

The Lions' Roar

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Students in JK-12 schools across the nation are facing a mental health crisis as a result of many factors including over the last several years, increased social media use and disconnection, the COVID-19 pandemic, and for Jewish students, Oct. 7th and the Israel-Hamas War. In many studies, students report feeling worse overall, more stressed, and less secure in themselves than in past years. The reported rate of students in independent schools who have considered attempting suicide has increased significantly dating back to 2014, even though the reported number of suicide attempts has decreased overall.



In order to support students' overall wellness and mental health, CESJDS has

developed a comprehensive program specific to the challenges we have seen among our students and as a proactive approach for our entire student body. This program builds on CESJDS' longtime concern for supporting our students' social-emotional growth, and is part of our current strategic plan's goal to enrich our students' lives by continuing to demonstrate a proactive culture of emotional and social wellness for all our students and their families. Our programs across the grades address a wide range of health and wellness topics including: academic performance and pressure, stress and anxiety, family and peer relationships, high-risk behaviors, diet and sleep habits, and internet use and social media.

Health and wellness is also a concern in Jewish tradition. In the Talmud (Shabbat 82a) Rav Huna encourages his son Rabbah to study with Rav Hisda because he cares deeply about matters of anatomy and hygiene. Maimonides, the great 12th Century Jewish thinker and physician, wrote extensively about exercise and balanced eating in his work the Mishneh Torah. More recently, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Mandatory Palestine and a leader of religious Zionism, promoted physical and mental health as both values in and of themselves and in creating stronger spiritual lives.

This edition of The Lions' Roar is dedicated to sharing with you a few of the outstanding and important health and wellness programs we have developed at CESJDS. In the following pages you will learn from Rabbi Bellas, Lower School Principal, and Rebecca Prigal, Lower School Assistant Principal, where health and wellness fit into our Lower School "whole child" philosophy. Rabbi Janet Ozur Bass, Middle School Assistant Principal, will share perspectives on early adolescent brain development and well-being. And last, Melissa Gartner and Rachel Soifer, Co-Directors of Upper School Health and Wellness, will share about our Upper School Health and Wellness Center and programs.

As with all our academics, programs, co-curriculars, and activities, I know that you will see how CESJDS is shining in Health and Wellness as we strive to meet the ever evolving needs of our students and families.

L'briyut/To (our students') health!













Kol HaKavod/Accomplishments כל הכבוד

SCHOOL

- **CESJDS** received a 2024 First Amendment Press Freedom Award.
- Dimensions Yearbook and The Lion's Tale were both nominated for Columbia Scholastic Press Association's Crown awards.
- Middle School Mathletes placed 3rd in the Regional Math Meet.
- The Margolius Family Debate Team placed 3rd in the Montgomery County High School Debate Playoffs.
- The Boys Varsity and Girls Varsity Basketball teams competed in the TanenbaumCHAT Invitational Tournament in Toronto, Ontario. The Boys Varsity team made it to the semi-finals and the Girls Varsity team played in the championship game.
- Varsity Girls Basketball finished 1st in the PVAC.
- Varsity Boys Basketball finished 3rd in the PVAC.
- JV Boys Basketball played in the PVAC Championship.
- MS Boys Basketball and MS Girls Basketball played in the PVAC Semifinals.
- Varsity Girls Swimming finished 3rd in the PVAC.
- Varsity Boys Swimming finished 5th in the PVAC.

STUDENT

- Shiri Cohen (Grade 12) received national recognition through the prestigious YoungArts National Arts Competition run by the National Foundation for the Advancement of Artists. Shiri was awarded National YoungArts Awards in the Popular Voice and the Singer/ Songwriter categories.
- Ari Howell (Grade 12), Daniel Schlactus (Grade 12), Gabriella Simon (Grade 12), and Jordyn White (Grade 12) were named National Merit Finalists.
- Ryan Klepper (Grade 9) and Evan Klepper (Grade 11) made Maryland's All State Ensemble.
- Todd Lazoff (Grade 12) was named PVAC First-Team for Basketball.
- Quinn Levitan (Grade 12) and his band released their first album, Lovesick.
- Tali Loeffler (Grade 10), Hannah Shank (Grade 12), and Itai Topolosky (Grade 12) were named PVAC Second-Team for Basketball.
- Adan Magnas (Grade 10) finished 4th in the Maryland State JV Tournament in Wrestling for his weight class.
- Shani Schwartz (Grade 12) was named PVAC Player of the Year and PVAC First-Team for Basketball.
- Ethan Scott (Grade 10) completed the 59-hour Teen Montgomery County, MD Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program which included Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) certification.
- Sam Sharp (Grade 12) was named PVAC Honorable Mention for Basketball.

