

# MAH HADASH?

מה חדש?

WHAT'S NEW?

THRIVING AND EXPLORING:  
EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION  
FOR EVERYONE

HIGH SCHOOL IS ONLY FOUR YEARS, BUT  
JOURNEYS LAST A LIFETIME.



FRANKEL JEWISH ACADEMY

Summer 2022 / 5782 ק"ץ



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WELCOME & FAREWELL

## MAH HADASH

A publication of  
FRANKEL JEWISH ACADEMY

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## LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

**RABBI AZARYAH COHEN**  
HEAD OF SCHOOL

The word "journey" conjures up fanciful adventure, majestic scenery, and magical encounters. However, etymologically, the word "journey" simply meant "day," then came to mean a "day's work," and after some evolution, incorporated the connotation of travel - which was how many people made their living. Today, we often use the word "journey", or "נסע" in Hebrew, to suggest an excursion, physically or experientially, that is extraordinary in some way. In Torah, the word נסע is used to talk about the journey of B'nai Israel from Egypt to Israel, on their way from slavery to freedom. At FJA, much can be accomplished in a day, let alone an entire school year, and this past year at FJA has certainly been a journey in every sense of the word.

After nearly two years of remodeling school due to COVID, we shifted back to many of our traditional routines. Not only were we able to bring back programs like Shabbatonim, full class periods, lunch, Town Hall, dances, spirit week, in-person graduation and much more, we also introduced initiatives that have enhanced our students' learning experience in meaningful and lasting ways.

As we "journeyed" back to reintroduce the best of our curricular and co-curricular programs, we also "journeyed" forward, quite literally, as each grade embarked on a once-in-a-lifetime experiential learning trip. They left the classrooms behind, but not the learning. They left as classmates and returned closer-knit than ever with their peers, teachers, and FJA staff who accompanied

them. They learned about our national heritage and history, and about our values, which make our lives meaningful and through which we can enhance the lives of others. They learned how to appreciate each other and gained a better sense of who they are as individuals. They tested their capacity for navigating and overcoming challenges and strengthened their resolve and resilience.

In the following pages you will read of students' learning experiences that truly actualize our mission to inspire critical, creative, and compassionate thinking; dedication to Jewish tradition, peoplehood and the State of Israel; and which establish the foundation for a lifelong "journey" of learning and leadership.

*Azaryah Cohen*



# JAGS IN THE NEWS

# כל הכבוד KOL HAKAVOD

to the FJA students whose essays were featured in the  
Detroit Jewish News Student's Corner.



