



Newsletter

Extended Pesach Edition



TAKE A PEAK AT OUR WEEK

ח' ניסן / פרשת צו תשפ"ו / March 26th, 2026

Out in the Community

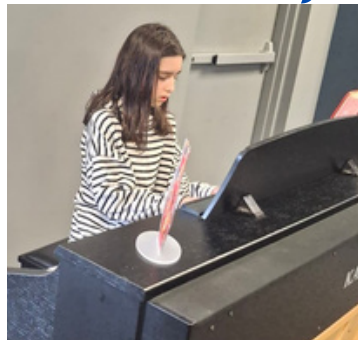
Last week, students were quite busy with chesed opportunities in the community. The girls started off their week by playing beautiful instruments at Webster Towers, with a highlight being Vita playing a niggun on the piano. Continuing this theme, students brought instruments to the Veteran's Center and put on a small concert. The 4th grade girls really wowed the crowd with their piano, violin, and clarinet performances. Students also visited Elan Skilled Nursing for a milkshake party, where they met a lovely resident who shared that the current Yeshiva building used to be a hospital, and that she had worked there in her youth on the switchboards and in the emergency room.

Students enjoyed returning to the JCC for several meaningful intergenerational experiences, including joining the Memory Café for individuals with dementia or similar illnesses and their caretakers, where they provided entertainment. They also had a special visit with Mrs. Itzkowitz at the Friday Café for older adults, where they taught about Pesach, showcased their Makerspace creations, and led a game with thought-provoking questions about Pesach and the meaning of freedom.

Lastly, our high school students created beautifully artistic cards for the clientele at Jewish Family Services, filled with warm wishes for a happy Pesach.



Out in the Community...



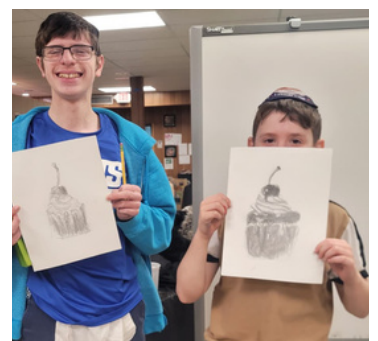
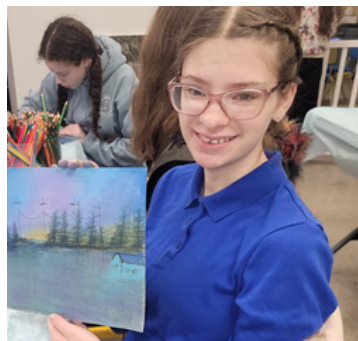
A Special Bar Mitzvah

We had the incredible privilege of celebrating a very special Bar Mitzvah with a boy who doesn't have too much of a connection to his Jewish roots yet. It was truly beautiful and meaningful to come together and celebrate with the Bar Mitzvah boy, helping him feel proud, supported, and connected as he reached this important milestone. The energy, warmth, and ruach that our students and teachers brought made the simcha even more special.



