A dandelion seed head is shown in the bottom left corner, with its seeds blowing away. The background is a clear blue sky. Two horizontal yellow bars are positioned above and below the text.

”EDUCATING  
THE MIND WITHOUT  
EDUCATING THE HEART IS NO  
EDUCATION AT ALL.”  
-ARISTOTLE

June 8,  
2025

# Kesher & Nesiah

AA Annual Meeting



**Something important that I have learned at Keshar/Nesiah:**

What our students have to say...

“Prayers.”

– Cosmim

“Jewish traditions and their stories.”

– Menches

“Hebrew, reading stories about Torah, going to a Jewish place, and holidays.”

- Gan

**Something special and/or something I look forward to about Keshar/Nesiah:**

“Learning about our Jewish past.”

– Menches

“Seeing my teachers and friends.”

– Cosmim

“This is the only place I feel Jewish.”

– Cosmim

“Being a part of a community with at least 1 thing in common.” – Cosmim

“[Coming here], because it’s fun!”

– Gan

# Who We Are

**The Judith and Aaron z"l  
Alembik Ahavath Achim  
Youth Education Program**

**The Judith and Aaron z"l Alembik**



**Ahavath Achim  
Youth Education Program**





# Kesher Philosophy

“Train the child according to their way” (Mishlei 22:6) - not through commands alone, but through true *chinuch*, an education that is geared to the individuality of each and every child. - *Chovat Hatalmidim*



Kesher is the Ahavath Achim Synagogue's supplementary education program for grades Pre – K – 6th grade.

Our curriculum meshes Jewish Holidays, Jewish Values, and children's interests into a child-centered, project-based curriculum.

We create confident and curious Jewish learners in a safe space where they can take risks, question, play, learn, explore, engage, create, make meaning, and love. We foster the child's sense of Jewish self-discovery by providing a nurturing environment where each person can explore and create their own identity.

## kesher values

גְּמִילוּת חֶסֶדִים **LOVING KINDNESS**  
G'MILUT CHASADIM

בִּיטָחוֹן **SAFETY/ TRUST**  
BITACHON

עֲרֵבוּת **RESPONSIBILITY**  
AREVUT

תִּיקּוֹן **REPAIR**  
TIKKUN

כַּוָּנָה **INTENTION**  
KAVANNAH

מַעֲשֵׂה **ACTION**  
MA'ASEH

צְדִיקָנוּ **JUSTICE**  
TZEDEK

עֲבוּדָה **SERVICE**  
AVODAH

שְׁמִירָה **PRESERVATION**  
SH'MIRAH

כְּבוֹד **RESPECT**  
KAVOD

## We believe in:

- nurturing the whole child
- viewing our relationships & interactions with others & our environment through the lens of Jewish values



שמע ישראל יי אלהינו יי אחד.  
HAR O ISRAEL: THE LORD OUR GOD, IS THE SOLE ETERNAL BEING.  
REBUILT A. M. 5600.

# Nesiah

From the Outside In: Understanding the Origins of our Prejudices through race, religion, and culture

**Nesiah**, Hebrew for “journey,” is Ahavath Achim Synagogue’s on-the-move program for 7th through 9th-grade students. Nesiah runs on a triennial curriculum, each year exploring a defining era in Jewish history and culminating with a memorable trip. The curriculum is uniquely designed to the needs of day school students and public-school students alike. As students gain a greater understanding of our shared Jewish history, they also learn more about their own identities and their families’ stories.

## A stylized black and white graphic of a human ear. The ear is depicted in profile, facing left. On either side of the ear, there are horizontal lines representing sound waves. The waves on the left start with a short horizontal line, followed by a series of sharp, upward-pointing peaks of varying heights, and then a final short horizontal line. The waves on the right are similar but include a final long horizontal line extending to the right edge of the graphic. The entire graphic is centered on a light beige background.

# Listen



## Curiously ask questions

the more  
effective  
you are

# Self-reflecting



6/12/2025



**What our  
students  
have to say...**

“[Nesiah] helps [us]  
form Jewish  
identity because we  
learn what is  
happening and  
why.”

“Seeing other spaces  
and learning how to  
respect them [is  
important] if we want  
people to be tolerant of  
us. It is helpful for us to  
learn to do the same,  
especially because  
people still don’t tolerate  
Jews.”



# Our Mission

We . . .

We reflect upon the mission and how it is reflected in what we teach and what our students learn.

**Teach skills to our students so that they can be confident and comfortable in Jewish spaces (shabbat, synagogue, celebrate holidays, and understanding rituals).**