**Manny**  
Arkashvsky '25



**Rozie**  
Aronov '24



**Samantha**  
Caminker '24



**Spencer**  
Cherrin '25



**Rebecca**  
Chynoweth '22



**Brody**  
Fleishman '25



**Ethan**  
Grey '23



**Esti**  
Klein '24



**Aliyah**  
Lofman '23



**Merrick**  
Michaelson '23



**Jonah**  
Miller '24



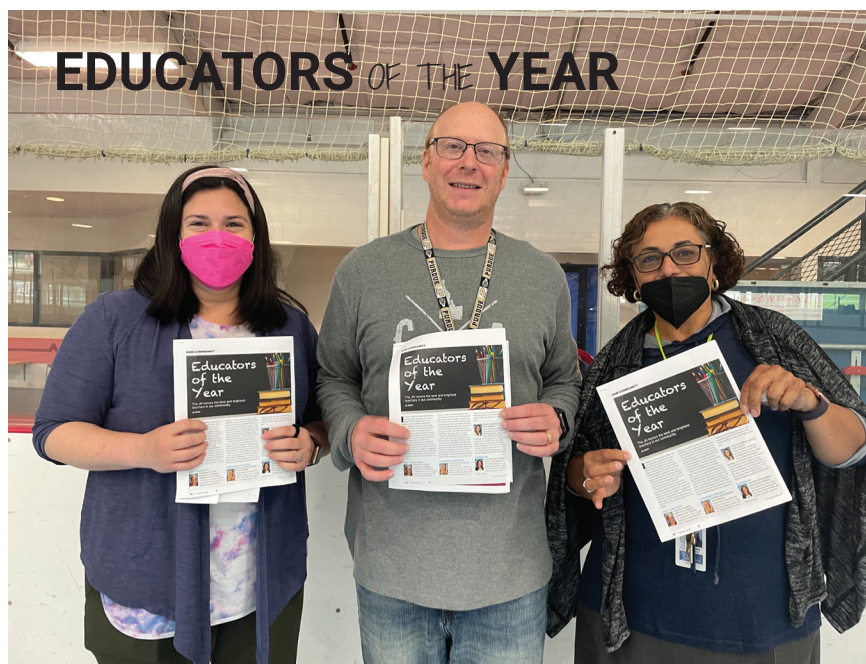
**Shayla**  
Mostyn '22



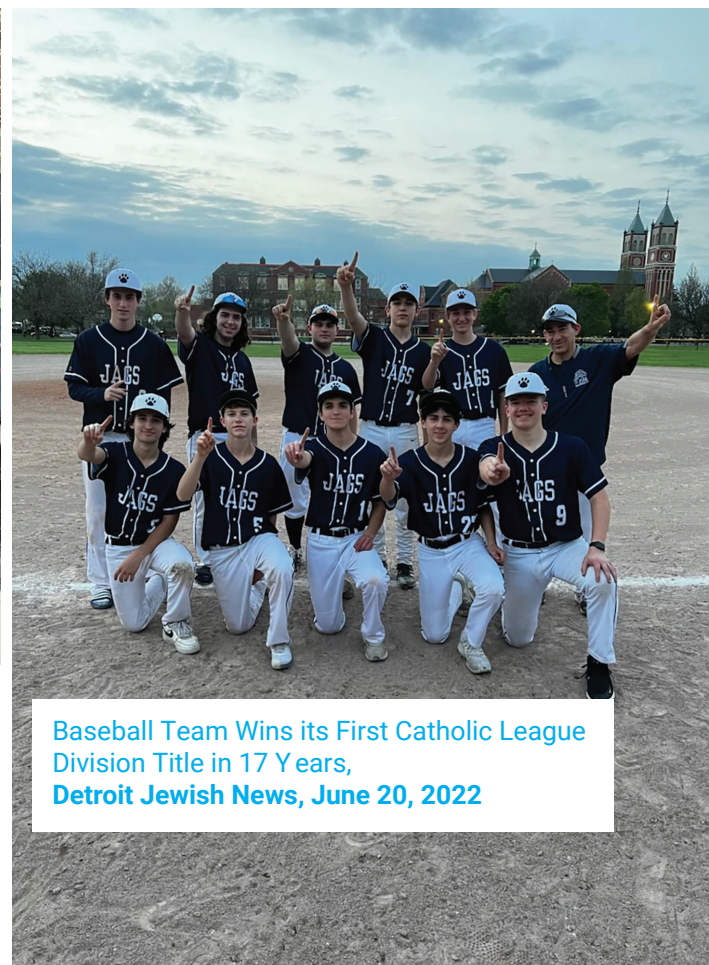
**Harry**  
Shaevsky '24



**Andy**  
Tukul '22



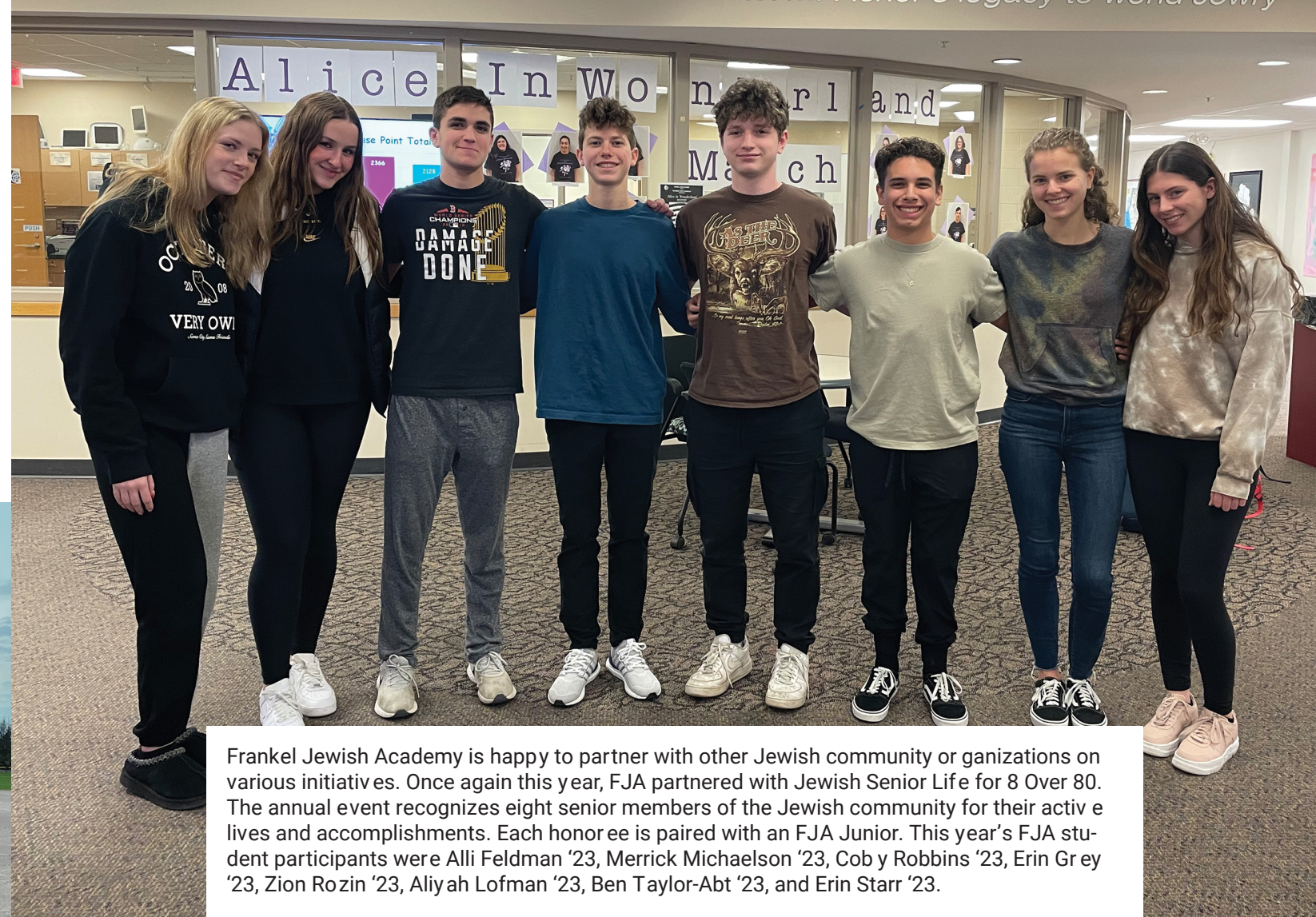
Eric Rapp (winner), Hadass Kidron (honorable mention), and Rebecca Strobehn (honorable mention) were honored as Educators of the Year in the High School category.  
**Detroit Jewish News, May 19, 2022**



Baseball Team Wins its First Catholic League Division Title in 17 Years,  
**Detroit Jewish News, June 20, 2022**

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

# קשרים בקהילה



Frankel Jewish Academy is happy to partner with other Jewish community or ganizations on various initiatives. Once again this year, FJA partnered with Jewish Senior Life for 8 Over 80. The annual event recognizes eight senior members of the Jewish community for their active lives and accomplishments. Each honor ee is paired with an FJA Junior. This year's FJA student participants were Alli Feldman '23, Merrick Michaelson '23, Cob y Robbins '23, Erin Grey '23, Zion Rozin '23, Aliyah Lofman '23, Ben Taylor-Abt '23, and Erin Starr '23.

