



# Inside SCHECHTER

December 15, 2023 / 3 Tevet 5784  
Weekly Parashat : Miketz

Candle lighting: 4:00 PM  
Shabbat ends: 5:07 PM

## Tribes, technology, and *tzedakah* unite for Hanukkah!

We channeled our festive Hanukkah energy and kicked off the week by gathering with our Tribes — a Sager School program connecting students across grade levels within micro-communities. Students learned about the history of the dreidel game, assembled and decorated dreidels, and then joined another Tribe for some good old-fashioned Hannukkah fun!



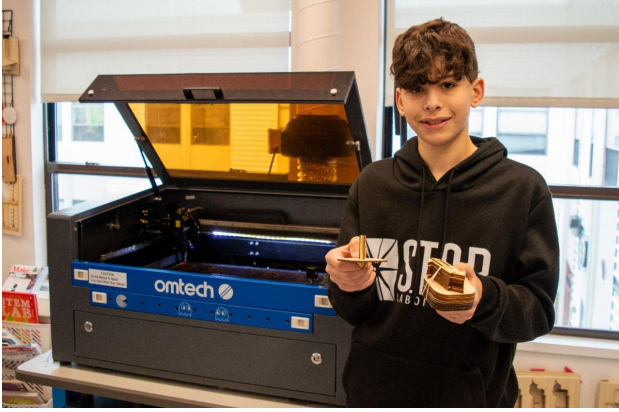
Spreading the light wherever possible, students brought in coins from home to use for their dreidel games, and all of the funds were collected and donated to **Pizza4Moms**— an initiative created by **Schechter moms and alumni Sarah Weil (SSDS '98) and Deanna Abrams (SSDS '01)**.

Click [here](#) to see our recent post about their project.

## Eighth grader Yotam Marom designs prototype for dreidels

During their time in Tribes, students assembled dreidels out of custom parts designed by 8th grader **Yotam Marom (SSDS '24)**, who utilized industry-level software (Lightburn) and created the parts with the Makerspace laser cutter.

**"I designed and cut about 30 different beta versions before settling on the final design. The anticipation of seeing if it would work through trial and error was fun! I'm the son of two engineers, so it's in my blood. Schechter has so many opportunities like this—they prepare me to be creative and**



think outside of the box!"  
—Yotam Marom, 8th grader

## Strength of community in full display at Hanukkah event

There's nothing like our Schechter community! Last Saturday night, over 200 students, parents, faculty, and staff gathered at the Bernard Weinger JCC for a festive Hanukkah and Havdalah celebration.



Everyone enjoyed a snack and dessert bar, a donut-decorating station, and more delicious treats!

While parents enjoyed spending time together, students bonded with friends over arts and crafts, arcade games, basketball, and DJ dance music.

Families marked the holiday with Havdalah, candle-lighting and singing.



*Thanks to our Parent Organization and volunteers for providing this incredible opportunity to bring us together! Schechter parents: look for more events in January and February, including parent and family social action projects and a Parents Night Out!*

[View More Photos](#)

## Curious 1st graders learn about different professions

In 1st grade social studies, students have been learning about service providers in their communities. Parent volunteers



visited their children's classrooms to present about their jobs, discuss the tools and skills they use, and answer our curious students' questions.

From doctors and attorneys, to singers, pilots, and more, the students were exposed to a wide-range of intriguing professions represented within our diverse parent community.



*Elianna Platt, child therapist and Schechter parent, discusses emotions with 1st graders*

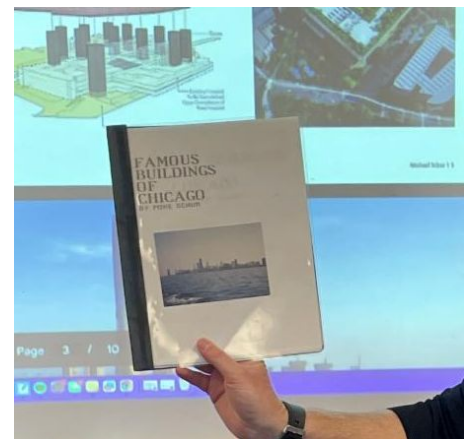
# SCHECHTER Shining Moments



## A multi-generational Schechter family's full-circle moment

**Mike Schur (SSDS '98)** came to visit his son Charlie's 1st grade classroom to teach Ms. Pogrund's students about his work as an architect. Mike brought along a special artifact that he's held onto from his days as a Schechter student.