1





# Understanding & Practicing Rituals of Havdallah





# Understanding Rituals

**Learning the rituals behind  
lighting the menorah**





# Becoming Confident and comfortable in the Jewish Spaces



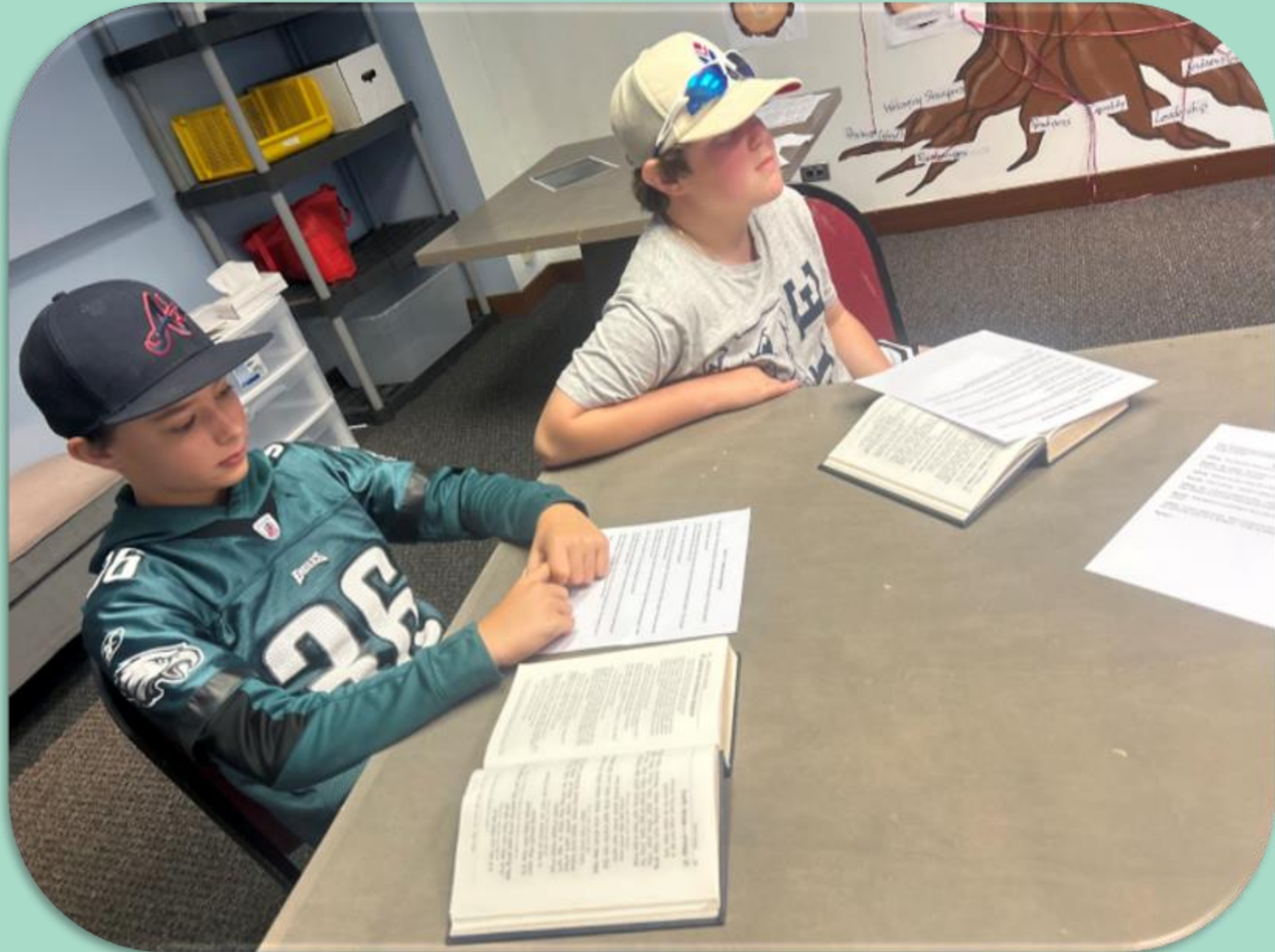
**Prayer Buddies in the sanctuary**



# Becoming Confident and comfortable in the Jewish Spaces



**Learning how to write a prayer or blessing**



**Learning about prayers**

**Becoming  
Confident  
and  
comfortable  
with Jewish  
materials**





# Celebrating Holidays



**Baking Challah**



# Celebrating Holidays



**Learning the rituals for how to shake the lulav and etrog in a Sukkah**

## Jewish Values



**Instill values in each  
student for their own  
personal growth and  
identity**





**Arevut – taking responsibility  
for cleaning our spaces**

6/12/2025



**G'milut Chasadim – the  
kindness of helping others**





**“They teach us how in another world what it was like in the past and how different people were in the the past. Knowing how hard it was for Egyptians and slavery, . . . I can try to change it. [Keshar] teach[es] me stuff I have never learned before, and I think it’s special.”**

**- Meyer Smith (Gan)**



**Giving tzedakah**



**Taking care of our world through acts of service and preservation – tikkun olam, shmirah, and avodah**



Learning  
about  
injustices  
so that we  
may  
change the  
world







**Help students find where they fit in to become responsible Jews and stewards of their communities and the world.**





**Making "Tree Tea"**



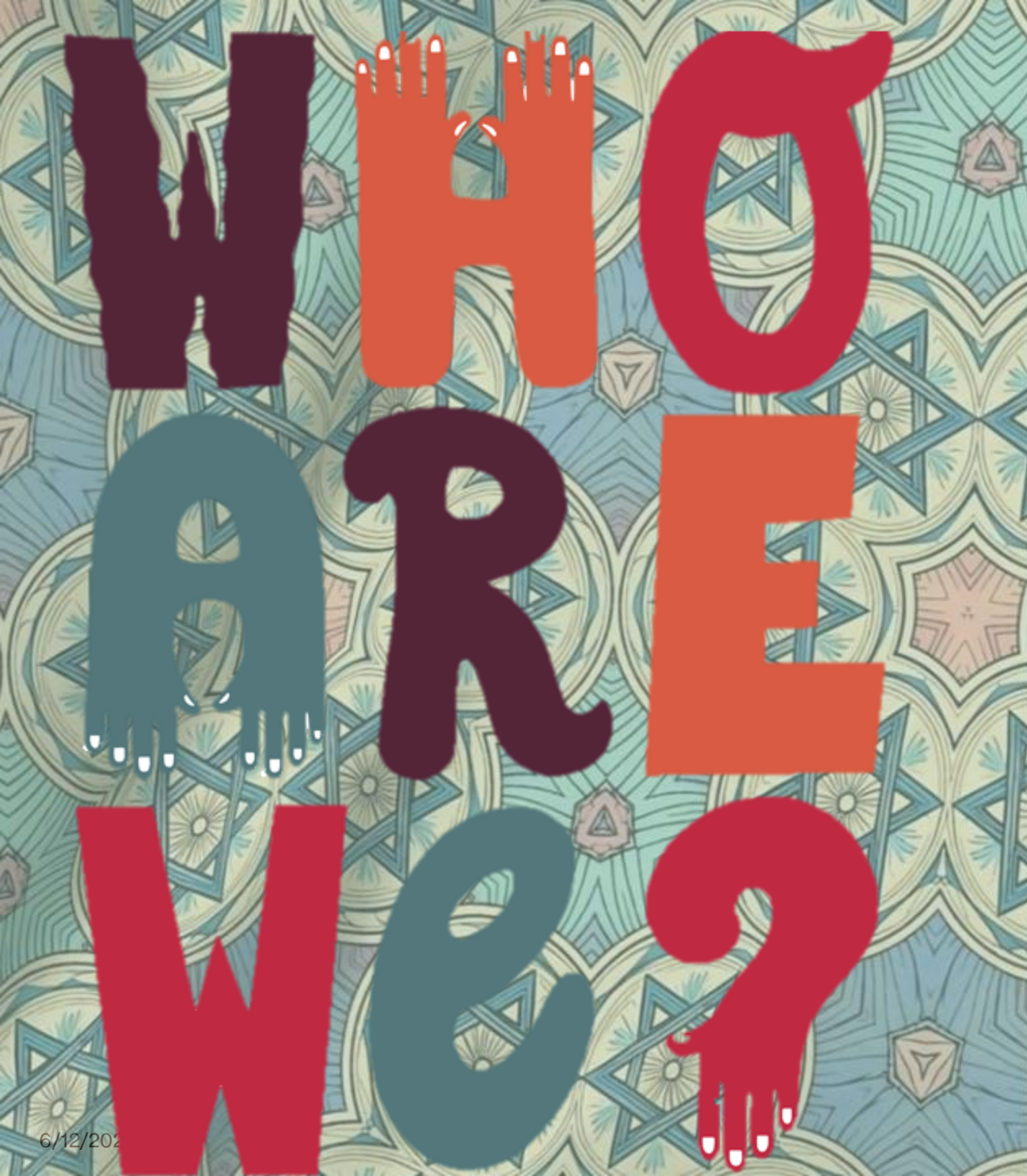
**Planting a tree**



# Deadheading Daffodils







**Provide students  
space to explore  
what being Jewish  
means to them**

# Current Events

7W 7X 7D

How does the news of the world impact our relationship with G-d / things beyond our control?