FJA is also excited to partner with BBYO for a mental health and wellness program for parents and teens. Look for more information on how you can attend this fall.



# YEAR IN REVIEW סיכום השנה

## ROBOTRAFFIC

Mazal Tov to the FJA Robotraffic team for receiving third place in the traffic safety initiatives category at this year's Technion Robotraffic competition! The students proposed an in-road signal transmitter that could be received by cars to let the computer or the driver know if they were drifting out of their lanes. While the competition usually takes place in person, this year, it took place virtually with all materials prepared and submitted in advance. Avi Shere '24, Jacob Rond '23, Shai Brown '24, Nolan Kovacs '24, Eric Diskin '24, and Eli Rosenzweig '25, students from Mr. Pinter's Topics in Computer Science class, delivered the presentation for the competition. They weren't the only students taking part in the fun. We had a large group of students showing enthusiasm for robotics and technology this year. Madison Charnas '24, Tali Feingold '24, Brody Fleishman '25, Elijah Fradkin '24, Aryeh Gamer '25, Rena Kantor '25, Jonah Miller '24, Rebecca Rabin '24, Elliot Salama '24, Ryan Schmeltz '24, Harry Shaevisky '24, Meir Shomer '25, and Ashten Spector '24 all took part in robotraffic inspired activities during lunch and X-block. All of the students' creativity and innovation makes us excited for what next year will bring. Thank you to the Ravitz Foundation for their multi-year support of the Robotraffic competition.



