



FRANKEL JEWISH ACADEMY

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19



OUR MISSION

Frankel Jewish Academy is a rigorous college preparatory high school pursuing academic excellence and Jewish literacy. We inspire students to think critically, creatively, and compassionately; to dedicate themselves to Jewish tradition, peoplehood, and the State of Israel; and to become lifelong learners and leaders.



Rabbi Azaryah Cohen, Head of School and Amy Folbe, President, Board of Trustees

Dear FJA Friends and Supporters,

It is a great time to be an FJA Jag. This past year has been a time of incredible growth and change. We adopted a new mission statement, embarked on a rebranding initiative, developed a strategic plan and financial plan, and launched a broad and deep “educational revisioning” process. These changes bring FJA to the forefront of educational innovation and institutional advancement.

Our new mission clearly articulates our continued goal of purposeful college preparation and high academic standards while emphasizing critical and creative thinking. It highlights the importance of Jewish values and tradition while exploring what students find personally meaningful and inspiring. It stresses confidence and vision required for leadership, and curiosity and humility required for lifelong learning.

Our strategic plan sets us on a course of continued growth and mission actualization over the next five years in the areas of board development, advancement, infrastructure, and programming.

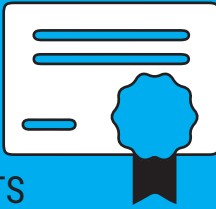
Finally, educational revisioning has already led to a later start time and a revised daily schedule to better meet the health and academic needs of our students. We also revised FJA’s graduation requirements and curricula to offer more flexibility and choice, and more opportunity for our students to be creative and learn in experiential ways. As just one example, our 9th graders will embark on an educational excursion in June 2020 to spend time on the Northern Cheyenne reservation and Yellowstone National Park in Montana.


Thank you to all of you, our supporters, who, together with our communal partners, parents, students, and staff, have been instrumental in our success and share in the conviction that FJA, our community’s high school, is a vital part of our future.

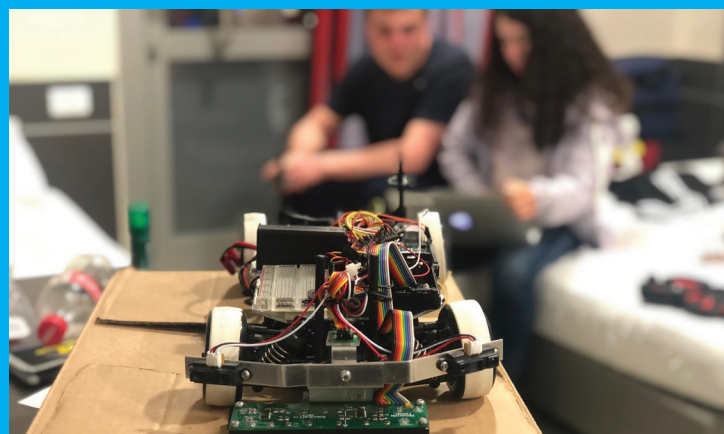
Sincerely,
Rabbi Azaryah Cohen
Head of School


FJA BY THE NUMBERS




100% 
OF FJA STUDENTS
ATTEND THEIR FIRST OR
SECOND CHOICE COLLEGE

 60%
OF STUDENTS RECEIVE
TUITION ASSISTANCE



Top 2% 
FJA'S RANKING
ON NEWSWEEK'S LIST OF TOP
U.S. STEM HIGH SCHOOLS

 90%+
90%+ OF FACULTY AND
STAFF DONATED TO THE
ANNUAL CAMPAIGN



\$2,000,000+

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS EARNED BY
THE CLASS OF 2019

\$2,000+

RAISED BY STUDENTS TO SUPPORT
LOCAL AND NATIONAL CHARITIES

2150+

HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE
COMPLETED BY FJA STUDENTS