+ bad things  
war makes you question your belief in G-d

(share your light)

Scared • G-d is with us always  
★ doubt our heritage + faith.

Both good and bad things are a part of life.

• G-d doesn't have control over everything

Oct. 7th  
Egypt

(its common to feel this way)

• feel helpless/useless

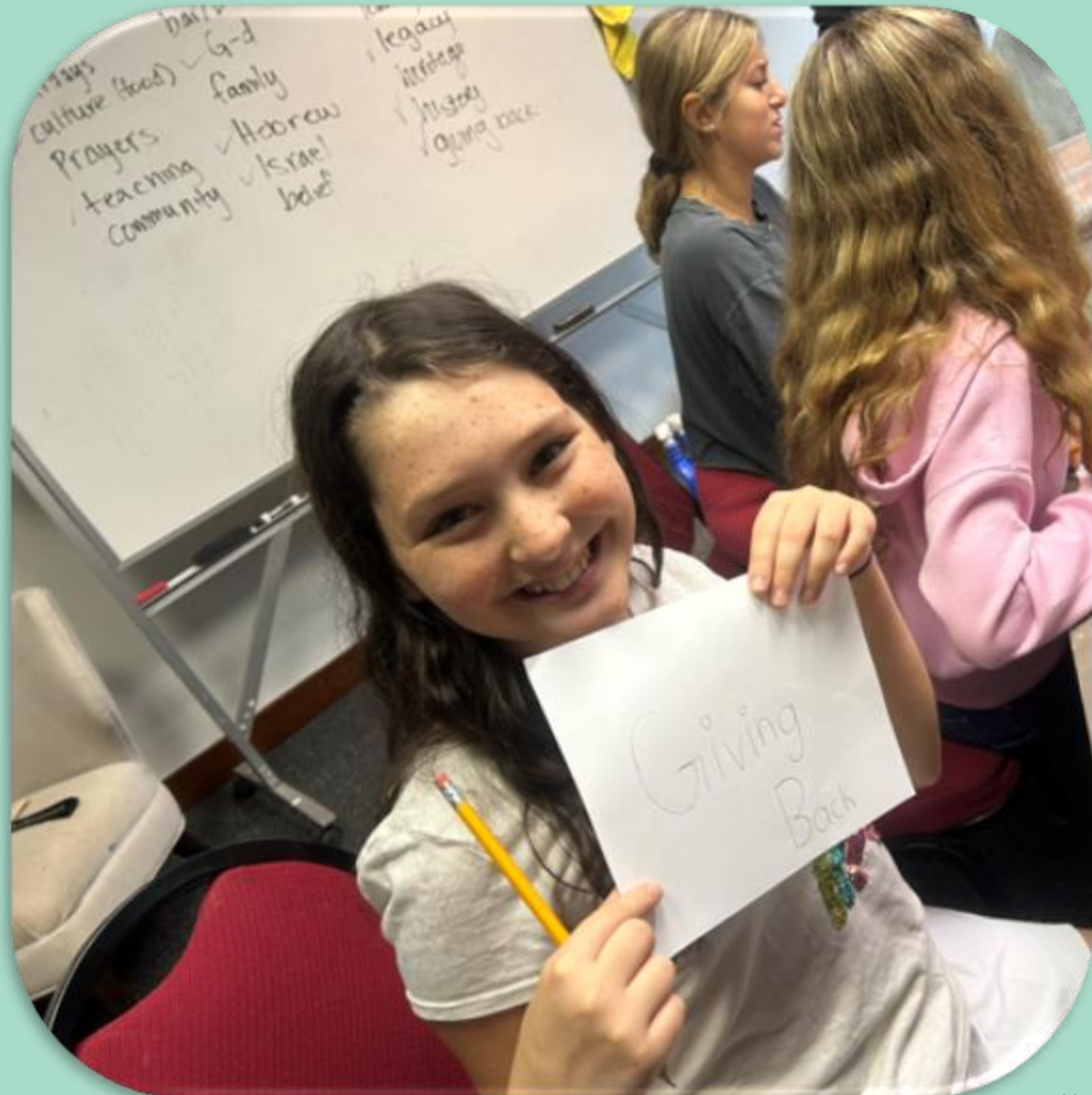
• G-d can't control all the bad people but can help the good

★ can make us feel closer to G-d / want to be closer to our community  
♥ support

• using your platform for good

★ • being independent

• everything happens for a reason





**“Here, you come to surround yourself with Jewish Community and Jewish connections and the importance of Judaism, and how we use it in everyday life.”**

