MJDS
MILWAUKEE JEWISH DAY SCHOOL

ANNUAL REPORT



2022 • 2023

תשפ״ג 5783

Our Mission

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



Milwaukee Jewish Day School
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ISACS independent schools association of the central states Accredited Member School

Head of School Letter



MJDS Friends and Family,

Looking back on the 2022-23 school year, there is so much to be thankful for due to the many people and organizations who make the amazing things happening at Milwaukee Jewish Day School (MJDS) possible.

As you read through this report you will learn about the unique programs, classes and opportunities that are offered at MJDS. When it comes to learning, textbooks have a role to play, but they are only one component of a student's education. The key to nurturing young minds lies in creating an environment that encourages personal growth, offers a support system and builds relationships.

Our older students have opportunities to express kindness and vulnerability as they are paired regularly with younger students. They learn leadership through experience, **moving from me to we**. Our graduates are confident and prepared for success. This fall alums will attend Loyola, Tulane, Brandeis and UW-Madison to study in fields including engineering, science and dentistry.

In addition to educating our students, this year MJDS was once again accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS). It was a seven-year process that required staff to regularly set aside time to reflect and plan for all aspects of our school's operation. It provided an opportunity to invite all school employees, key stakeholders and alums to share what they value and help establish priorities for improvement.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us this past year with your time, talent, or treasure. MJDS can do the amazing, important things we do because of your help. Together we are equipping young people with the tools to make the world a better place.

Bivrachah,

Aaron Lippman
Head of School

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Board President Letter

Dear MJDS Staff, Family and Friends,



The theme of this year's report, as well as our approach to the 2022-23 school year, is thankfulness. Our students, staff and MJDS community provide a safe and engaging space where children learn and thrive.

Stepping into the role of Board President has been a meaningful experience, and I am fortunate to work alongside a talented and dedicated group of individuals who share a collective vision for the future of our school.

This year we started every board meeting by writing thank you notes to our generous donors. This practice grounded us in the goodwill of our community, gave us the opportunity to be grateful for the investment in and support that surrounds MJDS, and brought us the gift of starting each meeting from a place of abundance.

Many board members participated in the ISACS accreditation process, with the support of our incredible MJDS staff. This presented an opportunity to closely examine all aspects of our school, participate in sincere and detailed self-reflection, get an external perspective from counterparts in the field, and open our eyes to what we do well and where we can continue to grow and innovate.

MJDS staff who lead the Exploring the Core (ETC) classes held a learning session for board members. We had the opportunity to experience how the guardrails used in their method of goal setting, questioning, documenting, reflecting, self-monitoring and receiving feedback are developing lifelong skills in our students. Their approach is also applicable to our work as a board.

There is so much amazing learning and growing happening in this building and it is thanks to donors like you. As I reflect on the year I am filled with a deep sense of appreciation for the remarkable support that is offered to our school.

Thank you.

Lina Wallace
President, MJDS Board of Directors



Thankful for Their Service

Each semester students in grades five through eight select an *omanut* (arts and crafts) elective. Woodworking is a popular option, and this year instructor Adon Salinsky enriched the students' experience by having them build a tiny house that was delivered to the Veteran Village at Veterans Outreach in Racine. Each tiny house is furnished with a bed, comfortable chair and television, giving veterans a private space to relax. The village contains a shared community space for meals and showers so guests can socialize and avoid isolation. They also offer trauma therapy, help with employment and opportunities to interact with fellow vets.

The tiny house project was a perfect blend of teaching practical life skills while reinforcing the school's core values of **empathy**, **wonder** and ***tikkun olam***. Students learned advanced skills including reading blueprints, developing a project budget and carpentry. Building a functional living space also gave children a taste of alternative career options. "Not everybody is cut out for a four-year college. Some students are more interested in the trades or a two-year technical school," explained Adon Salinsky.

Student response to the project was extremely positive. "It's really fun using the nail gun and putting insulation on the inside. Hopefully it will look really nice," said seventh grade student Baylen.

Sam, a sixth grade student, explained, "I think it's really important to help veterans. They helped our country, we should give back to them when they need it."

The tiny house was delivered and installed in early June and will be enjoyed by local veterans for years to come.

This project was made possible thanks to generous donations from Sid Grinker Restoration, BILTRITE Furniture-Leather-Mattresses, as well as local, private donors.







Thankful for Creative Thinking

Exploring the Core (ETC) is a course that promotes deep thinking and encourages students to expand their horizons. Their assignment this year was to develop their own business with a focus on answering the question: What does it look like, sound like and feel like to own your learning?

