



Inside SCHECHTER

October 13, 2023 / 28 Tishrei 5784
Weekly Parashat : [Bereishit](#)

Candle lighting: 5:53 PM
Shabbat ends: 6:52 PM

A message from Dr. Lena Kushnir, Head of School



Our hearts break and there are truly no words to express the overwhelming pain and sorrow that we feel as we continue to watch the news from Israel. We are devastated by the terrorist acts of Hamas, and we are praying for everyone in Israel, including our alumni, parents of alumni, and extended community members who are currently in Israel or have family and friends who have been injured, killed, or captured.

At Schechter, Israel is a place that many of us call home. It is one of our core values. Each morning, as we welcome our students to school, we say the prayer for the State of Israel, because Israel is part of who we are as a people and as a community.

Our primary focus now, and always, is to ensure that our students can come to school each day knowing that Schechter is a safe place for them to learn, to play, and to engage with their community. We believe in taking care of the whole child and we prioritize their academic, spiritual, and emotional well-being.

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Message](#)

Schechter stands with Israel at JUF Solidarity Gathering

On Tuesday morning, our 7th and 8th graders, accompanied by faculty and staff, stood alongside members and leaders of Chicago's Jewish community at the JUF Israel Solidarity Gathering. Joined by government officials, including Governor Pritzker and Congressman Brad Schneider (IL-10), we mourned the lives lost, prayed for healing, and expressed our steadfast support for Israel.



Schechter students, faculty, and staff are pictured with Congressman Brad Schneider, Rabbi Michael Schwab, and Consul General of Israel to the Midwest, Yinam Cohen, and his wife, Ayelet. Congressman Schneider is the parent of Schechter alumni, Yinam and Ayelet Cohen are parents of a Schechter alumna and current parents, and Rabbi Michael Schwab is a current parent and parent of two alumni.



"I am so proud of our students who represented Schechter beautifully and respectfully. Bringing them to the event is one way to show them what it means to stand up for something important to you, and gave us the opportunity to see our students put their learning into action."

—Nanci Caplan, 7th-8th Grade Sager School Principal

A message from Rabbi Jonathan Bubis, Rav Beit Hasefer

When we are in the midst of challenging times, *t'fillah* binds us together as a community and gives us the opportunity to speak with God about our pain and our hopes.

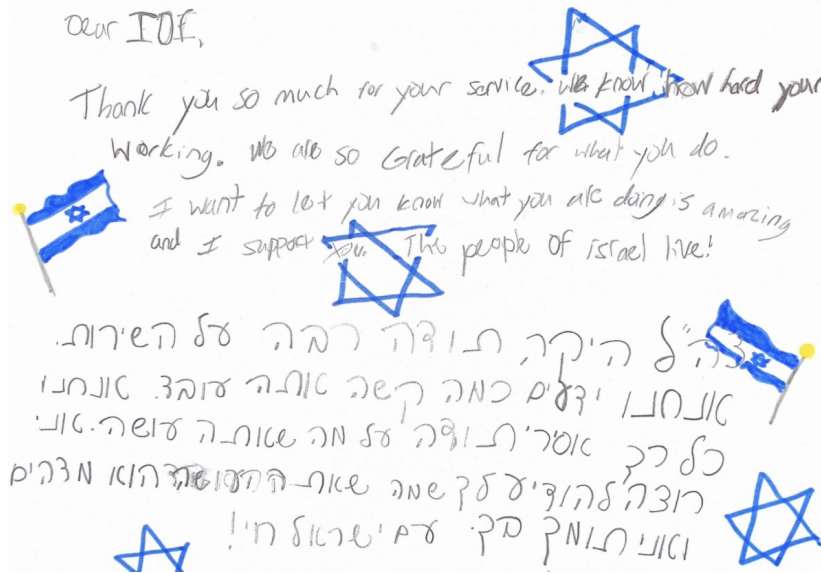
Throughout the week, each grade at Schechter has offered special prayers for Israel, appropriate for their particular age group. Younger grades have sung songs of peace and hope like *Od Yavo Shalom Aleinu* ("May Peace Be Upon Us"), *Lo Yisa Goy* ("Nation Shall Not Lift Up Sword Against Nation"), and Israel's national anthem, *Hatikvah*. Older students have added longer *t'fillot* such as a Prayer for Israeli Defense Forces and a Prayer for the State of Israel. Students have also been given the opportunity to offer personal prayers that come from their heart.

Through this extra emphasis on Israel, we are providing a space for students and teachers to come together in solidarity, express their feelings, and gain some solace with prayers for peace. May we all have the opportunity to feel connected to our community during this

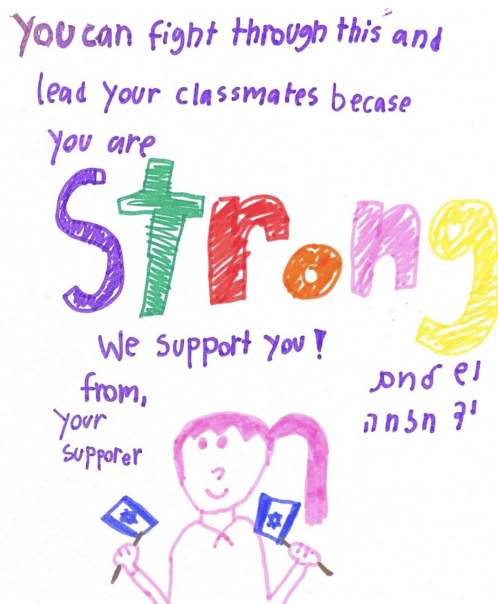
difficult time, and in the face of darkness, make the effort to send messages of love and support to Israel and to each other.

