

Class of 2025

Commencement Ceremony



Thursday, May 22, 2025
24 Iyar 5785



Class of 2025

Luca Frances Bea Allen



Leila Naomi Friedman



Ruby Rachel Friedman



Alyssa Reece Kaufmann



Heather Lynn Kletzky



Ella Faye Manor



Patrick Adin Marshall



Shira Merav Merenstein



Julia Hannah Perlmutter



Liat Brooke Segev



Emanuel Sezanayev



DJDS K-12 Graduate



Judaic Studies
Distinction



Tzedek Distinction

Scan below to learn more
about our graduates
with distinctions!



Order of Ceremony

Processional

Class of 2025 & Faculty

Opening Remarks

Jerry Rotenberg, Judaic Studies Teacher

Star Spangled Banner and Hatikvah

Class Video Part One

Alyssa Kaufmann

Board Chair Address to the Class of 2025

Lisa Engbar, Board Chair

Introduction to Ceremony

Dr. Avi Halzel, Head of School/CEO

Reflection on Shira Merenstein

Tia Woods

Student Remarks

Shira Merenstein

Striker Scholarship

Melanie Knowles, High School Dean

Reflection on Liat Segev

Dr. Heidi Markenson

Student Remarks

Liat Segev

Reflection on Ella Manor

Jerry Rotenberg

Student Remarks

Ella Manor

Reflection on Patrick Marshall

Andria Rabenold

Reflection on Ruby Friedman

Kelli Pfaff

Student Remarks

Ruby Friedman

Reflection on Alyssa Kaufmann

Craig Halper

Student Remarks

Alyssa Kaufmann

Reflection on Luca Allen

Melanie Knowles

Order of Ceremony (cont'd)

Chesed Award Presentation

Luca Allen, 2024 Chesed Award Recipient

Reflection on Leila Friedman

Brian Welling

Koby Gruenwald Neshama Award Presentation

Josh Lake, Upper Division Dean

Keynote Speaker

Rifka Wine (Class of 2005)

Class Video Part Two

Alyssa Kaufmann

Reflection on Heather Kletzky

Channa Schweid

Student Remarks

Heather Kletzky

Reflection on Emanuel Sezanayev

Joel Rozansky

D'var Torah

Emanuel Sezanayev

Reflection on Julia Perlmutter

Jerry Rotenberg

Student Remarks

Julia Perlmutter

Presentation of Judaic & Tzedek Distinction

Benjamin Levy, Upper Division Director of Judaic Studies

Commencement Speech to the Class of 2025

Dr. Jeremy Golubcow-Teglasi, Upper Division Principal

Presentation of the Class of 2025 and Awarding of Diplomas

Dr. Avi Halzel and Dr. Jeremy Golubcow-Teglasi

Board of Trustees

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Immediate Past Chair

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Joshua Rubenstein
Dr. Elias Sacks
Rabbi Emily Hyatt* (Class of 2003)
(Rabbinic Council Representative)

*Alumni

Administration

Dr. Avi Halzel, Head of School/CEO

Shayna Friedman, Director of Admission

Samantha Raizen Walsh*, Director of Development

Chagit Gibor, Director of Innovation

Elana Shapiro, Lower Division Principal

Dr. Jeremy Golubcow-Tegasi, Upper Division Principal

Rick Getz, Business Manager/CFO

Alyson Slatkin, Outreach & Engagement Manager

Matan Halzel*, Marketing Manager & Admission Associate

Pamela Kalinowski, Donor Relations and Data Manager

Melisa Demers, Annual Fund Manager

John Parker, Admission Executive Assistant

Jodie Applebaum*, Lower Division Dean, Pre-K Director

Robin Helgerson, Business Office Assistant

Benjamin Levy, Director of Judaic Studies

Josh Lake, Upper Division Director of Operations & Programs

Alyse Opatowski*, College Counselor

Dr. Natalie Mohan, School Psychologist

David Grenoble, Director of Security

Mordy Kadovitz & Kirya Jultak*, Administrative Assistants

John Humin, Maintenance Technician

*Alumni

Upper Division Judaic Studies and Hebrew Faculty

Rachel Greenfeld

Craig Halper

Benjamin Levy

Noga Livneh

Jerry Rotenberg

Joel Rozansky

Channa Schweid*

Danielle Shwartz

Yael Shalom

Upper Division General Studies Faculty

Dr. Tommy Bell

Gayle Bush

Naomi Cher

Andrew Englund

Pat Kidder

Alix Kivlin

Melanie Knowles

Dr. Heidi Markenson

Asha Merkes

Peta Miller

Andria Rabenold

Jason Saccomano

Melanie Salniker

Danielle Sapiens

Barbara Silberman

Sam Tluscik

Brian Welling

Tia Woods*

Megan Zitron

Lower Division Faculty

Meg Adler

Spencer Barclay

Mordechai Bellinsky

Rachel Brander

Marcia Chaimovitz

Simone Craig

Ravit Eldar

Elaina Streicher

Anna Faigenbaum

Rufina Feld

Hila Fradkin

Mike Friednash

Kayla Goldenberg

Ben Huston

Alex Guss

Charlene Irani

Alix Kivlin

Rebekah Kochavi

Rabbi Shalom Lebowitz

Rose Lucas

Jennifer Margolis

Michal Mayara

Asha Merkes

Merideth Pryor

Kate Routes

Stephanie Harvey

Patrick Sawyer

Becky Sheinbaum

Lena Shtutman

Tara Smith

Ali Weinberg

Rebecca

Wohl-Hibshman

Carla Zimmer

*Alumni

Luca Frances Bea Allen



Activities: Varsity Soccer, BBYO

DJDS experience: "I am so appreciative of many things at DJDS, especially since I began my time here midway through high school. My favorite part of DJDS has been my classes with Ms. Knowles, she has taught me how to appreciate and fall in love with biochemistry and science."