1250+

HOURS OF SYNAGOGUE PARTICIPATION
BY FJA STUDENTS

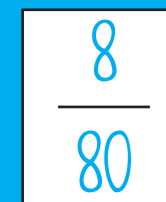


20 YEARS

OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION



8:30AM
NEW LATER
START TIME



8
STUDENTS PAIRED
WITH SENIORS IN
JSL's "8 OVER 80"



14
NEW COURSES
OFFERED
THIS YEAR



10
ATHLETIC
TEAMS



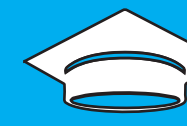
2
PERFORMING ARTS
PRODUCTIONS
EACH YEAR -
1 PLAY & 1 MUSICAL



1ST
PLACE AT ISRAEL'S
INTERNATIONAL
ROBOTRAFFIC
COMPETITION



250
MACBOOK AIR
LAPTOPS
TO PROVIDE 21ST
CENTURY TECH



792
ALUMNI

FACULTY & LEADERSHIP



“
I like what I do – and the reason I like what I do is because of the kids. Because of the teachers. Because of the counselors and social workers. Because of the energy of all these amazing people who come together to influence the process of who these kids are and who they are coming to be. In many ways, what happens here is magical.”

Randy Gawel, Principal

In 2018-2019, Randy Gawel joined the leadership team of Frankel Jewish Academy as its new Principal. After graduating with a degree in English from Lyndon State College, he went on to earn his Master’s Degree in Education at Boston College, where he met his wife, Leah, now a teacher at Hillel Day School. He then earned an advanced administrative degree from Wayne State University. Randy comes to FJA with a wealth of experience in education; he was the Assistant Principal of Novi High School before becoming the Principal of Berkley High School. As the product of a small private high school in New Hampshire, Randy understood the power of a small school when his own daughter expressed interest in FJA. Now the parent of two FJA alumni, Sophia ‘18 and Sam ‘19 who are both students at Dartmouth, Randy is putting his natural leadership into student-centered education.

FACULTY PROFILE REBECCA (NADIS) STROBEHN ‘06

In 2006, Rebecca (Nadis) Strobehn graduated from Frankel Jewish Academy. Today, she’s on staff in the Rabbinics department teaching several classes including Israeli Film, Jewish Texts and Art, and leading a minyan. **“Helping students find meaningful access points into Jewish life and learning motivates me as a teacher,”** Strobehn says.

Mrs. Strobehn came to FJA after teaching at another Jewish high school outside of Chicago. She said the standards students are held to at FJA in combination with a comfortable and informal atmosphere drew her back to her alma mater. She enjoys having the freedom to craft her curriculum so it can be as responsive as possible to student needs and interests.

Once a week after school, you’ll find Mrs. Strobehn learning Gemara (rabbinical commentary) with two of her students. They don’t do it as an assignment, they do it because they want to. And they have the freedom to learn at their own pace.

“I love learning things from my students,” Strobehn says. “Sharing my own interests and passions with my students encourages them to share their passions and interests with me. That’s how I’m able to develop meaningful connections.”



FACULTY PROFILE ADAM SHIREMAN

Adam Shireman teaches history, social studies, and weight training at FJA. But in reality, he teaches a lot more than that. **“My goal is to make every day in my classes a ‘real’ experience, focused on real problems, creating real solutions, with a heavy emphasis on creativity and innovation. Subject knowledge is important, but it’s more of a vehicle to acquiring, practicing, and mastering skills,”** Shireman says.