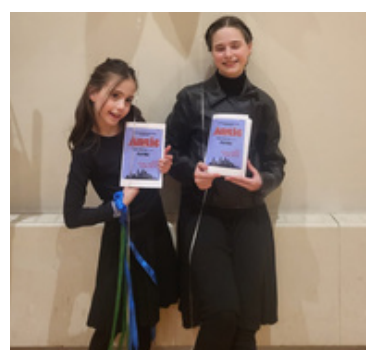
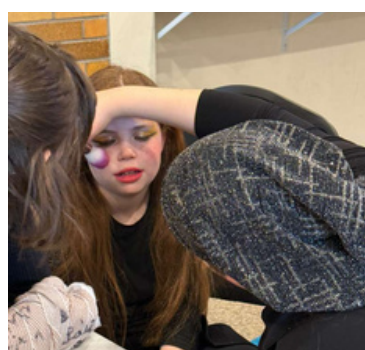
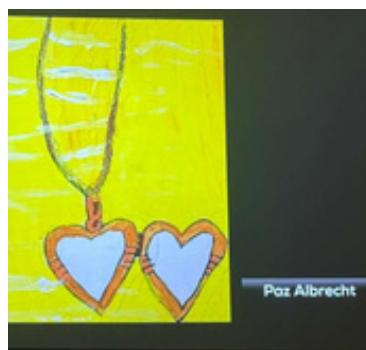
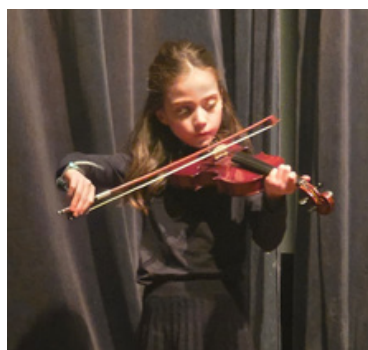
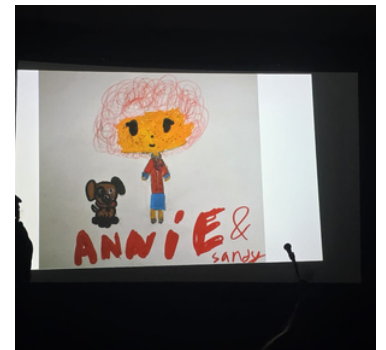
Creativity in the Art Room

Students have been creating such fun projects in the art room, from floral headbands to balloon painting, soft pastel artwork, clay dinosaurs, and more.



The Anachnu Project

Our Anachnu Project (“we” in Hebrew) taught students the power of communication, empathy, and Ahavas Yisroel. This year’s production of Annie brought it to life, with each scene expressed through different forms—language, dance, art, drama, digital media, and ASL—showing that one message can be shared in many ways.



Fidelity Bank's Donation

We were thrilled to welcome bankers from Fidelity bank who awarded us a donation through their Neighborhood Assistance Program. A huge thank you!



In Rabbi Weinberg's 5th grade class, the boys celebrated their completion of their model Beis Hamikdash



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Pesach Learning

In preparation for Pesach, the older boys learned about kashering utensils, and put their learning into practice in the shul kitchen. We discussed how to Kasher, as well as what items can and cannot be kashered.



In preparation for the real seder, students had a mock seder at school this week.



In-depth Haggadahs and incredibly creative Pesach projects were sent home this week for students to enjoy over Yom Tov, including resin Seder plates depicting the scene of Yetzias Mitzrayim and pillowcases with photo prints.



Maker's Space

The Makerspace has had many visitors lately. Students have created incredible Pesach-themed projects, including a Seder setting, as well as other fun creations like a truck, a flag, and weaving projects. The older boys also built and delivered penguin mailboxes to the kindergarten.



Color War

For our last two days before Pesach break, we held a well planned out and exciting color war lead by Mr. S. Students displayed such beautiful achdus and fun Spirits!



Color War

The students whispered, "Will the principal wear red?
Or maybe blue instead?" the curious voices said.
"Perhaps just black—her usual, safe and true?"
They wondered what, this year, she'd choose to do.

And there she stood—in purple, calm and bright,
A different choice, yet one that felt so right.
Not red, not blue—but something in between,
A thoughtful message woven in the scene.

For in this world, there are times to take a side,
To stand up firm, with purpose as your guide.
To choose with courage, clear in what you do—
And lead with strength in all you know is true.

But here, in moments filled with joy and play,
The goal is not who wins at end of day.
It's laughter shared, it's spirit in the air,
It's knowing every student has a share.

She cheered for passion, effort, heart, and pride,
For every student standing side by side.
Excited for each team to give their best,
While lifting one another through the test.

For even in the thrill of friendly game,
No heart should ever feel alone or small in flame.
To win is sweet, but sweeter still to see
A crowd that builds each other endlessly.

And so her purple stood both proud and wise—
A symbol shining through their joyful eyes.
A reminder strong, yet gentle in its view:
Be fully, bravely, unapologetically you.

For in the end, beyond the games they play,
No matter what side you are on today—
Your principal is with you, come what may,
Always on your side, in every way.



