



# Inside SCHECHTER

December 8, 2023 / 25 Kislev 5784  
Weekly Parashat : Vayeshev

Candle lighting: 3:59 PM  
Shabbat ends: 5:06 PM



*Hanukkah Sameach!* Throughout the holiday, we are sharing ways that Schechter community members are spreading light to those around them. Yesterday, groups of students put us in a festive spirit by visiting each class to sing Hanukkah songs. *Be sure to follow us on social media.*

## Exploring responsibility and ritual for upcoming milestones

Last Friday, our 6th graders participated in a special day of programming to study and celebrate their upcoming milestone of becoming *B'nai Mitzvah*.



Students explored the *mishna* (oral Torah), which discusses the importance of a “crown of a good name” and what actions they need to take to create that “crown” for themselves. Implementing a PoP protocol (see the Q&A feature below!), the students examined a second *mishna* to learn what the rabbis teach us about the milestones of a Jewish life.



*Thanks to Rabbi David Chapman and Rabbi Nate Crane for describing the meaning and significance of t'fillin and provided a step by step guide to wrapping t'fillin.*



*Students practiced their skills in a delicious way using Fruit by the Foot!*

**Where tradition meets innovation:** students learned how to tie *tzitzit* for themselves by using “how to” guides printed on our Makerspace laser cutter.



**“We love how this program provides a holistic and engaging experience for students to deeply explore how this milestone fits within their larger Jewish journey. Students discover how the term *B’nai Mitzvah* is a state of being, rather than something they have or something that happens to them.”**

**—6th Grade Judaic Studies Teachers, Rachael Gray-Raff and Pnina Mazor**

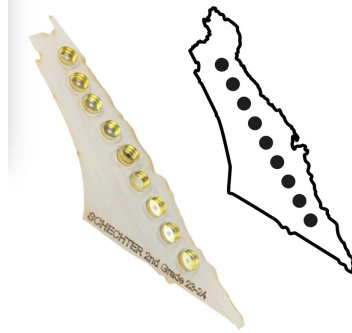
*Thank you to Rachael Gray-Raff and Pnina Mazor for planning this program, and to Rabbi Chapman and Rabbi Crane for volunteering their time and guidance.*

## STEM, Judaic Studies, and creativity unite

With a characteristic Schechter spin on a favorite holiday art project, 2nd graders decorated Hanukkiot in a familiar shape...the State of Israel!

These pieces were created with the laser cutter in our very own Makerspace. Our young artists then personalized them with designs of their choosing, resulting in custom pieces of Judaica for them to bring home and enhance their family Hanukkah celebrations.





**"We felt it would make our holiday extra special by having students create Israel-themed Hanukkiot. We're always looking for ways to reach across disciplines, celebrate our love for Israel, and explore Judaic Studies topics in engaging and creative ways." —Tali Lupovitch, 1st & 2nd Grade Judaic Studies Teacher**

## Reading Buddies program creates cross-grade connections

An expanded Reading Buddies program—promoting opportunities for Sager School students to build relationships across grade levels—is now underway!



Matched groups of 1st & 7th graders and 3rd/4th & 8th graders met during the first monthly program session. 1st graders enjoyed time to read books aloud with their buddies, followed by a shared recess to socialize and practice skills like mastering the monkey bars or tying shoes. 3rd and 4th graders benefited from academic guidance from their new mentors—selecting material to work on according to their interests, including working on chapter books, Torah *pesukim* (verses), and math problems.

**"As we explore the theme of *chesed* (acts of loving-kindness) with our 7th & 8th graders, it's valuable to show that we don't always need to go outside of the building to help others. The Reading Buddies program brings the school community closer together—our younger students can form a sibling-like bond with older students and receive academic help, and our older students step into leadership roles and give their time in a memorable way."**

**—Program Co-leaders Ron Schrag (7th & 8th Grade Judaic Studies Teacher) and Noreen Ohcana (5th-8th Grade Math Teacher)**



**Open-ended activities promote engagement at the ECC**

Last week, the ECC began their exploration of Hanukkah with the *morot* intentionally displaying Hanukkah materials and objects throughout the classrooms.

In Alonim Bet, the *yeladim* discovered a captivating center adorned with a cover, *Hanukkiot* and dreidels. Drawn in by the inviting set-up, their curiosity and initiative took hold—one child requested candles, another suggested lighting them, and a dialogue on light and darkness followed.

**"This type of Reggio-inspired activity stimulates children's imagination by providing self-directed, experiential learning opportunities where their questions and ideas guide the experience!"**  
—Zahava Berman, Director



**In the fall of 2024, the Ginsburg ECC will move to its new home on the Northbrook Campus.**

[Read More](#)

## Schechter makes its mark throughout JUF magazine



Schechter's presence is notable throughout the December 2023 issue of *Jewish Chicago: The JUF Magazine*. In addition to highlighting Schechter students and parents for their philanthropic initiatives supporting Israel (pages 22-25), an article titled "*Game Changer: New local initiative to help more families access day school education*" (page 38), covered the launch of the Tuition Accessibility Partnership (TAP) Fund.

**[Read more about TAP](#)**

*Bruchim Habai'm: Welcoming Israeli students in time of need* (page 27), shares the inspiring way Jewish day schools in Chicago, including Schechter, have stepped up to absorb Israeli families seeking refuge in our communities. (see excerpts below)

**"I witnessed the power of collaboration, collective goals, and support for one another, Lena Kushnir said. 'It's a mission in action.'"**

**"The impact is tremendous. Allison Packer, an Israeli parent, explained. 'You can't imagine what a gift it is for**





my son to be in a classroom with teachers and children like the ones at Schechter. It's everything to my husband and me. It anchors our family at a time we need to be grounded."