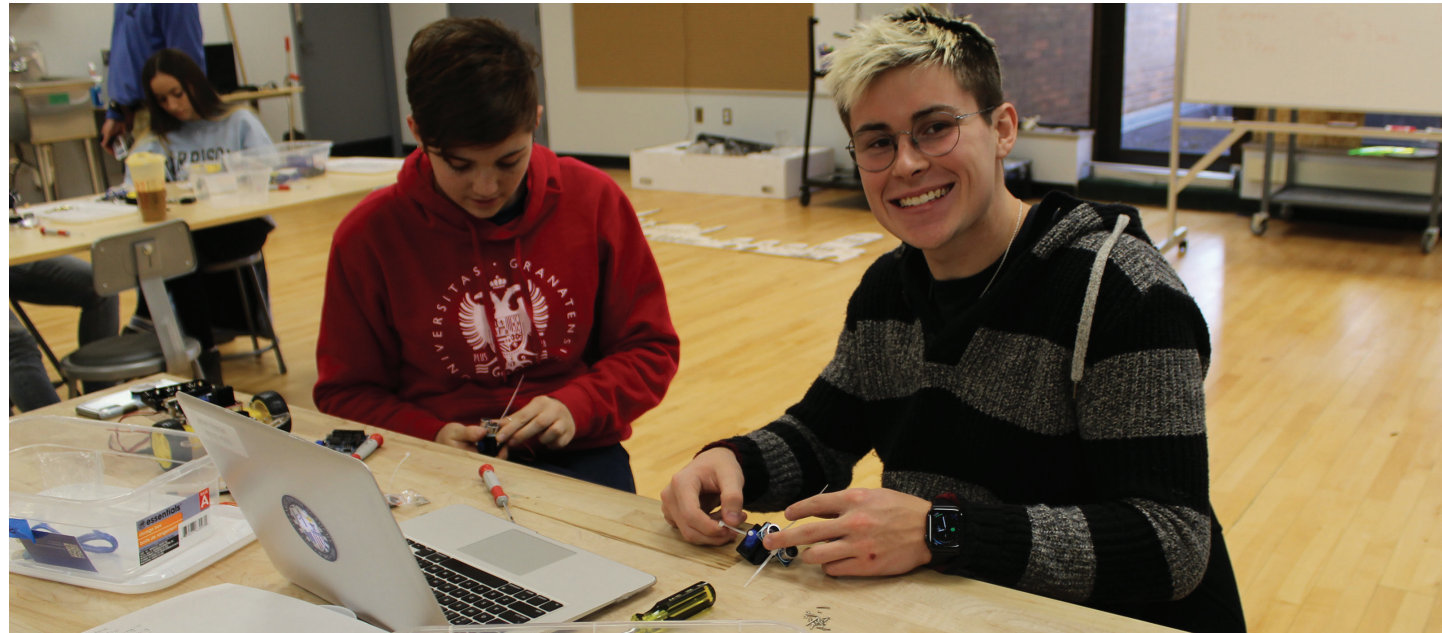
Since every freshman has to take Mr. Shireman’s social studies class, he knows every student in the school. The bonds that he’s formed with students are evident during lunch when a group of students crowd around his desk every day to talk about anything from in-depth political debates to internet memes. “FJA is very unique in that our students do become our family away from home. The bonds that I have formed over the years are incredibly strong, and last well after high school.”

Mr. Shireman rewrites his curriculum every year. No two classes will ever be alike. But all of his classes will stretch students to think differently. And once you’ve taken Mr. Shireman’s class, you’ll always have a home in his classroom.

“Sometimes, kids just need to be listened to - and they know that they can tell me just about anything without judgment. Sometimes they need advice and they know that I rarely give my biased opinion, but rather a plethora of ideologies to choose from.”



STELLAR STEAM!



FJA Top 1% STEM School

Frankel Jewish Academy (FJA) has been named one of the nation's best for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), according to Newsweek magazine.

[FJA is ranked in the top 1% of schools in Michigan](#) and the top 2% of all high schools in the United States in the report of the 2020 Best STEM Schools. Newsweek partnered with STEM.org to rank America's Best STEM High Schools. The schools were ranked based on data collected from 2015 to 2019. The research determined which schools provided the best STEM experience for students while positioning them for post-secondary study.



The top five thousand schools made the final list out of over thirty thousand high schools in the United States. From that five thousand, FJA ranked 514 - which puts it in the top 1% of schools in Michigan, the top 2% of all high schools in the United States, and better than the vast majority of the schools in the Detroit Metro area. FJA is also ranked #3 of all Jewish Schools (that have a high school) in the United States!

"This recognition from Newsweek and STEM.org demonstrates the strength of Frankel Jewish Academy's programs. With the addition of our [Genesis STEAM lab](#), we have been able to involve our students in robotics, coding, graphic design, and critical thinking in nearly every subject in our school," said Head of School Rabbi Azaryah Cohen. ["When our students won first prize in an international robotics competition at the Technion in Israel, it validated all of our work in science, technology, engineering, art, and math. Our graduates enter the world with technology at their fingertips."](#)



1st Place in Israeli Robotics Competition

The FJA RoboTraffic team brought two trophies back home to FJA after competing in the 10th Annual Technion RoboTraffic Competition. FJA was the only North American team in the competition.