- Nathan Szubin (Grade 11) ran a 15:41 (5:03/mile average) to set our all-time 5K record in the CESJDS time trials.
- **Reyut Weiser-Rosenbaum** (Grade 7) won the CESJDS Middle School spelling bee and went on to compete in the regional spelling bee.
- Zoya Wexler (Grade 9) finished 2nd in the Maryland State JV Tournament in Wrestling for his weight class.

FACULTY

- Melissa Andrew, 9th Grade Dean and High School Biology Teacher, was selected to be part of The Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington's Emerging Leader Institute.
- Natalie Levitan, High School History Teacher, and Grace McMillan, High School Jewish Text Teacher, presented at the Aims Subscription Professional Development Series with a program titled "Unlocking Potential: Executive Function Deficit Traits and Strategies for Success."
- Rabbi Mitch Malkus, Head of School, and John Barnhardt, Bishop McNamara High School Head of School, presented to AISGW colleagues on the successful partnership program between our two schools.
- Beth Poston and Hadas Heyman, Instructional Technology Specialists, presented at the Elementary & Secondary Technology Conference and presented an AIMS webinar on using AI in schools.
- Sarah Rubin Shapiro, Director of Community Outreach & Major Gifts, presented at the Jewish Digital Summit 2024 on Fundraising Trends and Top Tips.
- Robbie Shorr '13, High School Math Teacher and Jewish Life Chair, and Lydia Sonenklar welcomed a daughter, Tehila Simone.
- Lisa Vardi, High School Principal, presented at the AIMS conference on the topic of using faculty, staff, and student data to design, redesign, and implement yearly division goals and initiatives and to manage up.

ALUMNI

- Jill Bashein Aharon '87 and Stacy Schlactus '87 received the Association for Safe International Road Travel Aron Sobel Community Service Award.
- Rabbi Rachel Ain '95 spoke on the TODAY show with Reverend Dr. Jacqui Lewis about the true meaning of the holidays and the importance of sitting together as families and communities.
- Adam Friedlander '97 and Roni (Enten) Vissoker '97, along with two other physicians, started a company called Buoyant that will change how patients experience healthcare.
- Jack Gruber '14, Adam Landa '16, and Coby Siegel '20 and their funk/pop band Strutman Lane headlined at the Black Cat DC.
- Ilana Kaplan '19 was awarded the 2024 Anat Kimchi Award and was the alumni speaker at the CESJDS Class of 2024 graduation ceremony.

- Zach Krame '05 and his team won the 2023 Creative Arts Emmy for Outstanding Short Form Nonfiction or Reality Series. Krame, a senior marketing manager at HBO, worked as a supervising producer on *"Succession: Controlling The Narrative."*
- Katie Kolben Lerro '05 was selected to be part of *Realscreen's* 2024 Factual Under 40 list.
- Coby Malkus '23 was appointed the First Year Engagement Coordinator for Drexel JSA (Jewish Student Association) Board.
- Dr. Aliza Pressman '92 became a New York Times bestselling author for her book, The 5 Principles of Parenting.
- Rachel Rubin '03 was honored at the CESJDS Head of School Circle celebration.
- Andrew Yanovski '12 was nominated for his 2nd GRAMMY award, in the Regional Roots music category as a songwriter and a keyboard player for his band, The Rumble's new record: *Live at the Maple Leaf.*
- Danielle Clemons '11 and Eric Fischer welcomed a son, Judah Gabriel.
- Bari Friedman Eisenberg '09 and Zachary Eisenberg welcomed a son, Jacob Hayes.
- Ilan '02 and Suzanne Fulop welcomed a son, Caleb Mason.
- Elisheva Layman Salant '08 and Scott Salant welcomed a son, Eyal Reuben.
- Brittany (Cines) Shapiro '09 and Seth Shapiro welcomed a son, Jack.
- Ariana (Heideman) Tipograph '00 and Joseph Tipograph '98 welcomed a daughter, Noa Gal.
- Maya Arber '17 and Bosco Nshimiyumukiza were engaged.
- Jessie Berner '18 and Jake Sherman were engaged.
- Justin Galitzer '19 and Penelope Rhine were engaged.
- Eytan Layman '17 and Sigalle Bahary were engaged.
- Jonathan Ochs '09 and Sara Winograd were engaged.

