

2019-2020 DONOR REPORT



BERNARD ZELL

ANSHE EMET DAY SCHOOL

בית ספר אנשי אמת ע"ש ברנרד זל



DEAR BERNARD ZELL COMMUNITY,

As we look back on the 2019-20 school year we can't help but think about the lyrics from *Frozen, Jr.*, last year's 8th-Grade Operetta. The words "let it go" naturally come to mind, implying we might want to turn our backs on the challenges of our previous year. However, that is far from our sentiments. Last year was filled with triumphs over adversity, celebration, inspiration and impact.

As we entered our 73rd year, our community came together to open our innovative, award-winning new addition and reunited in January to dedicate the school's first Sefer Torah in our custom-designed spiritual space, *Makom Rina*. As spring approached, our faculty and administration quickly pivoted to provide students with a robust distance learning program. Despite the distance, our community came together each week for Shabbat and joyously celebrated Jewish holidays and key school traditions.

We thank you for making all of these opportunities possible. It is because of your support that we were able to continue to develop engaged and confident learners who have a deep commitment to humanity. Our students are the future Jewish leaders of our community.

We are pleased to share Bernard Zell's Donor Report with you. We hope you take pride in the many accomplishments of the past year. Throughout these pages, you can see the impact of your support and hear from fellow donors about why they are so committed to Bernard Zell's mission.

As we enter the 2020-21 school year we do so with tremendous gratitude to all of our donors and excitement for all that lies ahead. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and leadership of Bernard Zell, we thank you for your support and wish you and your family a healthy, happy and fulfilling year.

B'Shalom,



A handwritten signature in black ink.

Gary Weisserman
Head of School



A handwritten signature in black ink.

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BERNARD ZELL ANSHE EMET DAY SCHOOL COMMUNITY STANDS AT ITS OWN SINAI

For more than 73 years Bernard Zell was without a Torah of its own, but on January 13, 2020, our community came together to fulfill the 613th commandment, the completion of a Sefer Torah. Through the generosity of Margot and Tom Pritzker, current and future generations of students were gifted our people’s essential text, given to honor Tzivia Garfinkel’s 25 years of service to Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School.

A beloved Jewish Studies teacher and Director of Jewish Life and Learning, Ms. Garfinkel educated hundreds of students before her retirement in 2019, and also taught countless parents through her continuing education classes. But perhaps one of the most lasting pieces of her legacy will be the highly-regarded Tiyl trip she developed that each year gives our eighth-grade class an unforgettable capstone to their Bernard Zell education through a religious and cultural immersion in Israel.

This 2020 eighth-grade class, along with their peers, parents, community members and local rabbis of all denominations celebrated the long awaited arrival of the Torah through a warm and joyous celebration. All in attendance eagerly watched as Eli Kamins ’20, Rina Jacobius, Margot Pritzker and Tzivia Garfinkel finished the Torah as aided by sofer, Yochanan Nathan. After its completion, each class danced and sang with the Torah under a beautiful chuppah designed by art teachers Gili Sherman and Shana Ryback.

The scrolls were paraded through the school hallways until it found its new home in Makom Rina, Bernard Zell’s very own spiritual space—a new space within the school’s 25,000 square foot addition that is used for *tefillah*, lectures, flexible class space, jBaby events and more.

Tzivia Garfinkel shared, “While the Torah was given to the Jewish people only once, it is received by the Jewish people every time we learn Torah. With today’s dedication, the Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School community stands at its own Sinai.”

Thanks to the generosity of Margot and Tom Pritzker and to their lifelong dedication to Jewish learning, Bernard Zell has entered into a new chapter of education. The Torah has already been used for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, as a means of teaching how to use primary sources, for *simchas* and so much more. We are honored to care for not only hundreds of students each day but for a Torah scroll that serves as the ultimate teacher of the Jewish people.

“While the Torah was given to the Jewish people only once, it is received by the Jewish people every time we learn Torah. With today’s dedication, the Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School community stands at its own Sinai.”

– TZIVIA GARFINKEL

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

The Annual Campaign raises unrestricted funds that are the foundation of the distinct Bernard Zell experience. This list recognizes all donors who made a gift to the Annual Campaign between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020.



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“We both feel strongly that we want our kids to understand gratitude. We want them to have everything they need to succeed in life and we are so lucky to have BZ. What better place to be philanthropic than Bernard Zell.”

– LINDSAY YAFFA

LEARNING GRATITUDE BY GIVING BACK

Lindsay, Aaron, Max (2nd grade) and Zoey (SK) Yaffa are proud members of the Bernard Zell family. When asked what comes to mind when you say Bernard Zell they reply “The community.” Parents and teachers together are what make this community and who provide such a safe and nurturing environment for our children. There is a very special feeling on campus.”