**- Nesiah**





Making Mezuzot





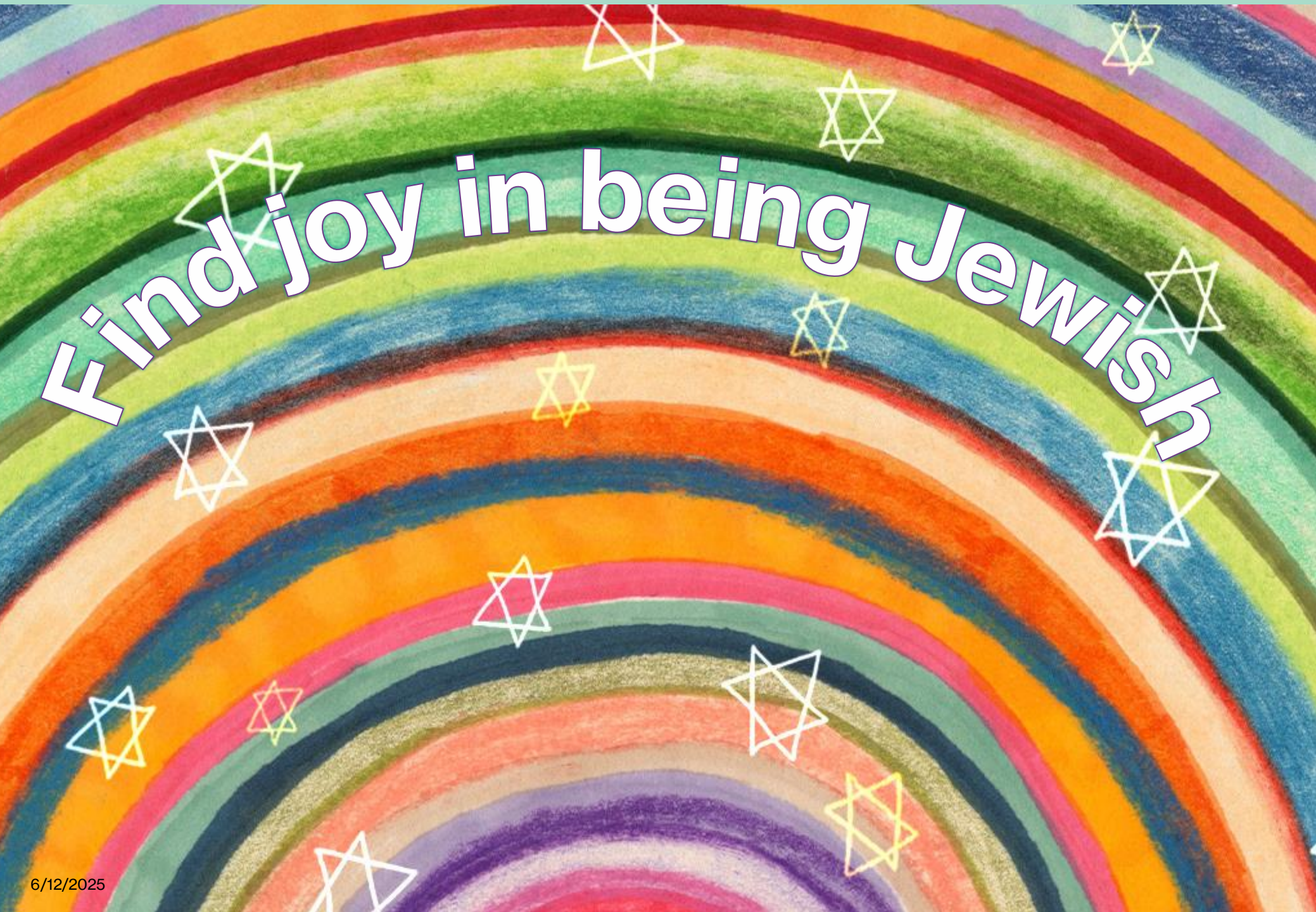
Telling our family stories at the Breman Museum Story Telling Festival



# Exploration of Jewish music within a group

























6/12/2025





# HANDS ON



**offer hands-on experiences, where students learn to question, problem-solve, and build a more just world.**

Deciding which parts to have when  
acting out the 3 guests arriving to  
Abraham's door



Assessing levels of prayer knowledge



We learned about:  
**“Equal rights, fighting  
for what we believe in,  
current events, tikkun  
olam, giving back,  
Zionism, antisemitism,  
culture (food and  
holidays), history of  
the Hebrew language,  
and Israel.”**

- The Menches Class







Experimenting with drums



Retelling the story of Purim



Understanding the Tu'Bshvat season, mixing glasses of "wine"



Making afikomen bags





# Learning about the lunar calendar and Rosh Hodesh







Making Tree Tea



Studying courageous Jewish figures





Making representations from the parsha

6/12/2025



Rocking Out!



# Our Successes

## Dictionary

Definitions from [Oxford Languages](#) · [Learn more](#)



**suc·cess**

/sək'ses/

*noun*

1. the accomplishment of an aim or purpose.  
"there is a thin line between success and failure"
2. **ARCHAIC**  
the good or bad outcome of an undertaking.  
"the good or ill success of their maritime enterprises"

We aimed to create a space where Jewish children want to be, where they care about themselves and others, and being Jewish.

## So, how did we do that?!?!?



# Build a Culture of Kindness

We created community  
through a culture of  
kindness, and connection,  
embodying a Living Torah.



**Understanding  
that . . .**

**Kol  
Yisrael  
arevim  
zeh la-  
zeh**

## ***Connection***

—

The energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.

**Brené Brown**

**All jews  
are  
respon-  
sible  
for one  
another**



*Through . . .*

**Kehillah**







**Enjoying time together**



**Older child guiding and supporting a younger one, working together**





**Working together**





**Working together**





**Matanot L'evyonim  
helping those in need**

# Innovations





# 1 New ways of engaging with our Judaism



**Prayer  
&  
song  
through  
music  
&  
drumming**





# Exploration of community and music through prayer





2

# Curriculum

Hebrew/Israel

Tefillah

Holidays

Torah

Values

Learning Themes: 1. Emotions; 2. Morals & Values; 3. Rules/Laws/Commandments; 4. Holidays; 5. Purpose; 6. Cause/Ecc; 7. Rituals/Traditions/Stories; 8. Holiness; 9. Culture/Community		
Parsha	Themes/Topics	Connections/Engaging Questions
Eikev	<p><b>1. Rewards for Obedience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Covenantal Blessings:</b> Moses assures the Israelites that if they obey God's commandments, they will be blessed with prosperity, health, victory over enemies, and fertility of the land. God will keep the covenant of love with them.</li> <li>• <b>Defeat of Enemies:</b> God promises to drive out the nations before Israel gradually, so that the land does not become desolate and overrun by wild animals. Israel is reminded not to fear these nations because God will fight for them.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Warnings Against Forgetfulness:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Remembering God's Deeds:</b> Moses warns the Israelites not to forget the Lord once they become prosperous in the Promised Land. He recounts their experiences in the wilderness, emphasizing that these were meant to humble them and test their faithfulness.</li> <li>• <b>Danger of Pride:</b> There is a strong admonition against becoming prideful and thinking their success is due to their own strength rather than God's provision. They are reminded that it is God who gives them the ability to produce wealth.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. The Golden Calf Incident:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recounting the Sin:</b> Moses recounts the sin of the golden calf and how he interceded on behalf of the people to prevent their destruction. This serves as a reminder of the importance of repentance and reliance on God's mercy.</li> <li>• <b>Second Set of Tablets:</b> Moses describes how he carved two new tablets and ascended Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments again, signifying the renewal of the covenant despite Israel's earlier transgression.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. God's Requirements:</b></p>	<p>1. How does what we do impact consequences our lives and the world? (3,5,6,7,8)</p> <p>2,3. How do we remember and learn from the past? (2,3,5,7,8)</p> <p>2. Gratitude (1,2,5,6,8)</p> <p>4. What if I live my life asking, "If I please God/a bigger purpose how would I behave?" (8)</p> <p>5. Why would Torah tell us to be a stranger? (3,7)</p> <p>5. What are the blessings, the bounties, in our world and our life? (2,3)</p>