COMMUNITY

- Shuly Babitz, CESJDS parent, published a blog post: "Not Your Typical Baseball Hat" in *The Times of Israel* about her recent trip to Israel as she helped her daughters make *Aliyah*.
- Dana Marlowe, CESJDS parent, and her organization, I Support the Girls, appeared on the Good Neighbor Segment on *The Kelly Clarkson Show*.
- Sharon Safra, CESJDS parent, Jill Epstein, alumni parent, and Steve Kerbel, alumni parent, received degrees of Doctor of Pedagogy, *honoris causa*, in recognition of their years of devoted service and significant contributions to the field of Jewish education.
- **Dan Shapiro**, CESJDS parent and a Former U.S. Ambassador to Israel, was named as the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Middle East Affairs by the U.S. Department of Defense.
- Ateret and Nadav Zysblat, CESJDS parents, welcomed a daughter, Kedem Benna.

Lower School Log: Health and Wellness Elements of Recess

By **Rabbi Matthew Bellas**, Lower School Principal | **Rebecca Prigal,** Lower School Assistant Principal



What do we mean when we talk about our "Whole Child" approach to learning and teaching and where do health and wellness play into the equation? In children, education takes place across several domains: cognitive/academic, social-emotional, spiritual, and physical. In a variety of previous publications, we have shared about many pedagogical and curricular/co-curricular aspects of our program with benefits to most, if not all, of these areas of child development: the arts, teaching with and for joy, STEM education, *tikkun olam/* repairing our world, and Responsive Classroom, among other topics. Here, we would like to share about an often overlooked, but essential aspect of a student's day: recess and the role it plays in the domains of physical and

social-emotional development and wellness for children.

When we talk about our Lower School facility with our staff, we explain that every location inside and outside of the building is "a classroom." From the actual rooms, to the gyms, to the cafeteria, to the Field of Dreams, and playgrounds, every space is a place where students grow, develop, and learn. While most children regard recess as "time off" from learning, we see and understand it as a time to promote and support learning in the social-emotional and physical domains. Beyond the basic benefits of recess, including the opportunity to get outside in the fresh air and, hopefully, sunshine, to run around, actively play, and spend time with friends, it is on the field and playgrounds that students learn important lessons about being a good sport, teamwork/ cooperation, kindness, inclusion, connection, and how important fun is for their overall well-being. Responsive Classroom philosophy and practice emphasize the importance of meeting children's core needs of belonging, significance, and fun, and recess is a crucial time during a child's day to foster them.

Through recess, students experience the importance of a schedule that includes work-life balance, something that many adults struggle with in their busy lives. With the placement and use of our Buddy Bench on the playground, students have the opportunity to practice empathy and inclusion for students who may need a hand to join communal play. With the entire grade out for recess together, students have the opportunity to enrich long-time friendships and to form new ones. During games and sports activities, students learn about managing conflict, flexibility, being leaders and followers, and when to ask for help from trusted and caring adults and when to navigate challenges on their own or with a friend.

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Speaking of the caring adults out at recess, our supervising teachers are ones who know our students well. They are supported by our Recess Monitor, who is a consistent presence daily for all recess periods, along with frequent visits by our Counseling Team. We are generously staffed on the Field of Dreams and playground in order to ensure safety and to offer students a variety of play locations and activities to fit their needs: playground (with swings, climbing equipment, and sandboxes), basketball courts, soccer field, ga-ga pits, and black top. While we love to see children moving, we also know it can be very meaningful for students to talk together on one of our benches under our shade trees.