Classroom connections to Israel

Schechter faculty members have been hard at work providing healthy ways to support their students as they process the difficult news from Israel. Many classes have turned to the healing powers of artistic expression.



Sager School students wrote messages in both English and Hebrew and created drawings to communicate solidarity with Israel. This meaningful artwork has been scanned and sent to contacts in Israel for distribution to soldiers and students.



Classes have also engaged in discussions on these challenging themes. One teacher describes how these conversations—particularly for students in lower grades—can be viewed as a partnership between teachers and families:

"Our hearts are broken for Israel as we watch the horrific events taking place," said Lauren Patinkin, 2nd grade general studies teacher. "We know that every family's conversations

look different and the information shared can vary."

"In *kehillah* and *t'fillah*, we addressed the war in Israel in an age-appropriate manner, giving students the opportunity to share questions and comments. Students asked many questions that may be better suited to be answered at home. Below are some examples of questions that arose this week that families may find value in exploring at home."

- How did the war start? Do we know how long the war will take?
- Is Israel winning or losing?
- Why is there a war right now?
- Why are America and Israel allies? How many allies does Israel have?
- Why isn't everyone going into shelters to be safe?"

Schechter students take initiative amidst tragedy

While we are flooded with devastating news, we are also catching brilliant glimmers of light—so many members of our Schechter community are taking initiative in the most inspiring ways. Even our youngest students understand they have a responsibility to step up in their own way and practice *tikkun olam*.

In one example, a group of students embarked on a mission to raise \$36 for Israel during their day off on Monday by selling treats and hot chocolate. With help from social media and the galvanized support of the community, their initiative took off beyond their wildest dreams, raising nearly \$5,000! The students chose to donate all of the proceeds to the IDF and Magen David Adom (Israel's EMT/paramedic service).

"Aaron and I are so proud to be raising children who have a deep connection to Israel and want to do their part, along with their Schechter classmates, to make a difference. We're grateful to Schechter for helping us instill a love of Israel and *tikkun olam* in our children "

—Jodi Epstein, Schechter parent



Schechter students (l to r): Adam Greenberg (SSDS '25), Asher Epstein (SSDS '28), Benny Epstein (SSDS '25), Jared Nathan (SSDS '25), and Avi Kirshenbaum (SSDS '28). Eli Nathan (SSDS '27) also participated.

Have you been inspired by news of other Schechter students' initiatives? Please share these uplifting stories with [Rebecca](#).

Emotional support resources for families

Our Educational Leadership Team has compiled the following list of resources for families, to provide guidance on broaching the heavy subject of war with children of all ages. Click on each link to read the valuable articles.

[Israel at War: Managing the Trauma for Individuals and Families](#)

Ohel Children's Home and Family Services

[How to Talk to Kids About Violence, Crime, and War](#)

Common Sense Media

[Talking to Your Kids About War](#)

VeryWell Family

[How to Talk to Your Children About Conflict and War](#)

UNICEF

[Handle with Care: Supporting Young People During Crises](#)

Learning for Justice

[Resilience in a time of war: Tips for parents and teachers of elementary school children](#)

American Psychological Association

[Resilience in a time of war: Tips for parents and teachers of middle school children](#)

American Psychological Association



Jewish Child & Family Services:

JCFS Chicago is offering a warm line for anyone, anywhere looking for support. Call 855.275.5237 to talk with someone, including Hebrew-speaking emotional support professionals, between 9am and 5pm Monday through Thursday, 9am-4pm Fridays.

Schechter Cares

As we work to understand the magnitude of how the war in Israel impacts our community, we are asking for your help to identify families (including your own) that may need support.

We invite you to fill out the following survey:

[**Schechter Cares
Survey**](#)

Israel solidarity gathering this Sunday for current families

We look forward to welcoming current Schechter students, faculty and staff, and their families for our community gathering on Sunday.

Register by Friday at 9:00 AM.

[Register Here](#)

We invite our extended community to join us by utilizing this livestream link:

[Livestream](#)

SCHECHTER STANDS WITH ISRAEL



Sunday, October 15 | 4:30-5:30 PM
Northbrook Campus

This event is for current Schechter students, faculty and staff, and their families to unite in prayer and song to show support for Israel.



Please register by
Friday at 9:00 AM

Free webinar this Monday with the Wellness Institute

Supportive Parenting Amid Crisis in Israel

Learn how to talk to and support your children (and yourself) during challenging circumstances.

Join the The Wellness Institute virtually | Monday, Oct. 16 at 12 PM CT for the free webinar: "Supportive Parenting Amid Crisis in Israel."

This event will offer insights to help parents in our Jewish community support their children and themselves through these challenging times. Psychiatrist Dr. Bella Schanzer from Raanana, Israel and Rabbi Shais Taub will share practical guidance to help parents boost their children's resilience and navigate the hard conversations we now face.

[Register Here](#)

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A partner with the Jewish United Fund in serving our community.

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