## MERRICK MICHAELSON '23 MAKES FJA HISTORY

Merrick Michaelson '23 made history this school year as the first runner to compete in the MHSAA Cross Country State Championships - all on his own. While he couldn't run in the event on the scheduled date because it fell on Shabbat, Merrick was allowed to record his official time for the championships during course prep on Friday, and he performed admirably. Competing solo in cross country is an immense challenge, but Merrick entered and exited the day with a phenomenal attitude, excited to make history and represent the Jags. His time of 18:16 earned him 95th place overall, well into the top half of the field. We'd like to thank everyone for their support this season, especially Merrick's parents Jeremy and Melissa, Mr. Dorn, Mr. Canvasser, and Rabbi Cohen for coming out to support Merrick at Michigan International Speedway for his race. It was an amazing season, and we're looking forward to next year!

## MAIMONIDES MOOT COURT COMPETITION

For this year's international Maimonides Moot Court Competition, students were tasked with answering the question - is online shaming permissible for a greater cause?

Our FJA team met weekly to prepare both written and oral presentations. Their response to the question was based on their study and analysis of traditional Jewish texts, including the Bible and Talmud, and commentaries spanning 2,000 years.

Our team competed against six other teams - two from Israel, and four separate teams from a Jewish school in San Diego. The FJA team's written response and oral presentation earned first place among the seven teams competing on April 3rd in the Cardozo Division of the MMCC Virtual Competition.

Our team members included Evan Weitzman '23 (captain), Samantha Caminker '24, Elijah Fradkin '24, and Esti Klein '24 with Rabbi Elliot Pachter as the Team Advisor. All team members participated last year, and Evan Weitzman is now a three year MMCC veteran. They have learned a lot from their past experiences, and their hard work paid off this year.

Mazal tov MMCC team!





# JAGS IN COMPETITION



The 2021-2022 school year was a return to normalcy. Our student athletes who went without competition for the last year and a half returned with smiles and anticipation.

Getting back out on the field and the court allowed us to watch the Frankel student athletes return to the success that has always been the norm. The boys tennis team finished second in the league and reached the state finals for the sixth time in seven years. Maybe you caught a boys baseball game; they were recently named the 2022 Catholic League Intersectional II Champions. Merrick Michaelson '23 ran in his second consecutive MHSAA cross country state championship as the first runner in state history to compete on the historic MIS course on his own. You likely witnessed one of our athletes doing what they love, as 75% of our student body played at least one sport during the school year.

With the last couple of years behind them, these Jags flourished in 2021-2022. Our students once again represented our school in a way that has made all those associated with Frankel Jewish Academy proud. GO JAGS!

**Rick Dorn**  
DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS





# CELEBRATING THE ARTS



## RETURN TO LIVE THEATER

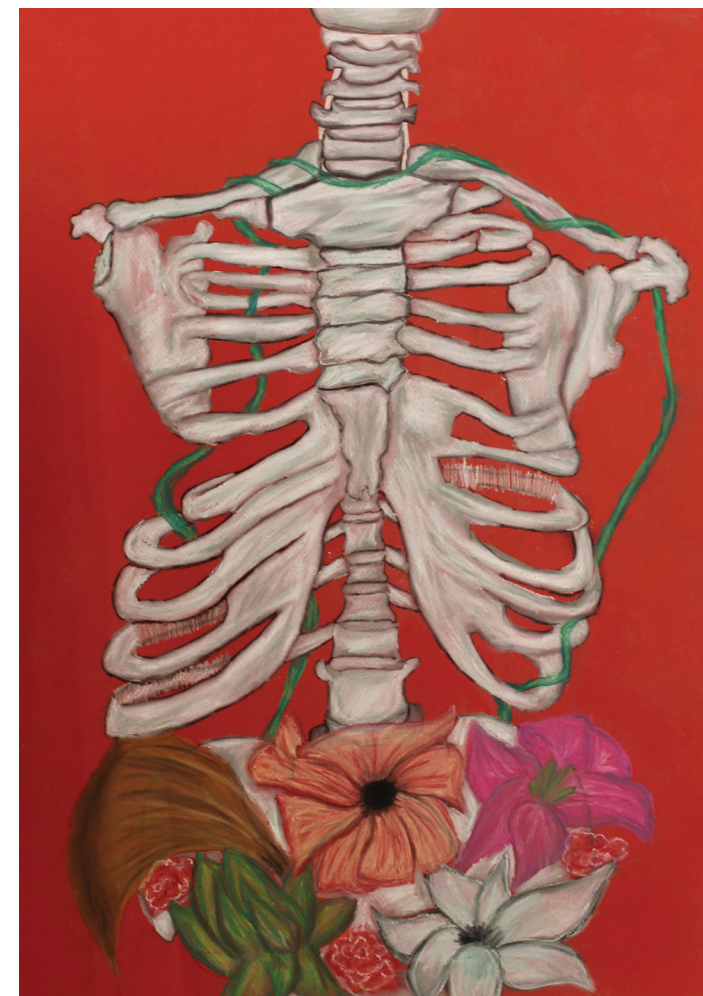
The excitement of live theater returned to FJA in 2021-2022 as the Performing Arts lowered the lights and raised the curtain on the Berman stage with two innovative productions during the school year.

