

# Solomon Schechter Day School



## Elissa Hoffman

**Hometown:** Lincolnwood, IL

**Current City:** Netanya, Israel

**University:** University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (starting graduate school at UW Madison this fall)

**Currently:** English Teacher on the Masa Israel Teaching Fellows (MITF) program

**Camp:** Camp Ramah Wisconsin

Elissa Hoffman (SSDS '12 ) is putting the Jewish practices, traditions, and skills she learned at Schechter to use while working in Israel this past year. She has always had a passion for working with children and has long been interested in the varying methods people use to communicate. Luckily, her current position -- teaching English in Netanya as part of the Masa Israel Teaching Fellowship program -- combines these interests, and Masa recently selected Elissa to appear in a national ad campaign for the organization.

"The campaign is entirely in Hebrew, and I really had to make use of the Hebrew skills I learned at Schechter and at Niles West High School," she said. "I'd like to give a shoutout to all of my Hebrew and Judaic Studies teachers for making sure that I left Schechter with the ability to not only read and write, but also to confidently speak the language."

"There were moments, while I was filming the TV commercial, taping the radio spot, and doing a live TV interview that I wished I had paid closer attention in some classes," she added, "but I could hear many of my teachers in my head encouraging me to be brave and not worry that this was going to be broadcast to the entire country!"

Elissa still keeps in close contact with her friends from Schechter, despite the fact that college and work opportunities have taken them to cities across the globe. They find ways to catch up regularly over the phone and in person, and when they do, Elissa said, "it's as if no time has passed and the sense of community we feel is just as strong as when we were Schechter students. And when I connect with other Schechter alumni, there is a shared understanding and appreciation of the unique Jewish education and values we learned at Schechter."

Elissa said that her Schechter experience remains a major part of her life. "Whether it's hearing a song that I learned from my time in the Schechter choir or musicals, feeling compelled to give tzedakah to causes I feel passionate about, or feeling driven to seek out the local Jewish community in every new place I go, I am constantly reminded of my connection to the Schechter community."

After her Masa program ends this summer, Elissa will be returning to the US to start graduate school at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where she will be working to obtain a master's degree in speech-language pathology.



SOLOMON SCHECHTER  
DAY SCHOOL  
OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO  
בית הספר ש. זלמן שכטר



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