The 3D CAD team of Elisha Cooper '20 and Henry Tukul '21, with support from STEAM Lab Director Simon Pinter '06, took home first place for their "professional quality" design of a fuel injector.

Of the 25 teams competing, FJA placed 5th in the innovation presentation lead by Jack Harris '21 on a braking alert system. The concept was to reduce rear-end collisions by making the brake lights more noticeable and flash faster in relation to harder/emergency braking to warn evermore distracted drivers behind the stopping car.



The team collaborated on the written safety test, commendably placing 6th, as well as a competition on Israeli and EU traffic laws and signage.

The FJA Autonomous Jaguar did well with Aidan Keenan '20 and special advisor Jonah Weinbaum '19 who worked with only a few weeks on the clock to completely tear down the car to its chassis, piece it electronically back together and write the controlling code and algorithms from scratch.

SCIENCE | TECHNOLOGY | ENGINEERING | ART | MATH

JAG ATHLETICS



The FJA boys basketball team completed a terrific season with an overall season record of 14-8. The team qualified for the Catholic League tournament as well as the MHSAA state tournament. Along with having a stellar season, the team was also awarded the BCAM (Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan) 2018-2019 Top 100 Sportsmanship Award, which included a banner to proudly hang in the school's gym.



As a member of the Catholic League, FJA students participate in a variety of sports. In the 2018-19 school year 23 students received awards from the league in athletic, academic and team accomplishments.

ACCOMPLISHED ARTISTS



FJA artists are recognized in and out of school for their phenomenal work.

In January, the Janice Charach Gallery at the JCC hosted a show called "Origins" with a group exhibition featuring 29 artists sharing stories of heritage and life's beginnings. FJA's own Joseph Shumunov '21 (pictured above) was one of the show's artists and shared his unique art with the community.

Liana Tarnopol '21 (inset) won first place for drawing in the 2019 Kappy Family Anne Frank Art and Writing Competition with her compelling artwork.