**Making paper for  
Tu B'shvat**



**Mixed age, reflecting  
on our Judaism using  
tennis balls**





**Learning about the intersection of religious music with in-person and zoom guests**





**Writing letters to Sarah**



**Making edible Sukkot**



# Making hamantaschen





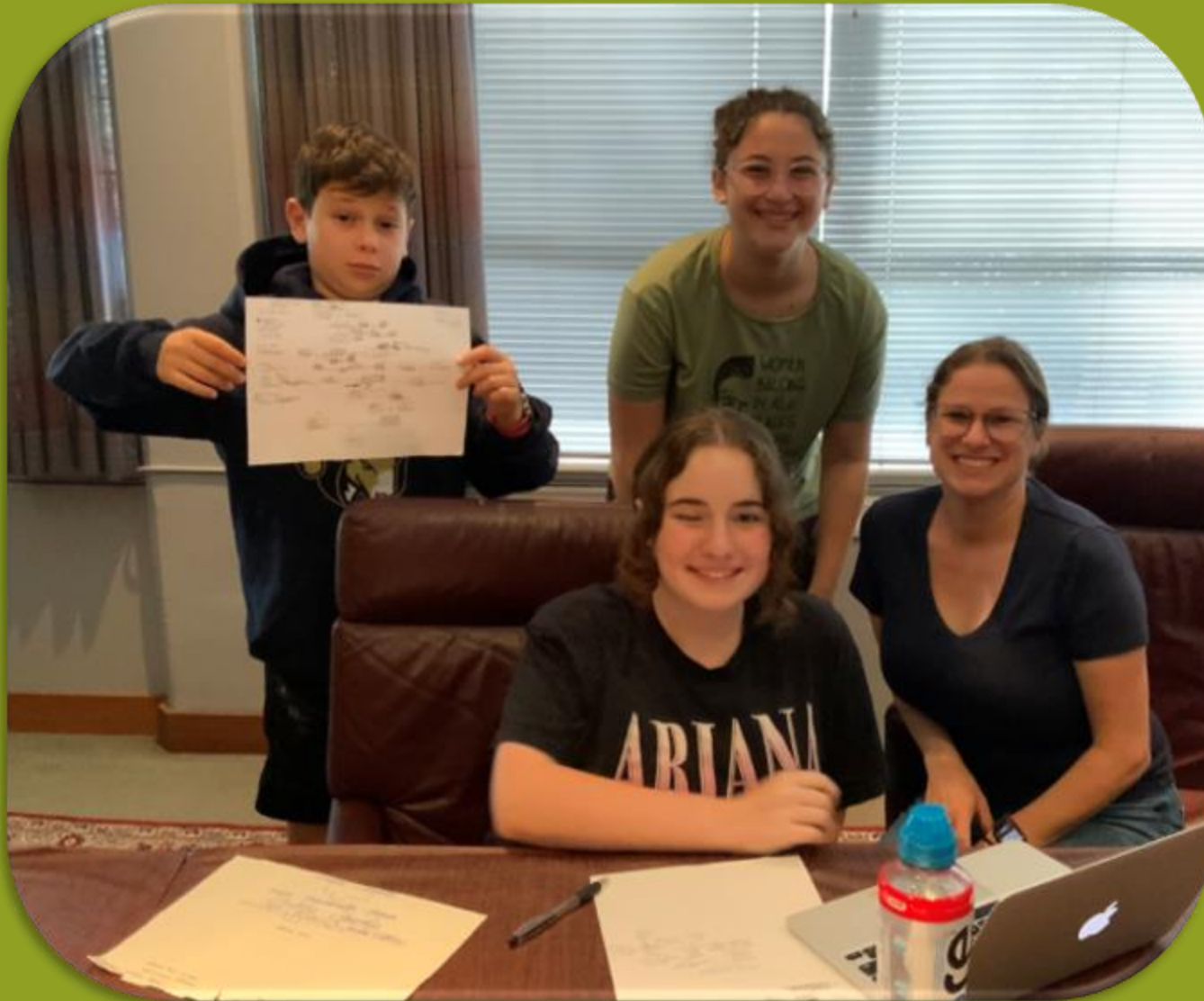
## Shaping Hebrew letters with clay



**Making a feast in for  
Abraham's 3 guests**







**Learning how to do genealogy  
research with guest**

6/12/2025



**Exchange with Hindu Temple**

77



# Nesiah trip to Charleston 2024



**Volunteering at  
Jewish camp  
teaching about  
Jewish heroes**



**Teaching about  
Jewish heroes**





# Nesiah trip to Birmingham & Selma 2025



**Visiting Temple Mishkan Shalom, est. 1830s**



**Learning about Jewish congregants  
and their associations or lack thereof  
with the Civil Rights Movement**





**Sharing our reflection  
at Terry Chestnut's  
live radio show**

**Meeting  
Reverend  
Tucker, MLK,  
Jr.'s bodyguard**



**Edmund Pettus  
Bridge**





# 3

## Kesher Schedule 2024-2025

9:30	Drop Off in Paradies Hall
9:30 - 9:45	Havdallah (whole school)
9:45 – 11:10	Circle Time/ Activity/Stations, music, Snack/ Break
11:15 – 11:30	Havruta (Prayer Buddies)
11:30 - 12:15	Chug (Elective)
12:15 - 12:30	Kehillah (Community)
12:30	Dismissal



# 4

## Prayer Buddies











# Shabbat Family Experience (L'dor V'dor - intergenerational)

## Family Shabbat Experience Schedule

9:00-9:40 am B'nai Mitzvah Cohort

9:30 – 10:00 am Keshet Family Breakfast

10:00 - 11:15 am Class

11:15 am - 12:15 pm AA Community Family  
Time (flip-flop)

- Family Services
- Torah Trials with Rabbi

12:10 – 12:20 pm End of Sanctuary Service



# 6

## Intergenerational Activities including holiday celebrations







Sharing family stories  
around Passover



Planting Daffodils with the Daffodil Project



# 7

## Holidays Highlights

Tu B'shvat Seders, Sparks of Light, Purim



Tu B'Shvat Seder





## Learning about Tu B'Shvat Foods



Creating a seder table and deciding with your family who should be invited from your past, present, and future