As a matter of policy and practice and based on research, we schedule our morning recesses before lunch. Every grade has at least one recess before they eat. Gurim and kindergarten students have a second recess in the afternoon for additional and age-appropriate outdoor play time. Furthermore, our students get their outdoor play time as often as possible. While inclement weather (precipitation or very cold temperatures) or field and playground conditions occasionally necessitate indoor recess, for which we have dedicated gym time in our two gym spaces for active indoor play, our kids go outside for recess as often as possible. Children and families know that gloves, coats, and boots will often be needed in the winter months. Nothing can replace the experience of the outdoors for our students, so we make it happen whenever we possibly can.

Middle School Musings: Early Adolescent Brain Development and Well-Being

By Rabbi Janet Ozur Bass, Middle School Assistant Principal



Here's what we know and love about early adolescents: they are hard wired for both peer approval and risk taking. Here's what we also know: their brains are just beginning to fine tune and prune their neural pathways and their neuroplasticity is amazing. As difficult as we adults often remember Middle School to be for ourselves, it is really an extraordinary time to be growing, learning, failing forward, and practicing resilience. Our students are building, tearing down, and rebuilding their world views, including the space and place they want to take in their communities, their Jewish identity, and their friendships. They are working so hard every day to figure out who they are and who they want to be. All of this while waking up every morning and not knowing what and who they will find in the mirror.

As young adolescents move beyond their childhood and concrete thoughts, they begin to see their world in a more abstract, self-aware, empathetic, and more sophisticated level. Their bodies, thoughts, feelings, and spiritual selves are all in a constant state of flux. This is a wonderfully confusing time for them, and it is important that we create a framework for our students and a partnership with their families. Only then can we build a strong concept of what health and wellness looks and feels like for students and for those around them. The foundation we give our students in Middle School is meant first to help them become more self-aware. We break down the steps they will need to take in order to make healthy decisions and create healthy relationships. This social, emotional, and spiritual foundation is at the core of a successful Middle School experience.

Foundational Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) education that is grounded in Jewish values is central to our Rikuz curriculum in the Middle School. Our lessons support students navigating the intricacies of this transitional phase of their lives with resilience and grit. Each year builds on the thematic progression of the CESJDS Middle School experience - Identity, Community, and Taking Action. Throughout the lessons, we focus on building a vocabulary for our students so they can have increasingly more sophisticated and articulate conversations. In terms of their wellness and healthy choices, we want to find the skills that allow them to learn to take the perspective of others, engage in difficult conversations, and make healthy choices in risky situations. We want our students to learn specific tools to help themselves and help others at a developmentally appropriate level.

One example is how we teach healthy decision making and consent in each grade as part of our healthy relationships curriculum. We learn and review the following four rules about consent in every grade:

- Consent is an active process between two or more people
- Consent is activity-specific
- Consent can be taken back at any time
- Consent must be given in a free and clear mindset

They are working so hard every day to figure out who they are and who they want to be.

We teach the values of *B'tzelem Elokim*/every human is created in the image of God, *Derekh Eretz*/ethical decency, and *Tzinut*/a world view that is modest and free from objectifying others.

- In **6th grade** we focus on "my stuff, your stuff." We practice recognizing when consent is given and when it is not given, how to set and communicate your own boundaries, how to respond and respect the boundaries set by those around you, and how to appropriately respond when someone is not respecting your boundaries.
- In **7th grade** we focus on "my body, your body." We learn that only hearing or seeing "yes" means that you have consent and we figure out what an enthusiastic "yes" looks and sounds like. We also talk about different ways that peer pressure can play into setting healthy boundaries and practice setting those boundaries in front of peers.
- In **8th grade**, after reviewing lessons learned from both 6th and 7th grade, we focus on sexual assault and consent, we also explore the effects that alcohol and drugs have on our ability to set and respect clear boundaries. Additionally, we explore healthy decision making and consent with online platforms and cell phones.

