

## Education Report June 12, 2022

This was a busy year for our Religious School. I started in July as the new Principal and at that time we had six unfilled teaching positions. The final teacher was hired in January, giving us a full roster of eight teachers, two of whom taught two classes and two who taught three classes. There were forty-nine students in grades Kindergarten through seventh and seventeen *madrichim*/teenage classroom assistants. We returned to in-person learning, with Temple Tots, for children ages birth through four years and their loving adults, meeting two Sundays a month from 9-11am, Kindergarten through sixth grades meeting Sundays from 9-11am, third through sixth grades also meeting Wednesdays from 4-6pm, and seventh grade meeting Wednesdays from 6-8pm. Kindergarten through seventh grade students studied Judaica and Hebrew and attended twenty-minute prayer services with the Rabbi on both Sundays and Wednesdays. Tot *Shabbat* was relaunched in May and will be continuing on the third Friday of the month during the summer and the school year for members and potential members with children up to 6 years old.

We continued Jewish Family Education programming for all grades including *challah* baking with the second and third grades and *yad* making with the fifth and sixth grades. For our last Sunday, *Mitzvah* day, each class did something to keep our building and school welcoming and friendly. For example, the fourth and fifth graders organized and decorated our library, and the kindergarteners and first graders collected and checked all of the markers to be sure they worked and discarded the ones that didn't. Each class also had a special First Friday service with members of that class helping with the service. It was wonderful to see our students, faculty, and parents gathering to learn and celebrate together.

In addition, we received a generous outpouring of support and assistance from Religious School parents. They were classroom teachers, substitute teachers, and watched the door during school to let in anybody arriving late or picking up their child early. The door watchers were duly vigilant, only letting in people that they recognized as being safe. Anyone else was asked to wait and the door watcher contacted me or the Rabbi and we would determine if we could let the person in.

Returning to in-person learning presented several challenges, which were experienced by secular and Religious Schools around the country. Our students had to learn and relearn basic social skills and appropriate behaviors needed to work in groups. Different learning styles and the accompanying challenges presented more strongly than in pre-Covid times. In addition, students experienced intense anxiety in the face of ever-changing circumstances of the Pandemic in Religious School and the rest of their lives. The teachers and *madrichim* worked to provide safe and positive Jewish learning and are to be commended for the time and energy they put into caring for our children.

Our students enjoyed outdoor and moving activities to encourage their learning. Hebrew reading skills continued to grow and all students learned the different ways of ensuring a *kehillah k'doshah*/a holy community for themselves and others. All in all, it was a great year, with a lot of learning and a lot of fun. Moving forward, we are looking to fill teaching positions, recruit additional *madrichim*, expand intergenerational programming, and prepare for another year with the students we have the privilege of teaching and learning with.