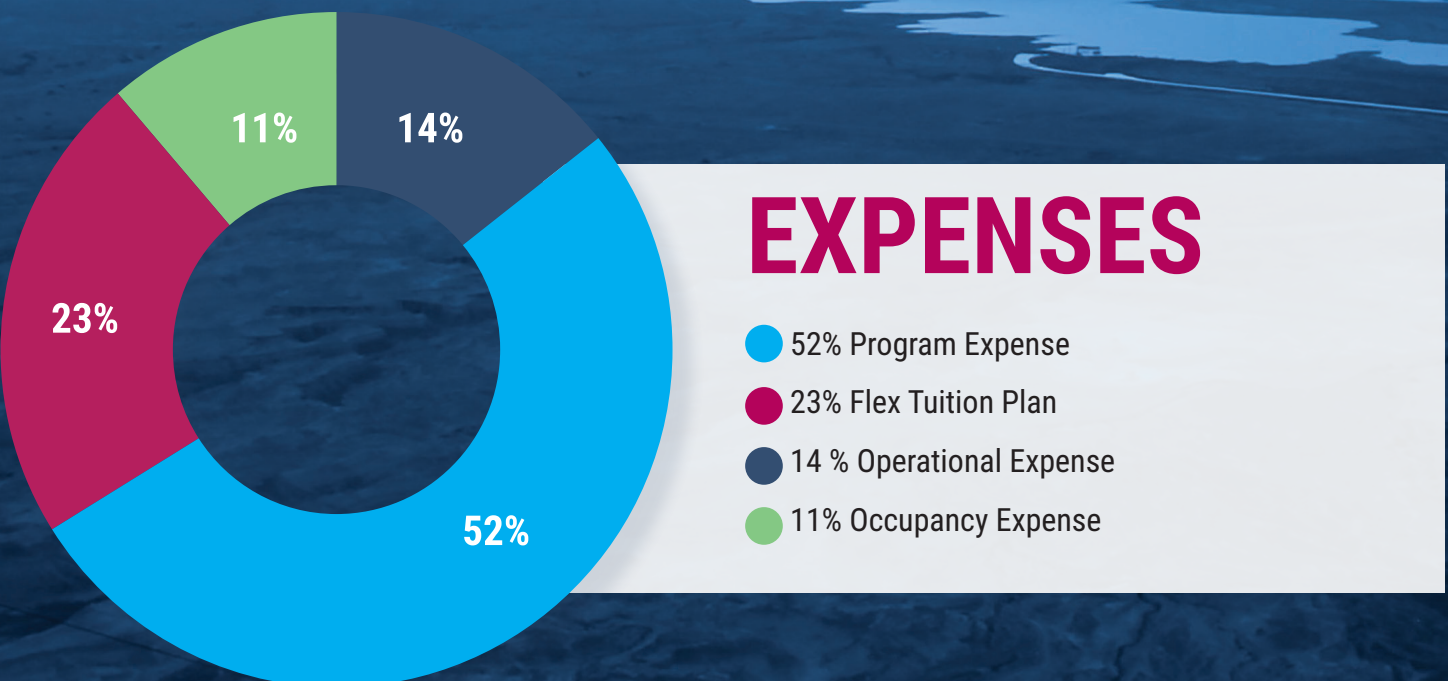
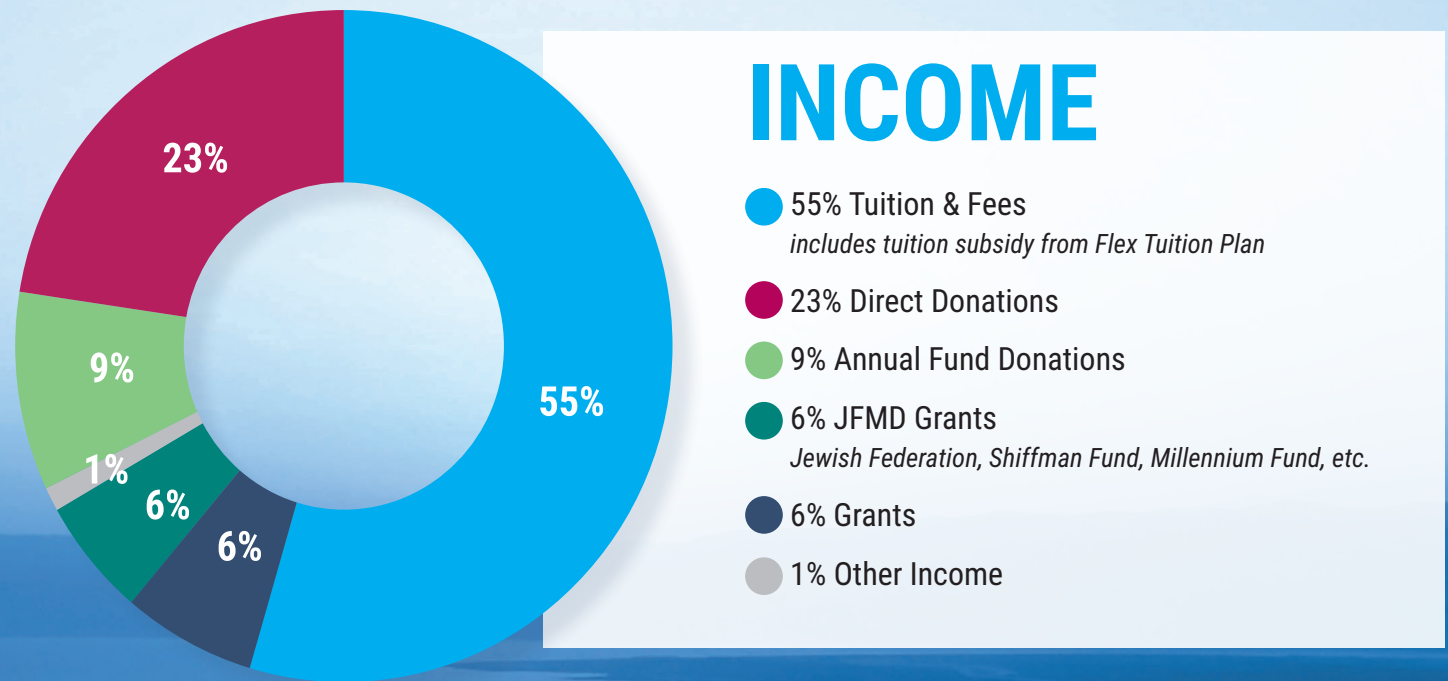
"The prompt for this year's Anne Frank Art and Writing Competition was 'How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.' I personally love this quote and saw it as a great art prompt. My painting depicts a stack of dynamite that evolves into various types of people. The people are hateful people, people stuck looking at their phones, impoverished people, etc. It represents the issues in society that need to be solved ASAP. The clock is on 2:43, which, on a phone, spells out 'aid.' **In my painting, I tried to represent the fact that we don't need to wait to change the world and that we can't wait to do so either.**" - Liana Tarnopol '21