Early Learning at BSA



Kindergarten



Pre-K



Toddlers



Baby Room



Smiles for Miles



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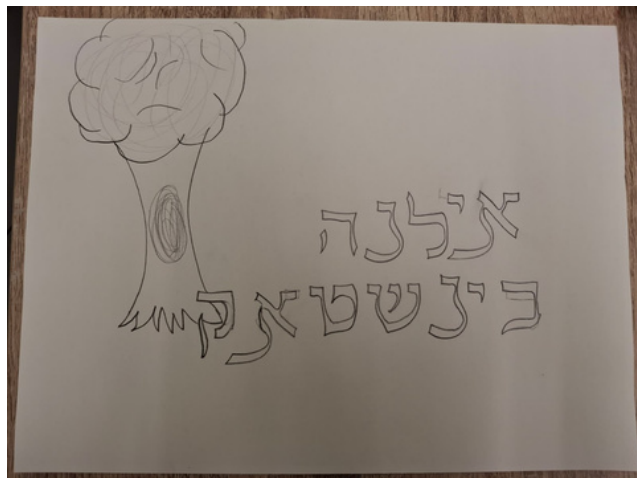
We do Catering!



Art Submissions



by Lani Itzkowitz



by Elana Binstok

Student Submissions

Pesach Poems

The Rasha by Ruchy Polatsek (Based on learning why the chacham is next to the Rasha in the Hagaddah)

The Rasha by Ruchy Polatsek

*R*asha repeats over and over, why are we doing this?

*A*cting tough and bad,

*S*ecretly feeling unloved because he is told he would be left behind

*H*ating people for that, yet

*A*ctually wanting help from the wise one, but feeling embarrassed to ask for help.

A spark of the divine by Nina Vogel (Based on learning that yes, Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim but its not ours to leave alone, we still need to work on our path from the spark that Hashem gave us.)

It's not yours it's not yours

It comes from God.

It's a spark.

It's made to follow rules.

It's made for me and you.

It's not to keep, but rather to borrow.

Its purpose is to change the world.

It's like when we were slaves.

It's doing its job one brick at a time.

It's beautiful, so treat it nicely.

It's not that sturdy.

It's one wrong move and it all falls.

It's like a firework waiting to spark.

It comes in all sizes, big and small.

It's all good, so be careful.

It needs healthy nourishment.

It needs love.

It needs you to care.

It's not yours, so keep that in mind.

Pesach by Lani Itzkowitz

Before Pesach we cook and cook until there is not a page left in our cookbooks.

On Pesach we eat many different foods

I feel so excited, I can not move

I remember making a cup in school

All the wine and grape juice could probably fill a pool

Pesach is a Great Holiday by Lani Itzkowitz

On Pesach we eat interesting foods

But all the interesting foods we eat is something we remember

Pesach is a long holiday, but definitely a meaningful one

Pesach is a holiday to remember

Student Submissions

Pesach Dvar Torah by Dovid Harkavy

During the Seder, we eat matzah, a symbol of redemption. Then we eat maror, a representation of how bitter and terrible slavery was. The question is, these seem out of order! We experienced slavery, represented by maror, and only then were redeemed, represented by matzah. Chronologically, it wouldn't seem to make sense to eat matzah first, as we weren't freed and then brought back into slavery. So why do we eat them in that order—matzah and then maror, freedom followed by bitterness? We learn the answer from when Hashem told Avraham that the Jewish people would be enslaved. He said they would be slaves for 400 years, yet in reality, it lasted only 210 years. Why? Because Hashem saw and understood how terrible and painful the slavery was, to the point that 210 years was considered equivalent to 400. In a sense, the bitterness of slavery caused us to leave Egypt sooner. Therefore, we are not reversing our experience of freedom when we eat maror after matzah. Rather, we are "tasting" the idea that what we perceive as bitter can actually be a key ingredient in bringing about sweetness.

So why do we eat the matzah first and then the maror? Because the bitterness of slavery was part of the process of redemption. Despite how terrible it was, it hastened our freedom. It's not out of order to eat maror second, because it was specifically the bitterness of slavery that ultimately led to our redemption and shortened the time from 400 years to 210. (This idea is based on the Noda BiYehudah.)