Eight talented students rehearsed for eight weeks to prepare for our opening night of "The Odd Couple" (Female Version) in the first week of December. It was such a joy to fill the theater with laughter and applause by an appreciative FJA community. Those students, many of whom had only virtual theater opportunities, blossomed and radiated in costume, in character, and in real time.

The FJA spring musical, "Alice in Wonderland," included a cast of ten dedicated and passionate theater students. The majority of the ensemble took on multiple roles in order to successfully choreograph this grand show! In late March, the FJA community was the recipient of an entertainment treat as they bought their ticket for a mystical journey in this musical comedy that witnessed Alice crossing paths with a crazy cast of characters.

We look forward to the adventures that lie ahead, and we revel in what will occur at the auditions of a very special dramedy entitled, "John Lennon & Me." Keep your eyes open for more information in the coming months as FJA Performing Arts emerges from rehearsals to deliver another crowd pleasing offering in the elegant Berman Theater on December 14 & 15. Save the date and see you then!

**Mitch Master**  
DIRECTOR OF THE PERFORMING ARTS \* THEATER MANAGER



## VISUAL ARTS

FJA's Visual and Performing Arts classes create environments that foster trust, comfort, creativity, and encourage a journey of self-discovery. Art is vitally important to building self-esteem, enabling students to let go of inhibitions, and take risks as they encounter challenges, both on and off the stage, or in and out of the art studio. Our incredible FJA arts instructors guide our students to comprehend, appreciate, and make educated choices, while applying the creative process to all areas of their lives. After two years of sharing student art virtually, we are so happy that we were able to finally welcome guests back in person to view and appreciate student artwork!

We are grateful to the Burton A. Zipser and Sandra D. Zipser Foundation for their support of music education and performance, including Celebration of the Arts. They established the Zipser Fund for Music Education and Performance at Frankel Jewish Academy in order to create meaningful opportunities for students at FJA to learn about, appreciate, and perform music.

**ARTWORK CLOCKWISE FROM TOP**  
Lilah Glazer '24, Leah Phillips '22, Natalie Cherrin '22





# STUDENT LIFE



The 2021-2022 school year was full of FJA ruach (spirit)! We were so happy to bring back some FJA traditions that were put on hold for the last two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For the first time since early 2020, students were able to experience Shabbatonim! The combined 9th and 10th grade Shabbaton began with a high ropes course at TreeRunner Adventure Park and then moved on to spend Shabbat hosted by Congregation Shaarey Zedek. Our 11th and 12th graders participated in the first ever Shabbaton in the FJA building, and began the fun with an excursion to Zap Zone. The seniors also participated in the first ever "Senior Lock-In" that included a host of grade bonding activities. We also brought back Chugim - enrichment and hobby activities led by FJA faculty and staff. Students were given a plethora of choices, including bracelet making, making fire with your hands, magic, mindfulness and relaxation, word games, DEAR (Drop Everything And Read), hockey talk, Bachelor Nation, card games A to Z, recycle it (repairing things), and intro to guitar. We introduced House Spirit Days and House Spirit Week in the fall and held the traditional grade-wide Spirit Week in the spring. Students took the lead and created an "explosion" of new clubs to participate in, including the Dungeons and Dragons Club, Anime Club, Volunteer Club, Art Club, and many others.




We look forward to all that the next school year has in store!