Quote: "You're gonna go far." - Noah Kahan

Plans: Case Western Reserve University

Leila Naomi Friedman



Activities: Varsity Basketball, Varsity Volleyball, NCSY, Literary Magazine

DJDS experience: "My time at DJDS helped shape who I am today spiritually and socially. The Jewish environment gave me a strong sense of identity and community, while also encouraging me to be open to new experiences and perspectives. DJDS has helped me grow my social skills, widen my circle, and feel confident in who I am as a Jew in the outside world."

Quote: "We have nothing to lose, nothing to gain, nothing we desired anymore - except to make our lives into a work of art." - Lana Del Ray

Plans: Kadima World Bnei Akiva Gap Year program, followed by University of Colorado, Boulder

Ruby Rachel Friedman

Activities: Varsity Basketball, Varsity Volleyball, Varsity Soccer, Student Council, NCSY Chapter Board, Mandil Inc. Intern, StandWithUs Intern

DJDS experience: "Transferring to DJDS, I was initially nervous about entering an unfamiliar environment, yet the support from my welcoming peers and dedicated teachers quickly made me feel at home. Through opportunities, such as student council, sports, and Color War, DJDS has pushed me to step out of my comfort zone and discover the leader I never knew I could be."

Quote: "We're almost there, but nowhere near it. All that matters is that we're going." - Lorelai Gilmore (Gilmore Girls)

Plans: Midreshet AMIT Gap Year program, followed by University of Wisconsin-Madison



Alyssa Reece Kaufmann

Activities: Mayor's Youth Commission (co-chair), Yearbook Editor in Chief, Model UN (chapter founder & captain), Varsity Basketball, Varsity Soccer captain

DJDS experience: "I have always been curious about the world around me. But DJDS has taught me how to question and search for answers. I credit my critical-thinking skills, collaboration skills, and general open-mindedness to the Jewish education I have received over the past seven years."

Quote: "Never say never." - Justin Bieber

Plans: Vanderbilt University



Heather Lynn Kletzky



Activities: BBYO, Varsity Volleyball, Jerusalem Science Contest, Hebrew school teacher

DJDS experience: "DJDS has taught me the value of developing strong friendships with your teachers and classmates. Through this lesson, I know I am prepared to create and foster new relationships with people I meet and collaborate with in the future."

Quote: "Slow down, you're doin' fine; You can't be everything you wanna be before your time."

- Billy Joel

Plans: Emory University

Ella Faye Manor



Activities: Varsity Volleyball, Competitive Dance, BBYO, Moot Court, Fresh Tape Media Production Intern

DJDS experience: "DJDS is a place where you learn how to connect with people differently than every other situation in life. Spending every minute of every day with the same people changes who you are as a person."

Quote: "Whatever you are not changing, you are choosing." - Laurie Buchanan

Plans: University of Colorado, Boulder



Patrick Adin Marshall

Activities: Varsity Basketball, Varsity Soccer, Baseball, Aviation Club, Model UN

DJDS experience: "DJDS has a strong community that has positively influenced me and my peers to strive for excellence."

Quote: "Explore, dream, discover." - Mark Twain

Plans: University of Colorado, Boulder



Shira Merav Merenstein

Activities: Yearbook Editor-in-chief, Theatre, Choir, BBYO, Dance

DJDS experience: "DJDS has helped me develop the leadership skills to navigate challenges, take initiative, and inspire others. Without the relationships I formed with the faculty, and events like Color War and Shabbatonim, I would not have had the confidence to be a strong leader and mentor younger students."

Quote: "To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Plans: University of Pittsburgh

Julia Hannah Perlmutter

Activities: Student Council President, JV/Varsity Volleyball, The Paw, Competitive Dance, BBYO, FGMC Intern, Humane Colorado Volunteer



DJDS experience: "DJDS challenged me in ways I never expected, pushing me through tough moments that tested my strength and resilience. But through every challenge, I grew—learning to lead, to speak up, and to support those around me. DJDS didn't just prepare me for the future; it shaped me into someone who can face it head-on with confidence and purpose."

Quote: "The world's law was no law for her mind." - Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter

Plans: Tulane University

Liat Brooke Segev

Activities: Custom Baking Business: "Hey, Cookie!," Volunteer Youth Basketball Coach at Denver Parks & Rec, Volunteer at Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children



DJDS experience: "What stood out to me most during my time at DJDS was the care and dedication of the teachers and administrators. Their support, flexibility, and commitment to Jewish values enabled me to remain a part of the DJDS community through a challenging journey."

Quote: "If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it." - Michael Jordan

Plans: University of Denver

Emanuel Sezanayev



Activities: Varsity Basketball captain, Russian Club

DJDS experience: "DJDS has prepared me for my next chapter by helping me cultivate life and leadership skills for my future."

Quote: "He shall be as a tree planted beside rivulets of water, which brings forth its fruit in its season, and its leaves do not wilt; and whatever he does prospers." - Psalm 1:3

Plans: Ohr Somayach Yeshiva gap year program, followed by the University of Colorado, Denver







Welcome to our alumni family!

You've gone to extraordinary lengths to give your children the best education possible. You wanted them to be well-educated, to love their school, to have a strong Jewish identity, and to grow up to live a Jewish life. Together, we have raised them well!

Even after your children move on, you (and they) will always have a connection with Denver JDS. As part of our alumni community, we encourage you to stay engaged. For more information on all the opportunities, contact Sam Raizen Walsh, swalsh@denverjds.org, (720) 449-9503, and visit denverjds.org

Go Tigers!



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