[JUF Magazine Article](#)

## Inquire & Inspire with Faye Bearman

# Q&A

### INQUIRE & INSPIRE

#### Faye Bearman

Judaic Studies  
Coordinator &  
Instructional Coach



*Faye Bearman has called Schechter her professional home for nearly 24 years—since she earned her MAEd in 2000. During this time, she has inspired hundreds of students with her passion and expertise in Judaic studies and t'fillah. She currently serves as Judaic Studies Curriculum Coordinator and Instructional Coach, and is a proud parent of two Schechter alumni and a current student.*

*This is Faye's third year as a school leader with **Hadar Institutes's Pedagogy of Partnership (PoP)**, which provides cutting-edge professional development and resources for educators, school leaders, and families to enable learners of all ages to develop the habits of wonder, empathy, and responsibility toward others and Torah.*

**Q:** You were recently featured in Hadar's **PoP School Leader Spotlight**. What is Schechter's approach to teaching and studying Torah?

**A:** PoP's philosophy is "How we learn is what we learn," and Schechter has adopted this approach. We focus on *havruta*-style learning (Aramaic for "friend") and help students build the skills to learn with another person in a way that deepens their learning and relationships. *Our goal is to help students gain the tools to engage with a text, with another person, and with the world.*

**The story continues! Click below to keep reading about this learning approach.**

[Full Q&A Feature](#)

## Alumna volunteers her trauma expertise in Israel

### Kol Hakavod

to **Dr. Chava Blivaiss (SSDS '03)**, one of our inspirational alumni who answered Israel's call during this period of overwhelming need.

A trauma critical care surgeon now living in Long Island, New York, Dr. Blivaiss is serving on a medical volunteer team with the [Emergency Volunteer Project \(EVP\)](#), and is currently stationed in Ashkelon's Barzilai Medical Center.



*Click below to hear her remarkable story about how she cared for a wounded soldier.*

**Facebook Video of  
Chava**

## Hanukkah resource for grandparents near and far

**Attention Schechter grandparents:**  
**Looking for ways to connect with your grandchildren through Jewish-themed activities?**

Presenting the **Hanukkah Discovery Kit**: a downloadable guide especially for grandparents and grandchildren (ages 3-8) to use together—either in person or at a distance.

This FREE resource has been provided to the Schechter community, courtesy of our partners at [The Jewish Grandparents Network](#).



**Click to learn more and access your free printable guide:**

**Hanukkah Discovery  
Kit**

## Mazal tov to this weekend's B'nai Mitzvah

**Boaz Eisenberg (SSDS '25)** will become a bar mitzvah this Shabbat at Beth Hillel Bnai Emunah. He will read parashat *Vayeshev*.

Boaz enjoys reading and playing sports,

especially soccer, and he plays on the Schechter soccer team. He also likes to sing and perform in the annual Schechter musical. At home, Boaz loves spending time with his cats, Penny and Puddles.

## Mazal Tov

to Boaz's proud parents, **Becky Barak and Yuval Eisenberg (both SSDS '96)**; to his loving brother, **Oren (SSDS '28)**; to his his grandparents, Karen and Hanoach Barak, and Rebecca and David Eisenberg; and to his great grandmother, Shirley Oppenheim. Mazal Tov to his aunts, uncles, and cousins, with many Schechter alumni among them.



**Mark and Abigail Geister (SSDS '25)** will become b'nai mitzvah this Shabbat at Congregation Darchei Noam Glenbrook. Mark will be reading parashat *Nasa* this Shabbat, and Abby will be reading an excerpt from *Shmuel I*.

Mark enjoys playing hockey and tennis, as well as skiing during the winter and riding his bike during the summer. In his spare time, Mark engineers games and builds gadgets from cardboard and wood. Abby is a dedicated soccer player and a figure skater. She loves spending time with her friends, playing outdoor sports, and going camping. Abby looks forward to spending this summer at camp CYJ.



## Mazal Tov

to their proud parents, Irina and Mikhail Geister; to their loving sisters **Annie (SSDS '18)** and **Ilana (SSDS '20)**; and to their beloved grandmother, **Sofia Frid (SSDS substitute teacher)**.

**Sadie Schaedler (SSDS '26)** will become a bat mitzvah on December 10, the 3rd day of Hanukkah. The Schaedler family are members at Skokie Valley Agudath Jacob; the bat mitzvah will take place at the Doubletree Hotel in Skokie. Sadie enjoys swimming on her swim team, drawing and painting, reading, and playing with her two cats. She loves spending summers at Camp Ramah in Wisconsin.

## Mazal Tov

to Sadie's parents, **Hannah Minkus (SSDS '94)** and Joe Schaedler; to her brothers, **Eli (SSDS '31)** and **Judah (SSDS '29)**; and to her grandparents Bob (z"l) and Carol Minkus, and Kathy Hays.



**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)

Thank you to our partners:

MORIAH ECC, PJ Library, Beth El, SOLOMON SCHECHTER DAY SCHOOL OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

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

## The Holiday Pop-up Spirit Wear sale is on now!

**Open for a limited time only!** Stock up on cozy swag created in collaboration with Schechter parent Lesley Wynes: **dyeGirl Chicago**.

**SCHECHTER** **Pop-Up Spirit Store** **dyeGirl**

A portion of the proceeds from the collection will be donated to both the Schechter PO and to Magen David Adom.

**BUY NOW**

All orders must be placed by Sunday, December 10



## Support RZJHS Basketball at next week's event

Join our friends at RZJHS for **Pack the Place!** Click image to RSVP.



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