

## A Note for Our Religious School Parents Sesame Shul-6th Grade

Dear Parents,

It is hard to believe that the 2018-2019 school year is quickly coming to a close. It has been an amazing year with many new initiatives and programs, including our *chugim* (elective) offerings for students in grades 4-6. We have had successful fundraisers this spring, including a Parent's Night Out led by our teen *madrachim* (teacher's assistants), our annual Purim Carnival, a Circus Day Intensive with Taylor and Turner Circus, and a Willow Street Pizza Night. **Our Youth and Family Engagement Taskforce is nearing the completion of their work.** They have outlined five pillars that guide our approach to cultivating proud Jews who have a deep relationship with their tradition, with their community, and with each other: (1) Connectedness and Belonging; (2) Jewish Identity Exploration; (3) Informed Jewish Choice; (4) Lifelong Learning; and (5) Social Justice.

Our summer will be busy **enhancing** our entire Religious School and Hebrew School curriculum, with the help of dedicated lay leaders and educators. Among the many new initiatives we are planning are:

- A Reggio-Emilia based curriculum for our kindergarten class.
- One field trip for each grade during the school year, as well as a special family field trip day on Sunday, April 5.
- A greater focus on project-based and hands on learning.
- The hiring of a Special Needs Inclusion Specialist who will work with parents and Rabbi Schwartz in ensuring students with learning differences and other limitations can be active participants in our Religious School program.

We also are excited to be launching a new and improved website in the coming months that will highlight the best of Shir Hadash, be mobile friendly, and allow for more ease at registering for events. We are in the process of migrating our database and content to a new database platform. Because our current database system was recently acquired by another company, we have had to make some adjustments for the upcoming year.

Therefore, we have decided to return to **paper registration** for the upcoming 2019-2020 school year. We have designed the registration form to be as easy as possible, formatting it so you can avoid having to put general information more than once if you are registering multiple children. An editable PDF form is now posted on our website as well.

### A few things to note about registration for this upcoming school year:

- Tuition now includes the snack fee and is in keeping with local religious school tuition fees at other congregations our size.
- Please consider donating to our various funds that help us continue to build upon our amazing program. Scholarship funds allow families to attend school or summer camp at discounted rates. Our general Religious School and Youth Funds offset the costs of special programs and ensure that all interested students can attend our youth events.
- Please be reminded that all students who are eligible for Bar or Bat Mitzvah must enroll in both our Religious School and Hebrew School programs, and attend class at least 80% of the school year.
- We do not want there to be financial barriers for your child to attend our program. There are scholarships available and we will not turn anyone away from having a Jewish education. A scholarship form is included in this registration packet. Please reach out to Rabbi Schwartz at [rabbischwartz@shirhadash.org](mailto:rabbischwartz@shirhadash.org) or our Executive Director, Eric Stone, at [eric@shirhadash.org](mailto:eric@shirhadash.org) with any questions.
- The success of our program in large part is due to your volunteerism. Please review the enclosed forms and consider participating in the many opportunities to volunteer throughout the year.
- Our school calendar includes both Religious School and Hebrew School! This calendar is subject to change, but we do look forward to seeing everyone on Sunday, September 8, for the first day of school. **An updated calendar will be sent prior to the beginning of the school year.**
- Please register your child(ren) in Religious School before June 15 for discounted tuition. After June 15, tuition increases by \$100.

As always, do not hesitate to contact us with questions and concerns. We are excited for another year of growing, learning, and fun.

Sincerely,

Rabbi PJ Schwartz  
Rabbi Educator