To answer this, students were required to brainstorm, plan and manage their time, collaborate, consult with experts, learn new skills, innovate and create. They wrote business plans; applied for funding through the Sandy Mitz Technology and Innovation Student Project Fund; developed their product or service; created logos, websites and other marketing materials; designed their booth and wrote a pitch. Friends, family, board members and staff were invited to an Entrepreneur Fair to see, touch and sometimes taste the student inventions! Innovations included a travel app to plan a vacation itinerary and provide directions, a senior care service, hand carved wooden spoons, an energy drink, a fashion app to help select a daily outfit, personalized cutting boards and more.

These projects allowed students to develop and sharpen skills such as planning and managing a long-term project, critical thinking and problem solving, embracing the iterative process to produce quality work, and reinforced the importance of asking many questions along the way.

Greg R., in eighth grade, learned the value of knowing more about his project than what was presented in his display. “Guests were really interested and asked good questions. I’m glad I was prepared to share a lot of extra details.”

This program is made possible annually thanks to funding through the Sandy Mitz Technology and Innovation Student Project Fund.



הַמֵּאִיר לָאָרֶץ וְלַדָּרִים עָלֶיהָ בְּרַחֲמִים
וּבְטוּבוֹ מְחַדֵּשׁ בְּכָל־יוֹם תָּמִיד מַעֲשֵׂה
בְרֵאשִׁית

Who illuminates the earth [and provides light] for those who dwell on it, with compassion; and in their goodness renews daily the work of creation.





Thankful for Music

MJDS created an updated, comprehensive, long-term plan and vision for the *Tefillah* (prayer) and Jewish Music Program, in partnership with educational consultant Sara Wilkie and led by Gev. Kleiman.

In its inaugural year, program highlights included an active upper school choir. Students performed for fellow students, families, traveled to senior centers and joined the Milwaukee Jewish Community Chorale's *Chanukah* performances at Chai Point and the JCC. Sixteen students led the Milwaukee Jewish community in song for *Yom HaShoah*, *Yom Ha'Zikaron* and *Yom Ha'atzmaut*. Seven choir members, plus staff, attended Song Leader Boot Camp and learned specific skills and strategies to inspire transformative change in their Jewish community. Six of the seven students plan to work with the Director of Jewish Life and Learning as facilitators for the upper school program during the 2023-24 school year.

An additional, very exciting development, was the return of the MJDS *Chanukah* Concert! Students in 3K through fourth grade, and the upper school choir, learned songs that were performed with their class, as well as several special numbers that were performed with all grade levels. Friends and family filled the Community Hall at the JCC to enjoy the beautiful student-designed set and costumes.

The expansion of the Tefillah and Jewish Music Program was made possible thanks to a grant provided by Tracy and Michael Askotzky, and an anonymous donor.







וְעַתָּה קְחוּ־לִי מְנַגֵּן וְהָיָה כְּנַגֵּן הַמְנַגֵּן
וַתְּהִי עָלָיו יַד־יְהוָה

"Now then, get me a musician."
As the musician played, GOD's hand came upon him.
- II Kings 3:15









Thankful for Our Family

Mishpachot (family) Magic is an experience created by eighth grade students. Inspired by subscription boxes that provide products that cater to a user's specific interests, they offered monthly materials designed to help MJDS families learn more about Jewish values.

At the beginning of the year students were assigned to a *mishpachot* group with a blend of participants from grades 3K-seventh. Each month the same group met for a session led by eighth graders. These monthly meetings helped children develop relationships with pupils of every age, and strengthened the feeling of family at MJDS. Happy hallway greetings increased throughout the year as students from different grades became friends.

Students had *Kabbalat Shabbat* with their *mishpacha*, then learned about a Jewish value, while participating in activities appropriate for all ages. Topics included self-care, *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), empathy, kindness, respect and more.

The project was made possible thanks to the Legacy Heritage Teacher Institute for the Arts. This one-year program is designed to provide professional development to teachers through an intensive training program during the summer, followed by a year of mentoring on a specific classroom project.