Fun Pesach Minhagim collected from students around the world and shared by our 7th and 8th grade girls

- "My family saves a piece of the Afikoman matzah until the next Pesach. Its supposed to bring good mazel. "
- " The head of the house wears a kittel"
- "The seder begins with boiled eggs"
- " Before the kiddush, the leader opens with some words of halacha"

Fun Pesach Minhagim Shared by our very own students

- "After breaking the matzah, we run around the table to resemble the freedom when we left Mitzrayim."
- "During the part about plagues at the Seder, our family asks questions about them and if we get it correct we win prizes connected to the plagues."
- "During the Seder everyone has a secret word they can't say"
- "Going to my Bubby's"
- "My father usually tells the story of leaving Mitzrayim 3 times"

Who's Most Likely Teachers Edition

Choices: Mrs. Itzkowitz, Mrs. Halberstadt, Mrs. Harkavy, Miss Raizel, Miss Shaelyn, and Morah Miriam with the answer key on the next page

- Who's most likely to lead the Seder?
- Who's most likely to start cleaning for Pesach the earliest?
- Who's most likely to finish the maror without making a face?
- Who's most likely to spill grape juice on the tablecloth?
- Who's most likely to eat the most matzah in one night?
- Who's most likely to fall asleep before Maggid ends?
- Who's most likely to come up with a creative Seder idea?
- Who's most likely to hide the afikoman too well?
- Who's most likely to forget where they hid the afikomen?
- Who's most likely to start a competition over who can find the afikoman first?
- Who's most likely to explain things in a way everyone understands?
- Who's most likely to sing Pesach songs for days after pesach?
- Who's most likely to still be cleaning 5 minutes before Yom Tov?
- Who's most likely to start a debate at the Seder?
- Who's most likely to go overboard buying snacks?
- Who's most likely to build a matzah sandwich tower?
- Who's most likely to make Pesach fun for everyone?

Who's Most Likely Student Edition

Choices: Ella, Leah, Henny, Rivka, Elana, Tehila

- Who's most likely to ask the most questions?
- Who's most likely to rush everyone to eat already?
- Who's most likely to sing the loudest during Dayenu?
- Who's most likely to read the Haggadah with the most expression?
- Who's most likely to check the time every 5 minutes?
- Who's most likely to be in charge of refilling everyone's cups?
- Who's most likely to ask for a 5th cup of wine/grape juice?
- Who's most likely to want to spend Pesach on a farm?
- Who's most likely to come up with a creative dvar Torah?
- Who's most likely to make the Seder the most meaningful?
- Who's most likely to include everyone at the table?
- Who's most likely to sneak extra charoset?

Who's Most Likely Teachers Edition Answer Key

- Who's most likely to lead the Seder? **Mrs. Halberstadt**
- Who's most likely to start cleaning for Pesach the earliest? **Mrs. Halberstadt**
- Who's most likely to finish the maror without making a face? **Morah Miriam**
- Who's most likely to spill grape juice on the tablecloth? **Morah Miriam**
- Who's most likely to eat the most matzah in one night? **Morah Bracha**
- Who's most likely to fall asleep before Maggid ends? **Mrs. Itzkowitz**
- Who's most likely to come up with a creative Seder idea? **Mrs. Harkavy**
- Who's most likely to hide the afikoman too well? **Mrs. Itzkowitz**
- Who's most likely to forget where they hid the afikomen? **Mrs. Itzkowitz**
- Who's most likely to start a competition over who can find the afikoman first? **Morah Miriam**
- Who's most likely to explain things in a way everyone understands? **Mrs. Harkavy**
- Who's most likely to sing Pesach songs for days after Pesach? **Miss Shaelyn/ Miss Raizel**
- Who's most likely to still be cleaning 5 minutes before Yom Tov? **Miss Raizel**
- Who's most likely to start a debate at the Seder? **Morah Bracha**
- Who's most likely to go overboard buying snacks? **Morah Bracha**
- Who's most likely to build a matzah sandwich tower? **Miss Raizel**
- Who's most likely to make Pesach fun for everyone? **Mrs. Harkavy**