PERFORMANCE ART

FJA's talented performing artists are always hard at work creating musical and theatrical entertainment. In the 2018-2019 school year, the school musical was "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," a hilarious musical about a group of quirky adolescents enrolled in their local spelling bee. "John Lennon and Me" was the spring play that told the story of life, death, power and first boyfriends. The Music Ensemble and Vocal Ensemble entertained audiences with their incredible talents at the Evening of the Arts and then wowed guests at the FJA Annual Gala.

2018-2019 FISCAL YEAR



Figures are from the 2018-2019 fiscal year audited financials.

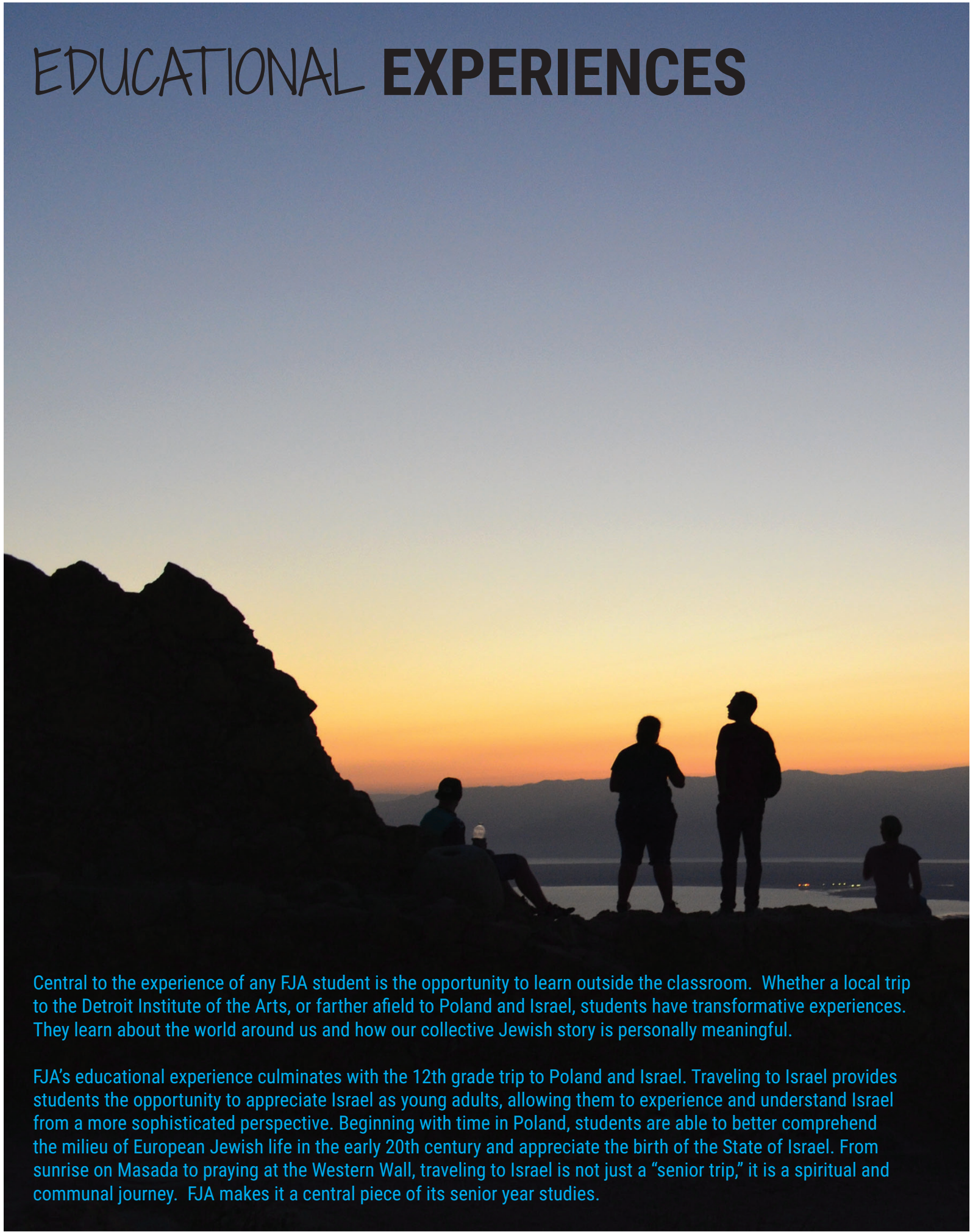


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EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Central to the experience of any FJA student is the opportunity to learn outside the classroom. Whether a local trip to the Detroit Institute of the Arts, or farther afield to Poland and Israel, students have transformative experiences. They learn about the world around us and how our collective Jewish story is personally meaningful.

FJA's educational experience culminates with the 12th grade trip to Poland and Israel. Traveling to Israel provides students the opportunity to appreciate Israel as young adults, allowing them to experience and understand Israel from a more sophisticated perspective. Beginning with time in Poland, students are able to better comprehend the milieu of European Jewish life in the early 20th century and appreciate the birth of the State of Israel. From sunrise on Masada to praying at the Western Wall, traveling to Israel is not just a “senior trip,” it is a spiritual and communal journey. FJA makes it a central piece of its senior year studies.

WE THANK OUR DONORS

L’DOR V’DOR

We recognize and honor those who have made a legacy commitment by including Frankel Jewish Academy in their estate plans this year.

Sheri and David Jaffa
Beth and Steve Margolin

2018-2019 ANNUAL FUND