מַה־טֹּבוּ אֹהָלֶיךָ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁכְּנֹתֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל

How fair are your tents, O Jacob,
Your dwellings, O Israel!
- Numbers 24:5







לֹא תַעֲמֹד עַל־דַּם רֵעֶךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה

You shall not stand idly by [when] the blood (life) of your fellow [is in danger].
- Leviticus 19:16





Thankful for Emergency Planning

To help promote a safe environment for students, staff and visitors, volunteer MJDS staff members formed an Emergency Response Team. They worked with Children's Hospital and the North Shore Fire Department to establish a Cardiac Emergency Plan. Team members learned to respond to an emergency alert, notify 911, locate and use AED's (Automatic External Defibrillators), perform CPR, manage onlookers and maintain a safe scene. In addition, students in fifth grade volunteered to become project ambassadors to promote heart-safe awareness among their peers.

After months of preparation and testing, MJDS was named a Heart Safe School by Project ADAM. This project was founded in 1999 after MJDS alum Adam Lemel died of a heart attack at age 17. Its goal is to provide AEDs in Adam's Memory (ADAM), to schools across the country. To date the program has been responsible for more than 200 lives saved.

The AEDs are located in the upstairs and downstairs hallways of MJDS, thanks to a donation made in loving memory of Jordon A. Werner, z"l.

Thankful for Our Neighbors

In Judaism there is a shared value of *tikkun olam*, repairing the world. The Repairing Together program connects students from different cultural backgrounds in the Milwaukee area, exploring and celebrating the cultural, racial and social diversity in our communities. Students learn from each other, becoming co-creators and educators. This year MJDS partnered with Bruce Guadalupe Community School, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School and Indian Community School (ICS).

Each month students in the same grade met at a school or on a field trip. The year began with a nature walk around Lakeshore State Park, learning about each other's cultures and their shared connection to Wisconsin's watershed. A member of the Ojibwe Nation opened the session with a water ceremony.

When early childhood (3K, junior and senior kindergarten) students from partner schools visited MJDS, they learned about celebrating *Shabbat* and made *charoset*, a traditional *seder* dish.

Fourth grade students participated in a communitywide project with Latino Arts Center and Familia de Arte, carving positive messages into clay butterflies. The butterflies will be glazed, painted and installed along fences on Washington Street in the Walker's Point neighborhood. Students in sixth grade had the unique opportunity to learn about the importance of the Ojibwe ponies to the Anishinaabe people with a visit to MKE Urban Stables. Once as common as deer, the horses helped with tasks such as hauling wood and trap lines.

Sixth and seventh grade MJDS students taught ICS students about the Holocaust and, in turn, ICS taught MJDS about Indigenous boarding schools in North America. It was a day of collective solidarity that ended with a unifying bird dance led by the ICS Earth Dancers.

Additional activities included creating music using African drums; learning Indigenous songs; playing lacrosse, which was invented by Native Americans; questioning guest speaker Judge Derek Mosley about the legal system and social justice; and more.

All Repairing Together programs are offered at no charge to participating schools. This is thanks to support from the Forest County Potawatomi Foundation, Bader Philanthropies, B'nai B'rith Shorewood Lodge Endowment, the Clarice S. Turer Charitable Fund, Nancy and Jim Barnett, Engaged Neighbors Madison, The Human Family Unity Foundation Chicago, and Colton Donor Restricted Memorial Fund.

וְאָהַבְתָּ֥ לְרֵעֲךָ֖ כָּמֽוֹךָ

How fair are your tents, O Jacob,
Your dwellings, O Israel!
- Numbers 24:5









MJDS By the Numbers

Through the financial support of generous benefactors, MJDS is able to fulfill the mission of creating a space where academic excellence and Jewish values prepare children for a lifetime of success, leadership and engagement with the world. This school is committed to providing outstanding academic excellence rooted in Jewish values and an environment that fosters trust, risk-taking and collaboration.

MJDS believes that there is a social obligation to deliver the affordability of an MJDS education to ensure that any family who chooses to attend is able to do so. Through the Affordable Customized Tuition (ACT) program, each family's unique circumstance is considered to arrive at a successful tuition plan.

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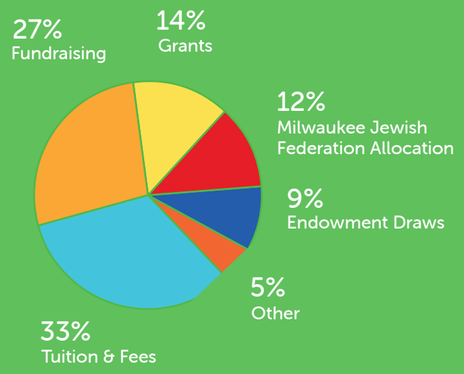

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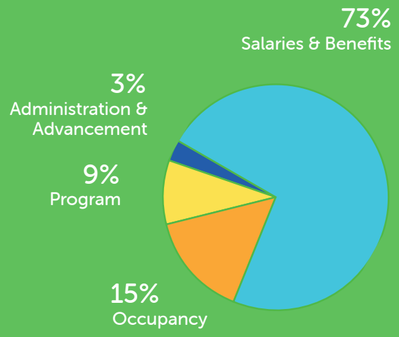

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Your support of Milwaukee Jewish Day School ensures all families can access a quality Jewish education for their children. This donor listing is a reflection of the many ways MJDS receives financial support.

