Judaism asks us to live our lives.*

Recently, a friend asked me what will define my rabbinate when I look back at the end of my career. It didn't take long for me to come to the conclusion that my rabbinate I believe is defined by the partnerships I strive to create to advance meaningful connections to Torah and community. Just as *Havdala*—collaborative learning in partnership—is our traditional model for Torah study, so do I believe that we are better people, professionally and personally, when we make decisions with the concerned advice, consent and critique of others who share our vision. As I write these words on the first day of 2019, I resolve to expound further in the year ahead, and beyond, on the benefits of partnerships—between professionals and lay leaders, between teachers and students, between institutions, between communities—in advancing Jewish identity.

Thank you all for helping us go a little
greener!