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MJDS CHAVERIM





Where academic excellence and Jewish values prepare children for a lifetime of success, leadership and engagement with the world.

Dear MJDS Friends and Family,

When the doors to Milwaukee Jewish Day School opened for the first time in 1981, no one would have predicted that forty years later students and staff would wear masks every day and swish cotton swabs up their noses once a week. This, however, is our current reality and we are thriving! Enrollment is up compared to last year and we added new families in every grade. As second century sage Nahum Ish Gamzu taught (Taanit 21a:11), *gam zu l'tova*, even this is for good, so we seek to find what is good in a bad situation.

A wonderful silver lining identified during the pandemic is that across the country, Jewish Day Schools have seen an increase in enrollment. The Prizmah Center for Jewish Day Schools conducted a study to determine families' satisfaction with switching to Day Schools and their findings align with what we are seeing at MJDS. Parents appreciate the quality of their student's educational and social experience. Some reported concern that their students would miss values of diversity and inclusion, yet their perception shifted as they found unexpected socioeconomic, denomination and occasionally racial diversity. Beyond that, MJDS has the added benefit of our **Repairing Together** program that connects students from different cultural backgrounds in K-8 schools in the Milwaukee area (read more on page 2).

The resilience and curiosity of our MJDS Lions continues to amaze me. In our classrooms, students in early childhood studied the human body, learning about bones and the five senses, third graders practiced environmental engineering by cleaning a fictional oil spill on Lake Michigan, and seventh and eighth grade students designed basketball courts based at the bottom of a hill, creating strategies to protect the court from erosion.

As we continue to face challenges we never considered forty years ago, the endorsement of the MJDS community gives us strength. Our flexibility and ability to provide high quality individualized support for each student is fueled by your support. I am proud to see our core values of empathy, wonder and *tikkun olam* being lived each day.

Bivrachah,
Aaron Lippman
Head of School

Repairing Together

One of the core values at Milwaukee Jewish Day School is *tikkun olam*, repairing the world. To help students live this value, they participate in the **Repairing Together** program which connects students of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds to share, celebrate and appreciate the diversity in our communities.

Students from MJDS, Indian Community School, Bruce Guadalupe Community School and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School create lifelong relationships, participating in different programming levels as they get older. Early childhood students play together by introducing cultural celebrations, music and stories. First through third grade students enjoy field trips and natural, outdoor exploration. Fourth and fifth graders explore ideas about social and environmental justice with guest speakers and an arts unit.

In the final segment, upper school students work on a three-year history project, identifying untold and mistold stories from their culture and rewriting them. The Repairing Together program will build a collection of the students' writings to educate future grades, developing a framework for empathetic leadership in the community.



Torah Buddies



Noah K, eighth grade, remembers when he was in junior kindergarten (JK) and started meeting with his **Torah Buddy**. "I liked being friends with an older student. I didn't realize it at the time, but he put me in a position of exploring who I was and deciding what I believe in."

The Torah Buddies program pairs eighth grade students with junior kindergarten students. The older pupils mentor their younger buddies during guided activities throughout the year. Through these exercises they learn together and teach one another in important ways. This program strengthens the sense of *mishpacha* (family) within our school community.

"It's good to have someone challenge your beliefs and point you in the direction of being a better person. I hope when my Torah Buddy is in eighth grade she remembers that she gets to make the choice of who she wants to be."



Alum Spotlight: Sara Askotzky Galicki



When MJDS alum Sara (Askotzky) Galicki (2002) moved from New Jersey back to Milwaukee, she was looking for a Jewish neighborhood for her family. "We were lucky to find a great house in a great neighborhood within the Nicolet school district. We never questioned sending our children to MJDS."

She and her husband, Zachary, work together for her parent's family business, Trike Property Management, and rent apartments. They live in Bayside with their sons Elan (JK) and Jacob who will start 3K next year.

"Because I'm an alum, I know more about what it means to be in a community within a close knit school. Since my husband came here not knowing anyone, I knew the MJDS community of families would be a great place for him to make friendships. I know I can call anyone from my graduating class of 2002 and talking to them feels like no time has passed! Two of my classmates were bridesmaids and in total there were 16 MJDS alums from different classes at my wedding. It was awesome to see us all together."



One of Sara's strongest recollections was in eighth grade during the attacks on September 11. "I was in Judaica class. The teacher got a phone call and it was very weird and somber. In the beginning we were not sure if it was an accident or an attack,then some kids got picked up by their parents. Our class trip was supposed to be to New York City, but that got cancelled. The MJDS teachers have always been such a unique group. They really care about the students and want to make sure they have wonderful experiences, no matter the situation. So they planned an AMAZING trip to Chicago and it's one of my favorite memories."

Her son Elan started 3K last year at MJDS and is enjoying junior kindergarten this year. "I love how comfortable Elan is with his teachers and fellow students. It's a safe and warm environment. That's the same feeling I had with my teachers and my friends at MJDS."

The Galicki's are looking forward to Jacob going to school next year with his brother and encourage all parents to consider Milwaukee Jewish Day School. "Meet the teachers. They are the reason MJDS continues to be so strong. They lead our students into becoming caring human beings. The curriculum amazes me as I learn more and more from Elan. He comes home and says, 'Mommy, did you know the human body has 206 bones in it?' He has a thirst for knowledge and his teachers continue to pour more into him. I'm so proud to share my school with my family."

MILWAUKEE JEWISH DAY SCHOOL

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ISACS independent schools association of the central states Accredited Member School

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