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Ann *z"l* and Albert *z"l* Deshur
Penny and Jim Deshur
Melanie and Joseph Devorkin
Deb and Ben Fendrich
Avi Fenster
Neena and Rick Florsheim
Karen and Jason Gottlieb
Sharon and Michael Grinker
Mimi *z"l* and Robert Habush
Christy and Adam Horn
Thelma Hurwitz *z"l*
Debra and Moshe Katz
Joan and David Kazan and Family
Sari Luber
Gilbert Meisel *z"l*
Felicia and Jamie Miller
Lynda and Sandy *z"l* Mitz
Elizabeth and James Neubauer
Sarah and Kevin Packman
Michaela and Jeff Peck
Sheryl and Michael Primakow
Estelle Swerdlow Pump *z"l*
Dr. Werner and Carol Richheimer
Dr. Robert and Lauri Roth
Julie and Michael Sadoff
Judy *z"l* and Gerald Salinsky
Lori and Jim Salinsky
Karen Schapiro and Douglas Frazer
Sandy Schmidt
Sarah Schott and Brian King
Doris Shneidman
Jodi Habush Sinykin and Dan Sinykin
Steve and Trudy Sirkis
Jodi and Peter Sprinkmann
Rabbi Moishe Steigmann
Barbara Stein
Alisa and David Wasserman
Julie and Yonatan Zvi

Endowment Funds

8th Grade Israel Trip Endowment Fund
Adina Altshull Israel Education Endowment Fund
Bar Mitzvah Year Endowment Fund
Donna and Robert Berg Endowment Fund
Ateret and Jacob Cohn Judaic Enrichment Fund
Colton Charitable Foundation
Sol and Eva Dorf Education Endowment Fund
Nina and Richard Edelman Family Endowment Fund
Louise A. Eder Memorial Endowment
Morris and Olga Eder Endowment Fund
Merzy Eisenberg Endowment Fund
Toni Ettenheim Memorial Art Education Endowment Fund
Howard Frankenthal Family Fund
Gellman Family Endowment
Graduation Endowment Fund
Lillian P. Heffernan and Eileen A. Perlson Scholarship Endowment. Fund
Joseph and Ruth Hirschberg Teacher Appreciation Endowment
Isaac and Eva Hochman General Purpose Endowment
Leo "Sunshine" Hochman Endowment Fund
Drs. Edgar and Rachel Inselberg L'dor V'dor Fund
Debra and Moshe Katz Family Fund for MJDS Staff Travel to Israel
Kernis, Bloch, and Smargon Families Book Fund
Michael Kovnar Memorial Special Needs Fund
Larry Lieberman Memorial Jewish Life and Learning Endowment Fund
Reva Loeb Theater Arts Fund
Susan A. Lubar and Family Scholarship Fund
Marge Meyers Scholarship Endowment
Milwaukee Jewish Day School Restricted Endowment Fund
MJDS Unrestricted Endowment Fund
Benjamin "Baki" Muchin Athletic Memorial Endowment Fund
Sharon Muchin Rotter Endowment Fund
Eileen A. Perlson Memorial Endowment Fund
Judee Ross Memorial Endowment Fund
Jay Schmidt Computer and Technology Memorial Fund
Doris Shneidman Chai Endowment Fund
Dr. Nathan and Flora Sonin Educational Endowment Fund
Stark Family Endowment Fund
Armin K. Taus Scholarship Fund
Maurice Wolkomir Endowment Fund

Special Purpose Funds

Maxine Herz Fund for Professional Development and Literacy Advancement
Jacqueline Kravit Fund for Reading and Computer Literacy
Sandy Mitz Technology and Innovation Student Project Fund
Judee Ross Imagination Grant
Judee Ross Memorial Education Fund
Patti and Jordan Weigler Fund

** Board Member + Alumni # Staff ^ A fund of the Jewish Community Foundation of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation*

Save the Date

MJDS Gala | *L'dor V'dor*

Wednesday, April 17, 2024
The Italian Community Center