Lindsay and Aaron have watched both of their children thrive at Bernard Zell. Both children have forged incredible friendships, love to tell their parents about the “cool experiences” that happen in the classroom with their teachers and appreciate how confident they are in their everyday lives.

Especially this year, the Yaffa’s feel secure in the steps Bernard Zell has taken to ensure the safety and health of the community. “When school had to quickly pivot to distance learning this past spring, the faculty, staff and leadership were on top of it all, instilling confidence in the community that we are all in this together.” As Lindsay said, “school is doing so well with COVID – anxiety doesn’t go away but I am confident in how BZ is handling it all.”

Aaron and Lindsay have been active volunteers and financial supporters of the school since day one, and Lindsay wanted to get involved from the start. Lindsay says “That is who I am. I am grateful I have the time to give. The kids are so proud to know that I am volunteering. On the first day as we were pulling up to school this year, the kids asked if I still worked at school. I explained that I volunteer but so appreciate that they take notice and that I am setting a positive example of what it means to give back.”

The Yaffa’s have also been staunch supporters of our Annual Campaign from day one. When asked why, Lindsay and Aaron replied, “We both feel strongly that we want our kids to understand gratitude. We want them to have everything they need to succeed in life and we are so lucky to have BZ.” They believe that it is so important to talk to their kids about philanthropy and giving back, and Bernard Zell is such an important partner in their lives, shaping their children into the people they will become. For them, “What better place to be philanthropic than Bernard Zell.”

**Includes recognition for Annual Fundraiser Live Auction Support
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THE GIFT OF A BERNARD ZELL EDUCATION

When they started at Bernard Zell, Sarah and Nat Sager would tell you it was the community that drew them to the school. They quickly realized that not only is the community aspect of Bernard Zell amazing, as evidenced by the friendships they’ve made, but more importantly, it is how much their son Boaz loves school and is thriving.



They feel so lucky and proud that Bernard Zell is such a leader in the community and back in-person full time. Sarah appreciated that “Bernard Zell always puts the kids first—not that parents come second, but kids come first. And to have taken the time to understand our current situation and do everything in their power to ensure the safety and health of our kids and our families has instilled even more confidence in our belief that Bernard Zell is the right place for our family.”

“Each year the faculty increase expectations and make it a warm supportive place to be—it’s a wonderful balance of high academic standards and meeting students where they are.” Sarah appreciates how well the Bernard Zell faculty and staff know their son. Through in-person and phone communication and report cards home, the teachers and staff have shown that they truly understand Boaz’s strengths and what he can work on.

When asked if there was something about Bernard Zell that surprised them, they were quick to answer—The Leona Molotsky Hanukkah Music Festival. “We had no idea what to expect. To see how confident our son and all the other students were to be up there, performing in front of the whole school was unbelievable. And the students who performed solos in between the class performances were so moving.”

This year Nat has taken on the role of Annual Campaign Vice-Chair, and Sarah is entering her second year as an Annual Campaign Champion, along with serving on several PTC committees. Nat explains, “We got involved because we wanted to be a voice within the school. We care deeply about Jewish education and community, and so now felt like the right time to step into a leadership role. This is not just about raising money, but this is about affecting change for the school in the short term and the long term. BZ has such a special place in the community and we want this school to thrive long into the future.” Sarah reflected, “Our parents taught us that while there is much you can give and provide for your family, the one thing you can actually give to your kids is an education. That is why we give and volunteer. Nothing is more important than our kids’ education and this is our passion.”

GRANDPARENTS & SPECIAL FRIENDS CAMPAIGN

One of our school’s greatest strengths is its deep connection to extended family. The grandparents and special friends of Bernard Zell families are loving supporters of our students and vital champions of their education.

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The people who make our school an exceptional place are also our most loyal supporters. For the fifth year in a row, 100% of Bernard Zell faculty and staff participated in the 2019-2020 Annual Campaign, a testament to their incredible generosity and dedication to the school and our students.

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Thank you to the generous members of our community who raised their paddle during our Annual Fundraiser, Who's Coming to Dinner? on January 25, 2020!



JOANN WEXLER MEMORIAL FUND

We were honored to create the JoAnn Wexler Memorial Fund earlier this year at the request of JoAnn's family. Thank you so much to the donors of this fund for your immediate and immense support. All proceeds of this fund will be used to renovate a space for our teachers in honor of JoAnn's love for her fellow teachers and Bernard Zell family.

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