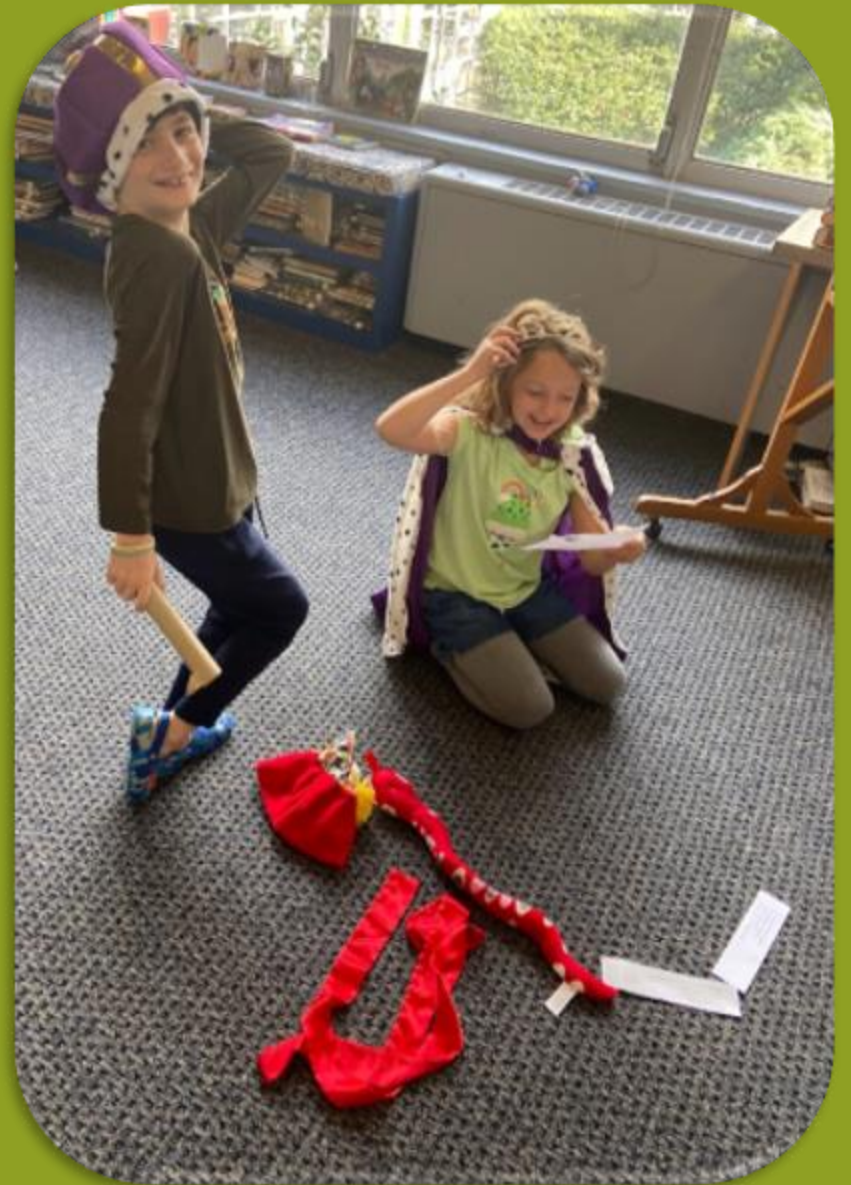
Acting out plagues



Passover Seder



## Hanukkah Summer Expo and Sparks of Light



Purim Re-enactment



**Including Israel  
in our everyday  
lives**







Bringing in our Shinshin, Gili, Aisenberg, to teach about Israel





**Studying locations  
in Israel**



**Weekly Keshet-wide  
Hatikvah during Kehillah**



# 3x Grant Recipient from Federation





# Summer Expo Sparks of Light Community Gather Grant





# Educational Boost Grant Federation of Greater Atlanta

L'Dor V'Drum





# Family Stories Documentary

## How We Connect: Strengthening Familial Ties

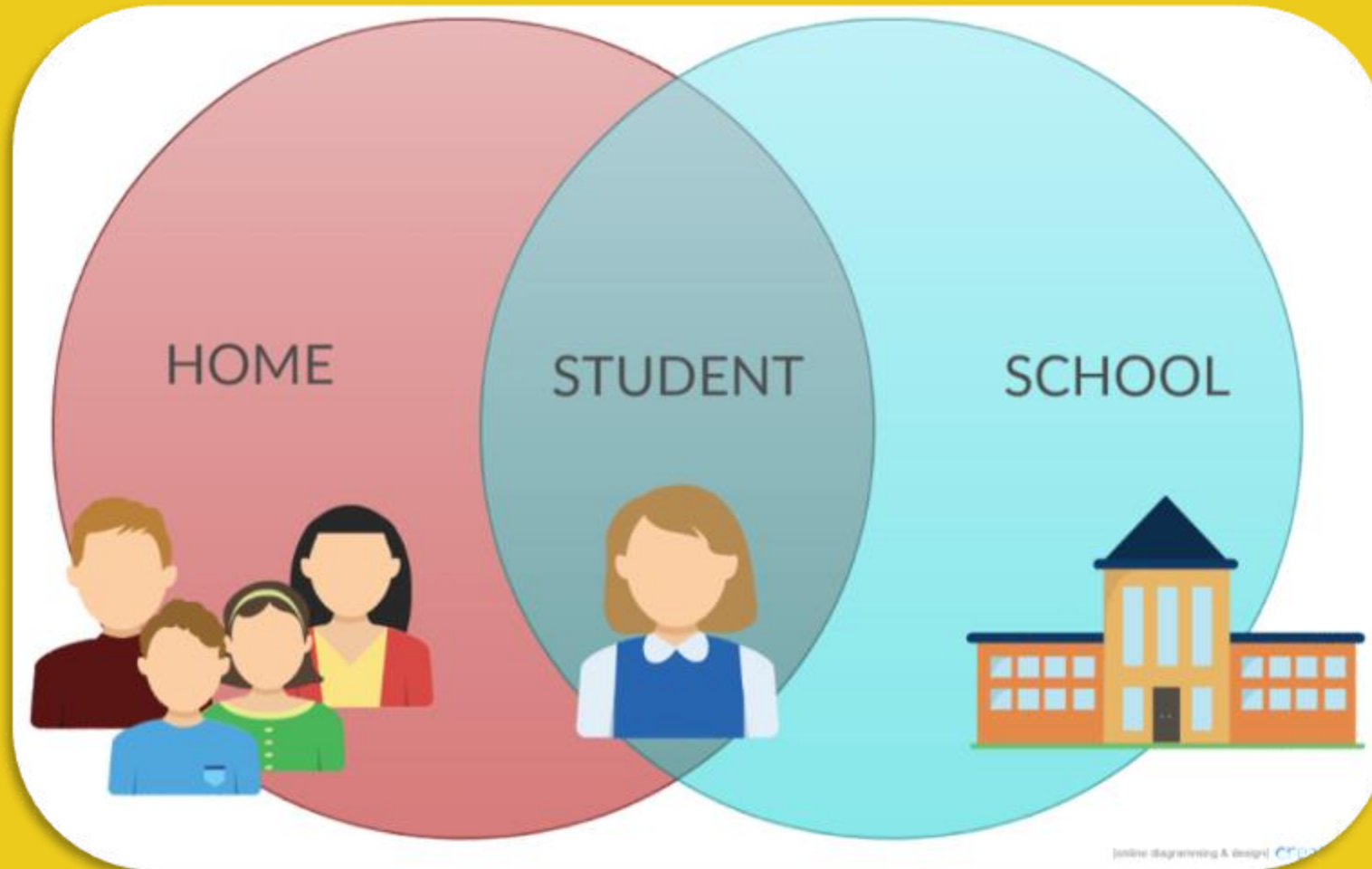
Coming Soon . . .