As our students move through Middle School, they are seeking more autonomy. With that comes added stress and added responsibility. Health and Wellness in Middle School in our Rikuz curriculum is all about helping them understand the tools they already have and learn new concepts and tools that are developmentally appropriate. Our students examine the steps they will need to take to learn, to make mistakes and learn from their mistakes, and to grow into healthy young adults.

High School Highlights: What's New in Health and Wellness at CESJDS? Everything!

• By **Melissa Gartner & Rachel Soifer**, Co-Directors of US Health and Wellness



The past two years have brought innovation and exciting improvements to many aspects of student life and learning at CESJDS. School counseling and classroom health have undergone a complete transformation.

In Spring 2022, The Center for Health and Wellness was created with the mission to deliver integrated and forward-thinking programming to all students across five dimensions: social-emotional and mental health, physical health, academic balance, digital well-being, and service, ethics, and leadership. The Center accomplishes this and enhances school culture through active partnerships with administration, teachers, student leaders, parents,

community organizations, and outside experts. Through our efforts, we have successfully stepped-away from a system that had become crisis-driven and introduced a robust prevention program that helps raise the baseline of mental health, self-care, and resilience of the entire student population.

This fall, "Wellness Wednesdays" were introduced to spotlight one core dimension of health and wellness each month. Led by professionals such as sleep doctors, substance abuse specialists, exercise physiologists, nutritionists, urologists, neuropsychologists, and more, "Wellness Wednesdays" offer students a variety and introduce them to knowledge and best practices from experts in their respective fields. Topics this year have included: cultivating happiness, stress and anxiety management, substance abuse prevention and Narcan first aid, healthy relationships and sexuality, and digital well-being.

Our Health and Wellness Fellows initiative, also launched this year, serves to amplify student voice and cultivate leadership. Our ten student fellows were selected through a

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competitive application process. They are responsible to meet weekly and advise directors about topics and speakers. Fellows act as ambassadors in the student community and create workshops each month that encourage their peers to practice skills, personalize content, and set goals. These small-group sessions are led by faculty thereby increasing the number of students who have a genuine connection to one another and their teachers. One fellow, Neely Shemony (Grade 11) offers, "I enjoy being a Health and Wellness Fellow because it give me the opportunity to help other students in our school and allows me to tap into my creative side and learn tips and tricks that will be able to help me as a student and in my life in the long run."

Since our inception, partnership with our stakeholders has been a centerpoint and strong influence in our efforts. The Health and Wellness Taskforce is composed of a diverse group of representatives including parents, faculty, and administration, who meet monthly to help ensure that our initiatives are responsive to students' needs and practical by design.

The CESJDS Center Health and Wellness is a major departure and restructuring of traditional health education and mental health counseling. It is built to evolve and grow in real time through input from invested teens, offers opportunities for teens to practice healthy decisions, builds youth leadership, reinforces strong student-faculty relationships, and expands community partnerships.

Ask what we're up to, and you'll hear about something new and exciting! Reach out to **healthandwellness@cesjds.org** to ask questions or get involved!



Ma'ayan 2024: Harvesting Bright Futures

Our *Ma'ayan*, a natural spring, sustains our community's roots and nourishes us with a deep appreciation for our Jewish heritage. The *Ma'ayan* Annual Campaign extends beyond fundraising; it embodies a collective endeavor to nurture and celebrate the distinctive qualities of CESJDS.

Now more than ever, your contribution is vital. Please make your gift or pledge online at **cesjds.org/maayan**.



Why We Give: The Sharp Family

During COVID, when we switched our children from public school to CESJDS, our decision was akin to a professional sports team signing an undrafted free agent: we decided to give it a year and see how it goes. And then we never looked back. Four years and one graduate later, we feel confident in saying that CESJDS has helped propel our kids to new heights - academically, socially, culturally, and athletically. We never imagined back in 2020 how impactful this school community would be on our children's lives. Our children's CESJDS experience has been marked by strong bonds with administrators, teachers, and coaches, genuine friendships with kids who show one another kindness, and a values-based education to help them lead righteous lives.