Who's Most Likely Student Edition Answer Key

- Who's most likely to ask the most questions? **Elana**
- Who's most likely to rush everyone to eat already? **Leah**
- Who's most likely to sing the loudest during Dayenu? **Henny**
- Who's most likely to read the Haggadah with the most expression? **Ella**
- Who's most likely to check the time every 5 minutes? **Tehila**
- Who's most likely to be in charge of refilling everyone's cups? **Leah**
- Who's most likely to ask for a 5th cup of wine/grape juice? **Henny/ Elana**
- Who's most likely to want to spend Pesach on a farm? **Ella**
- Who's most likely to come up with a creative dvar Torah? **Rivka**
- Who's most likely to make the Seder the most meaningful? **Leah**
- Who's most likely to include everyone at the table? **Rivka**
- Who's most likely to sneak extra charoset? **Everyone but Rivka**
- Who's most likely to keep making jokes throughout the Seder? **Henny**

Featured Student of the Week

Hi, my name is Rochel Polatsek, but most of you might know me as Ruchy. I'm 14 years old, and I used to live in Monsey, NY, where I was born. My family moved to Scranton because everything closes before 9, and it's a really great place to grow up.

Some of my favorite classes are Mrs. Gaerman's Life Skills, Mrs. Harkavy's Math, Makers Space, and Gym—just to name a few (in no particular order). Something people might not know about me is that I'm really good at making miniatures of places or scenes, and I'm also pretty good at impressions.

I love to read, play instruments, sing, eat, and nap.



Featured Teacher



Morah Faigy was nominated several times over the past few weeks, and we're so happy to finally give her the shoutout she deserves for feeding our entire school. Her lunches are always fabulous, and we truly appreciate her consistently positive attitude. We are also so grateful to her for covering for various teachers this week.

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From the Desk of our Principal: Dr. Leiter-Itzkowitz

Preparing for Pesach

As Pesach approaches, there is a shift in the air—a sense of anticipation, renewal, and reflection. Homes begin to transform, routines adjust, and families prepare not only physically, but emotionally and spiritually, for one of the most meaningful times of the year.

Pesach is more than a commemoration of Yetzias Mitzrayim; it is an invitation to pause and consider what true freedom means. It asks each of us—children and adults alike—to reflect on growth, responsibility, and our connection to something greater than ourselves. It is a time when learning becomes alive, when stories become identity, and when values are meant to be felt, not just understood.

For our students, this time of year brings these ideas into focus in a powerful way. The concepts of freedom, responsibility, and belonging are explored not only through text, but through experience, discussion, and personal connection.

This balance between learning and lived experience is something we strive to model in every aspect of school life. Our Rebbeim and teachers instill in the boys a warmth and excitement for Torah learning, particularly through Gemara and Mishnah, while our Morahs cultivate within the girls a deep and thoughtful connection to Torah through Chumash and Navi. Across both divisions, Tanach remains a central and unifying foundation of learning.

At the same time, education extends far beyond the classroom. Through art, photography, music, dance, and hands-on projects, students are given opportunities to express themselves and connect more deeply to what they are learning. This approach reflects a belief that education is most meaningful when it is active, engaging, and rooted in real experience.

And it is precisely this idea—that learning must be experienced—that lies at the heart of Pesach itself.

A central message of Pesach is that freedom is not only about leaving something behind, but about what we choose to do moving forward. Through ongoing chesed initiatives and opportunities to give back to the community, students begin to understand that being part of Klal Yisrael means showing up for others with care, responsibility, and heart.

This understanding of responsibility and connection is something that, for many of us, was first formed around the Seder table.

On a personal note, Pesach is also a time filled with deep memory, reflection, and emunah. My father, Rabbi Dr. Noson Zvi Leiter נ"ע, passed away on Pesach, and this year marks his fifth yahrzeit. The Seder, in many ways, will never feel quite the same without him. My siblings and I were raised with a profound sense of reverence for our father, and it is difficult to imagine experiencing the Seder in any other way.