This list represents annual donations received between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2019.

\$25,000 +

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OUTSTANDING ALUMNI



Ilana Goldberg Block '03

was honored with the first ever Distinguished Alumni Award at the 2019 Gala.



FJA Alumni Families
enjoying the 2019 Gala.



The FJA Class of 2008

had their 10th Reunion just before Thanksgiving.



Reconnecting

with retired FJA faculty member, Jerry Guttman, alumni gathered to watch Election Night returns on Tuesday, November 6, 2018 and hear Jerry chat about politics.



The Class of 2019

on their last day of school.



WHERE DOES YOUR DONATION GO?

TUITION ASSISTANCE

More than 60 percent of FJA students receive tuition assistance. Your support ensures that any teen can receive a Jewish education.

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Create opportunities for students to broaden their horizons and choose from an array of offerings including technology in the Genesis Lab, art, performing arts, sports and much more.

SUPPORT FACULTY

FJA's excellent faculty provide ongoing mentorship and close relationships with students that do not end at graduation.

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Call the Advancement Department 248-592-5263

Mail to 6600 West Maple Rd, West Bloomfield, MI 48322

Your gift is important to us.

**Thank you for making a gift to Frankel Jewish Academy
to help our students**

DISCOVER THEIR TOMORROW.

A group of young women are gathered around a rough, light-colored stone wall. They are engaged in a craft activity, with some holding long, thin strips of paper or fabric that they are attaching to the wall. The woman in the foreground has long, straight brown hair and is looking down at her work. She is wearing a black top. Behind her, another woman is wearing a white shirt with horizontal stripes in green, blue, and pink. To the right, a woman is wearing a white shirt with a lace-like pattern. The overall atmosphere is one of focused creativity and collaboration.

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