



Micah Swislow (SSDS '03)

Micah's desire to make a difference and serve our community can be traced back to his years at Schechter. Shortly after the Columbine High School massacre, Micah and his best friend, Jimmy Bublick, both 10 and in 4th grade, were upset by the shootings and tried to think of a way to help. They decided to turn in their video games and other toys that could be violent in nature.

They created a campaign called "Kids Making a Difference" and invited their Schechter classmates to join their effort. A local company sponsored the Campaign and donated funds for every violent toy or game collected. Their Campaign was highlighted in the local and national media, and the boys received a peace award presented to them by Mahatma Gandhi's grandson (pictured). Micah and Jimmy donated the funds they raised — about \$500 — to a violence prevention program in Chicago and to the Columbine Healing Fund.



Q and A with Micah

As you look back on your Schechter experience, how did Schechter help to shape your life and/or impact your choices?

In addition to giving me a great academic foundation, Schechter taught me the fundamental importance of community. I am confident that my passion for helping other people stems at least in part from the strong roots from my Schechter family.

What would you want others to know about Schechter that they may not know?

Schechter kids just get it. My own children (K and 1st grade) come home each day and cannot wait to speak in Hebrew and tell everyone they know about their wonderful time at school.

What is it like connecting with Schechter alumni later in life? Describe what this community means to you?

I almost always know when I am speaking to a Schechter alum. There is something about the way they carry themselves that is readily identifiable. This community means everything to me — It is built into the very fabric of who I am, who we are as a family, and the families that we surround ourselves with.



What skills do you use today that were fostered at Schechter?

While the academic side goes without saying, for me it is about how to treat and connect with other people. Being a firefighter and paramedic, you see people at their very worst. They need to know that they can trust you implicitly within seconds of meeting you. Schechter helped me develop the confidence that I have in myself—the clear understanding of who I am and my identity—in addition to the compassionate communication skills necessary to put my patients at ease.

How did Schechter impact who you are today and the choices you have made?

I remember my time at Schechter so fondly. I wanted my own children and our family to have that same experience, which is one of the reasons we moved back to the Chicago area. We wanted our children to further develop a strong academic foundation and passion for Judaism and Israel, while immersed in the warm Jewish values that we see as central to our family. They are getting all that and more at Schechter.



Micah's sister, Eliana Wool (SSDS '05), works as a psychologist in the greater Chicagoland area. His brother, Ben Swislow graduated from Bradley University and owns Diamond Event Group, a leading event production company in the Chicagoland Area.