Why do we give to the *Ma'ayan* Annual Campaign? We give because we know that tuition does not cover the full operating costs of CESJDS. We give because CESJDS students benefit tremendously from incredible opportunities in the arts, STEM, health, athletics, and beyond. We give because we want to ensure other students can benefit from a CESJDS education. We give because we are grateful to be part of such an enriching and connected community of educators and families at CESJDS.

Jana and Jeremy Sharp

Proud Parents of Sam '24 and Eve (Grade 9) *Ma'ayan* Annual Campaign Co-Chairs



Why We Give: The Waxman Family

We give to the *Ma'ayan* Annual Campaign because our children celebrating Jewish life daily is so very important to our future, now more than ever. At CESJDS, the holistic educational approach provides every student with a meaningful way for them to engage academically and spiritually. Through cross cutting concepts embedded in all subject areas, the curriculum combines in a way that has students making connections within their school community and the world.

Our children have a profound love for Israel. This love and pride are nurtured through study, dance, cooking, art, and prayer. We are so grateful for this deep relationship with Israel. As a family we have made lasting friendships through CESJDS. Even more rewarding, we have watched our children create their own relationships and grow each year.

Your participation in the *Ma'ayan* Annual Campaign is critical for the long-term growth of CESJDS and for Jewish education for the next generation.

Janine and Josh Waxman

Proud Parents of Ginger (Grade 2) and Davey (Grade K) *Ma'ayan* Annual Campaign Co-Chairs



Zuckerman Bequest Helps Ensure Vibrant Jewish Future

Susan and Alan Zuckerman were living in Exeter, England, where Alan was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholar and their 5-year-old daughter was the only Jewish child her age in their town. "We had three children at the time," Sue says, "and we felt strongly that we wanted a Jewish education for them." A friend helped register Sharon for first grade at CESJDS in preparation for the family's return to Maryland when Alan joined the faculty of the GU School of Medicine.

Sue and Alan are firm believers in Jewish education and feel obligated to ensure a strong, vibrant future for CESJDS, which is why they have included a bequest to the school in their will. "We want to be at least a small part of ensuring that JDS is here for future generations who can benefit from this extraordinary, unique, and special community."

In time, all four Zuckerman children attended CESJDS and were involved in sports, arts, music, photography, and journalism. They made lifelong friends and benefited greatly from the vision of the school's founders and benefactors. "The education at JDS is couched in Jewish values, which is the way they lead their lives," they say. "Enrolling them in JDS is the best investment we ever made."

Sue has worked at CESJDS now for over 40 years. She taught English and journalism, and she started *The Lion's Tale* student newspaper in 1984. She is currently the Feder Family Educational Support Services Chair.

As members of the *Bonim* Society—which recognizes donors who have provided for the school through a bequest in their will or trust, endowment, or other planned gift—Sue and Alan want others in the CESJDS community to realize that every gift is significant and makes a difference.

"We hope others will understand the importance of the commitment to the future of JDS and Jewish education," they conclude. "JDS educates the future leaders of the Jewish people, and we need people to renew their commitment—now more than ever."

Susan and Alan Zuckerman



Sue lights *hanukkiyot* with her grandchildren.



Sue and Alan's children and grandchildren enjoy vacations together.



Abby (Grade 11) and Eliana (Grade 6) learn Daf Yom with their Zayde.



בית מדרש צוריאל

Administrative Offices & Lower School Campus 1901 East Jefferson Street Rockville, Maryland 20852 Rockville, Maryland 20852

Annette M. & Theodore N. Lerner Family Upper School Campus 11710 Hunters Lane

UPCOMING EVENTS

- MAY 2: 2024 Ma'ayan Annual Campaign Launch
- MAY 6: Yom Ha-sho-ah V'ha-g'vurah/Holocaust & Heroism Memorial Day
- MAY 6 10: Faculty/Staff Appreciation Week
- MAY 7 12: 8th Grade Bridges Capstone Trip
- MAY 13: Yom Hazikaron/Israel Remembrance Day
- MAY 14: Yom Ha-atzma-ut /Israel Independence Day
- MAY 17: Dor L'Dor/Intergenerational Day
- MAY 24: EARLY DISMISSAL Memorial Day Weekend
- MAY 27: SCHOOL CLOSED Memorial Day



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