**"I've always traced my early interest in architecture back to Mrs. Cantor's 3rd grade 'Famous Buildings of Chicago' report," he said. "This introduction to a field that brings history, people, place, creativity, and art together in impactful ways has since become a lifelong passion that I am lucky to practice daily."**



Mike is now an architect and strategist at [Gensler](#), the world's largest design firm. He leads the firm's wellness practice with projects extending far beyond Chicago and spanning a range of markets, but primarily centered in education and healthcare.

**"A key to my success has been the ability to think critically about complex challenges and articulate solutions through design and storytelling. My Schechter education helped me cultivate those skills."**

**—Mike Schur**

*The Schurs are a third generation Schechter family. Mike's grandmother is beloved former Head of School, Charlotte Glass.*



## The magic of performance art in early childhood

In Alonim Aleph, the power of dramatic play illuminated the hearts of our *yeladim*. Each child immersed themselves within the Hanukkah story as our *morot* guided the narrative as storytellers. Some students donned the heroic capes of Maccabees, while others stepped into the shoes of Antiochus and the valiant Judah Maccabee.

**"A gasp echoed through the room as the *yeladim* discovered that a tiny amount of oil miraculously illuminated the menorah for 8 glorious days! Cheers erupted, Israeli flags waved proudly, and in that shared moment of joy, the essence of Hanukkah came to life."**

—Zahava Berman, Director



## SCHECHTER ALUMNI *Spotlights*

“Schechter prepares students to be well-rounded adults with pride in their Jewish identities and a love for education and community.”



### Alumnus summits literal and figurative mountains

**Bryan Villano (SSDS '96)** has never been one to shy away from a challenge. Now living in Encinitas, CA, Bryan has fostered a passion for ski mountaineering—not in spite of, but driven by his personal battle with Multiple sclerosis (MS).

He explains, **“I think physical activity is key to mental health and well-being. My MS diagnosis fueled my desire to strengthen**





my body and mind, and preparing for a climb gets me in the best shape of my entire life so I can fight whatever battles I need to prepare for in the future.”

*Read more about Bryan’s recent fundraising expedition in the Andes, as well as his role as co-founder of ContractPower, a company using AI to summarize contracts and regulatory documents to share across organizations in order to democratize terms of agreements.*

[Read Full Spotlight](#)

## Parent of alumni walks the *Tikkun Olam* walk

### Kol Hakavod

to **Mike Rudolph**, parent of 4 alumni (SSDS '99-'07), who decided to run towards the fire to provide a helping hand on farms in Israel, utilizing his skillset developed 50 years ago while he worked on Ein Harod Kibbutz in 1973.

“Going to Israel gave me the opportunity to be a part of something greater than myself. I’ve been so uplifted by the support I’ve received from our community along the way.”  
—Mike Rudolph



**Thank you to this week's Day of Learning sponsors!**

**Every day at Schechter, students receive the gift of an outstanding education.**

**You can help support a day of learning with a \$250 sponsorship to celebrate a child, honor a friend, mark a special occasion, or remember a loved one.**



### DAY OF LEARNING SPONSOR

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

In honor of

**Ben Fisher's Birthday tomorrow**

Because now is the time to give the gift of Jewish Identity!

With much love and pride,  
Arna & Dad



### DAY OF LEARNING SPONSOR

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

In memory of  
**Shirley Levin**

Our loving mother and  
grandmother

Brad, Sherry, Alexa (SSDS '13)  
& David (SSDS '15) Levin



[Learn More](#)

## Mazal tov to Maya Chiswick

**Maya Chiswick (SSDS '25)** will become a Bat Mitzvah this coming Shabbat at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El. She will be reading parashat *Miketz* and is looking forward to celebrating with all who love her. Maya loves animals, sports, and spending her free time with family and friends. She recently joined the Schechter 7th grade basketball team and is proud to be a part of the Schechter school community.



### Mazal Tov

to Maya's proud parents, **Ben (SSDS '97)** and Wendy Chiswick, her loving grandmother, Fran Golberg, and her Saba and Savta, Barry and Carmel Chiswick.

## FREE Sunday programming continues for pre-schoolers!

Get ready for our next FREE Schechter SunDay FunDay! Invite your friends to come experience the joyful Judaism that defines Schechter. **Click the flyer to register.**

**SCHECHTER SUNDAY FUNDAYS**

Introducing a **free** monthly drop-in program designed with your playful 3-6 year old in mind!

**December 17, 2023**

9:30-10:30 AM  
Schechter Northbrook Campus  
3210 Dundee Road, Northbrook

**Tales & Trails through Israel**

Embark on an adventure across Israel with Schechter! Through engaging storytelling and hands-on activities, this captivating journey will immerse children in Israel's diverse landscapes, rich traditions, and vibrant narratives.

To register, visit:  
[schechter.org/so-many-ways-to-explore](https://schechter.org/so-many-ways-to-explore)

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