Jteen (formerly JumpSpark) Prototype Grant



# Creating real life connections and communication between our educational programming and home









# Communications



Text:

@3h3dgba to 81010

or

@3h3dgba to (510) 478-9062



[aayoutheducationprogram](#)



<https://www.facebook.com/aayoutheducationprogram>



Youth and Family  
Programming Calendar Dates



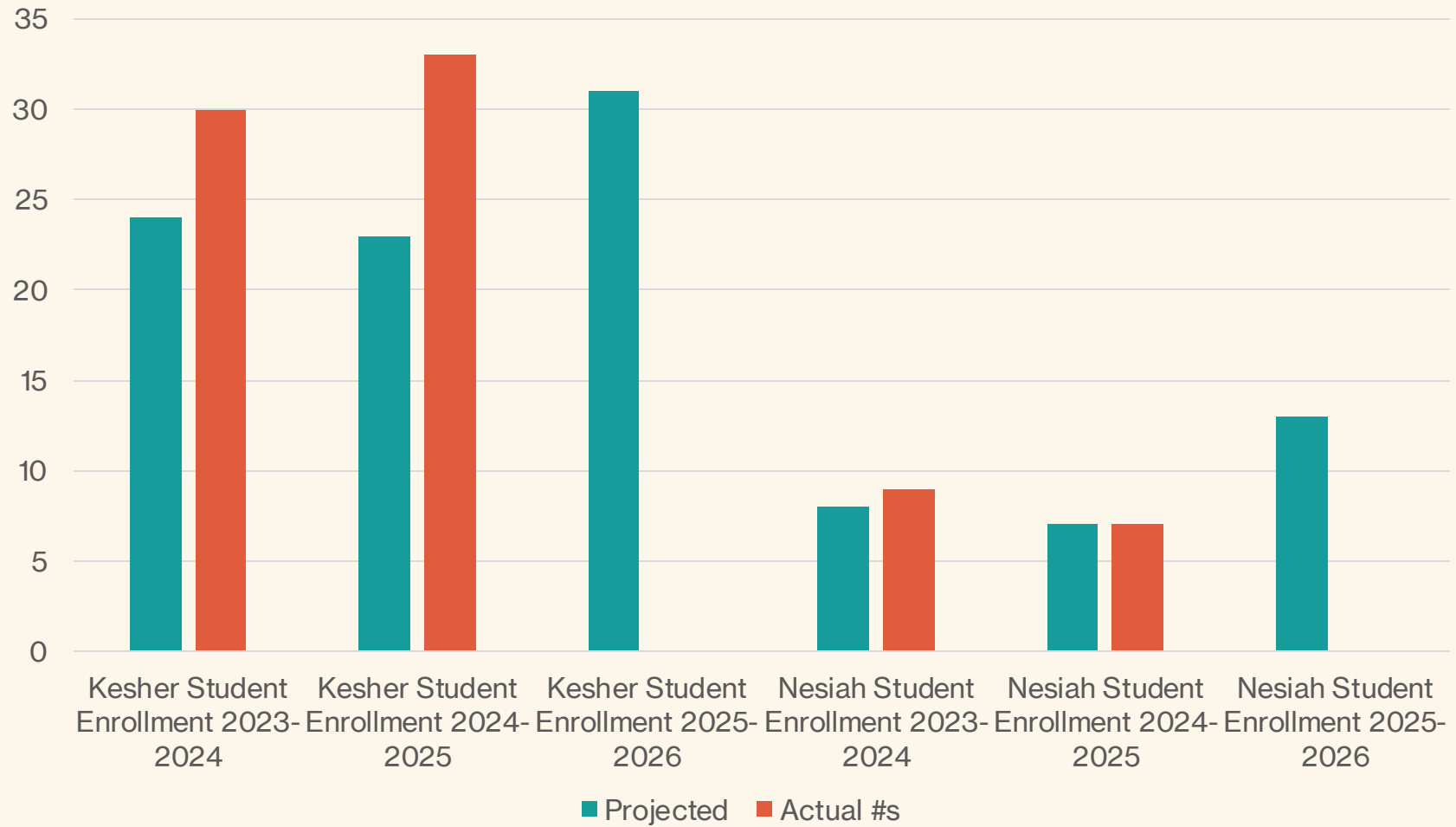
# Family Handbook

- Snacks
- Tzedakah
- Birthdays
- B'nai Mitzvah Dates
  - No toys
  - No cell phones