No matter what was happening in the world during any given year, my father had a remarkable ability to connect the events of our history to the present moment. The Seder was never just a retelling—it was alive, relevant, and deeply meaningful. It was rooted in a deep and unwavering emunah—that the same Hashem Who redeemed us from Mitzrayim continues to guide and protect us today.

He would often explain that the miracles of the Exodus were not only for Pharaoh, but for all generations. In Egypt, even Pharaoh was forced to recognize Hashem's presence. Today, that presence may not always be as obvious—but it is no less real. What we call "nature" is itself a continuous series of miracles. The rising of the sun, the growth of grass—these are not ordinary occurrences, but expressions of constant Divine involvement.

From the Desk of our Principal: Dr. Leiter-Itzkowitz

And beyond what we see, there is an even deeper truth: nothing happens by chance. In ways beyond our understanding, Hashem is guiding our lives at every moment. The message of the plagues, my father would say, is to look beneath the surface and recognize that Hashem's hand is always present—the only difference is how openly it is revealed.

That perspective didn't remain abstract—it shaped the way he lived the Seder itself.

There was a beautiful precision to the way he approached every detail. He carefully measured the shiurim of matzah and ensured the proper amounts of grape juice or wine—but always with warmth, patience, and love. It was never rigid or overwhelming. Instead, it created an environment where halacha was lived with joy and dignity. Through that balance, he taught us that emunah is not only found in ideas, but in the way we live—carefully, consistently, and with heart.

Today, there is a sense of continuity and strength. My brother, Rabbi Dr. Yechiel Leiter, now joins us and leads the Seder in a way that reflects so much of what our father embodied. At times, I find myself wondering what it would be like if he were not able to be there to lead us—but I am deeply comforted by the strength of the memories we were given. Those meaningful childhood experiences are something I will always carry with me.

And that is, ultimately, what we hope to give our students.

That same sense of connection. That same warmth. That same feeling of Yiddishkeit that is built together with their parents, through the excitement and preparation of Pesach.

The same way the Rebbe would have a young child taste honey on the letters of the Aleph-Beis—creating a sweetness and love for learning from the very beginning—we strive to create positive and meaningful associations with Yom Tov.

This week, our students experienced that firsthand through a Pesach-themed Color War. They learned, prepared, and celebrated—all at once.

Students cleaned their classrooms and earned points, connecting the responsibility of Pesach preparation with a sense of excitement, ownership, and pride. They began to understand that preparation is not a burden, but part of something meaningful. I often joke with the students that in Japan there are no janitors—we are not Japan, but we do take pride in our surroundings, and we work together to keep our school clean, orderly, and respectful.

I was given such a deep and fundamental feeling toward Pesach, one that has stayed with me throughout my life. It is that sense of connection, meaning, and emunah that I strive to pass on to our students each and every day.

A tremendous thank you goes to our incredible teachers, who give so much of themselves to their students. Their dedication, creativity, and commitment to hands-on, meaningful learning are what bring all of this to life. They are not only teaching—they are creating the memories and experiences that our students will carry with them for years to come.

I give a bracha to our students that they should experience that same warmth at their Sedarim and throughout Pesach—that deep sense of connection, meaning, and joy. And knowing our parent body, I feel both warmed and confident that our students will indeed be surrounded by that warmth during this most meaningful Yom Tov.

As we prepare for Pesach, the hope is that our students do more than retell the story—that they begin to see themselves within it. That they recognize their role as the next generation of Bnei and Bnos Yisrael, carrying forward a legacy rooted in Torah, growth, and purpose.

Wishing all of our families a meaningful, uplifting, and joyous Pesach.
Chag Kasher V'Sameach

Students of the Week



Noam was so well behaved this week. He was kind and friendly with his friends, behaved nicely, and showed great sharing skills.



Gita has been very helpful and has been doing a great job with her listening skills!



Ester Miriam waited so patiently for her turn while working on her Pesach projects and worked nicely with her classmates.



Yaacov has had strong participation and eagerness in class. He is excelling in his learning and in respect and dignity towards his fellow students.



Daveners of the Week



Mazal Tov Elana!



Mazal Tov Yara!

Wishing Everyone a Relaxing and Enjoyable Pesach!

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