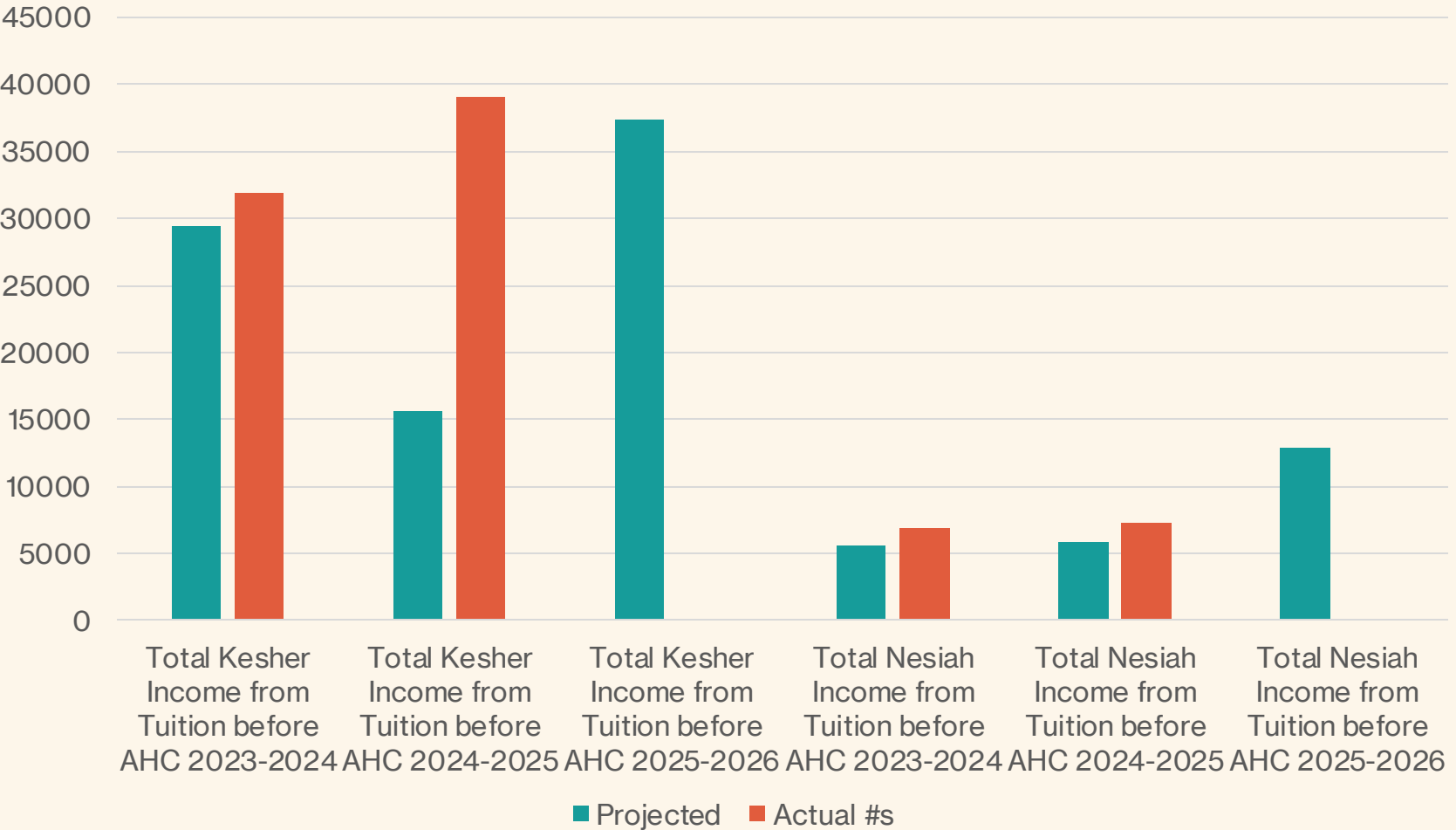


## Youth and Family Enrollment Numbers FY2324, FY2425, FY2526



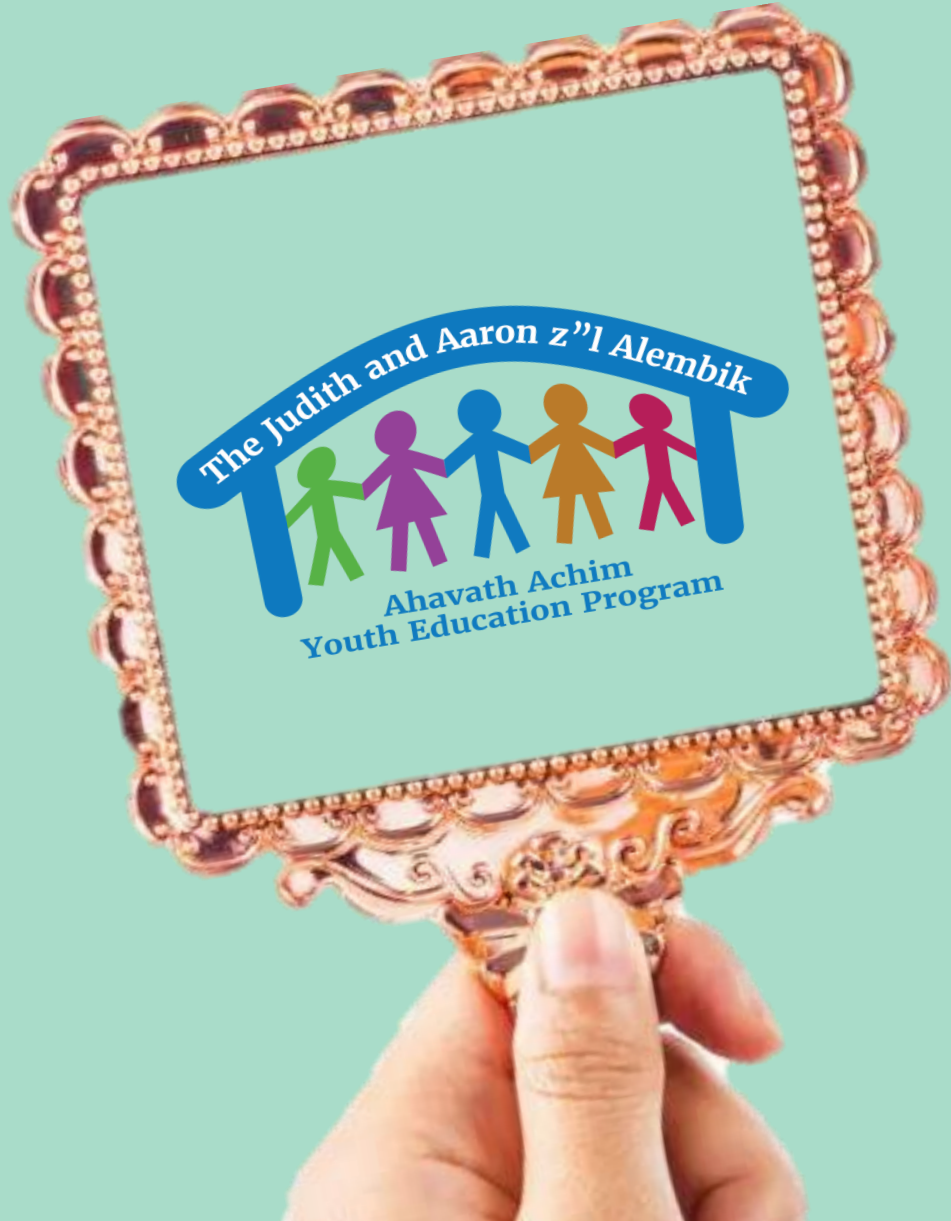


**Youth and Family Tuition Income  
FY2324 , FY2425, FY2526**





# Reflections



be better  
than you were  
yesterday.

# Reflections

*Changes moving forward*

- Need Jewish Curriculum Standards for each class
- Will begin Hebrew Infusion with Hebrew at the Center
- Thought our Israeli Shinshin added a great deal of value
- More intergenerational collaboration
- Intentional tzedakah giving
- Clearer messaging to students our 3 most important values
- Future possible electives: Hebrew, Yearbook, Sunshine Class
- Shabbat Family Experience well received
- More spiritual connectivity
- Increase differentiated learning to individualize goals that meet the needs of the student and the family



A Million Dreams

Music Video

A Passover Parody

Written by our Music"al" Elective  
Produced and Edited by  
our very own Michael Levine





# Thank you!