# 2022 CLASS OF SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

**ASHLEIGH ADELSON**



**Michigan State University**  
Major: Psychology or Sciences

**ADRIANA AZARIAH**



**Michigan State University**  
Lyman Briggs College  
Major: Physics

**DANIEL BERNSTEIN**



**University of Michigan**  
Major: Communications & Media

**NATALIE CHERRIN**



**University of Michigan**  
Major: Psychology

**REBECCA CHYNOWETH**



**Michigan State University**  
Major: Science

**SKYLAR ELBINGER**



**Michigan State University**  
Major: Communications

**SOPHIE FEILER**




**Colorado State University**  
Major: Sociology

**SHAYNA FOREMAN**




**University of Michigan**  
Major: Biology, Health, & Society  
(pre-public health)

**OZ GAMER**



**DePaul University**  
Major: Psychology

**MAYA GOLDBERG**



**College of the Atlantic**  
Major: Ecology, Environmental Studies

**RAYNA GOLNICK**



**University of Michigan**  
Major: Pharmaceutical Sciences

**ELI GORDON**



**Michigan State University**  
Major: James Madison College- Pre Law

**MATTHEW KAY**



**Michigan State University**  
Major: Marketing

**CALEB KLEINFELDT**



Bar Ilan University Israel Experience Gap Year  
**Syracuse University**  
Major: Finance

**CHARLIE LABELLE**



**Michigan State University**  
Major: Engineering

**SASHA MILLER**



frameable faces  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
**University of Arizona**  
Major: Undecided

**SHAYLA MOSTYN**



**Eastern Michigan University**  
Honors College  
Major: Sociology & Journalism

**LEAH PHILLIPS**



**University of Michigan**  
Major: Science & Engineering

**LINDSAY RANDEL**



Education First (EF) Gap Year  
**University of Michigan**  
Major: Undecided

**KIRA SAROKEN**



**Michigan State University**  
Major: Business/ Hospitality  
Management

**LINDSAY SCHLUSSEL**



Kivunim Gap Year  
**University of Michigan**  
Major: Undecided

**BENJI SCHMELTZ**



**University of Michigan**  
Major: Undecided/Biology/Pre Med

**NORA SKOLNIK**



**Michigan State University**  
Major: Psychology

**ADAM STATE**




**University of Michigan**  
Major: Undecided

**DANIEL STRYK**



**University of Michigan**  
Major: BBA Ross School of Business

**CHARLIE TOBIAS**



**Michigan State University**  
Major: Social Work

**ANDY TUKEL**



**University of Michigan**  
Major: BBA Ross School of Business

**JOEL VAN LOON**

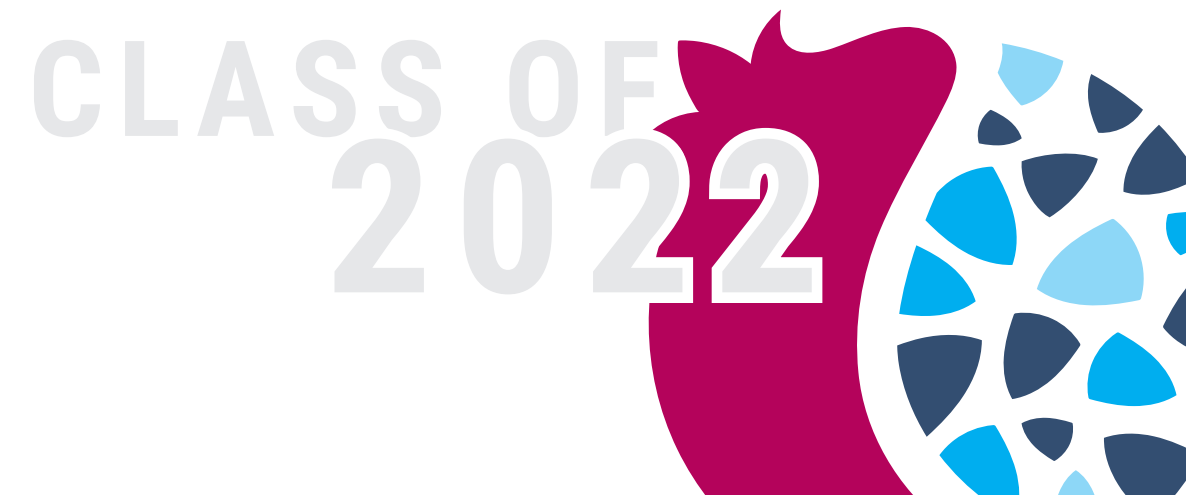


**Eastern Michigan University**  
Major: ROTC, Navy & Military  
Science

**DALIA ZWAS**



**Michigan State University**  
Major: Finance





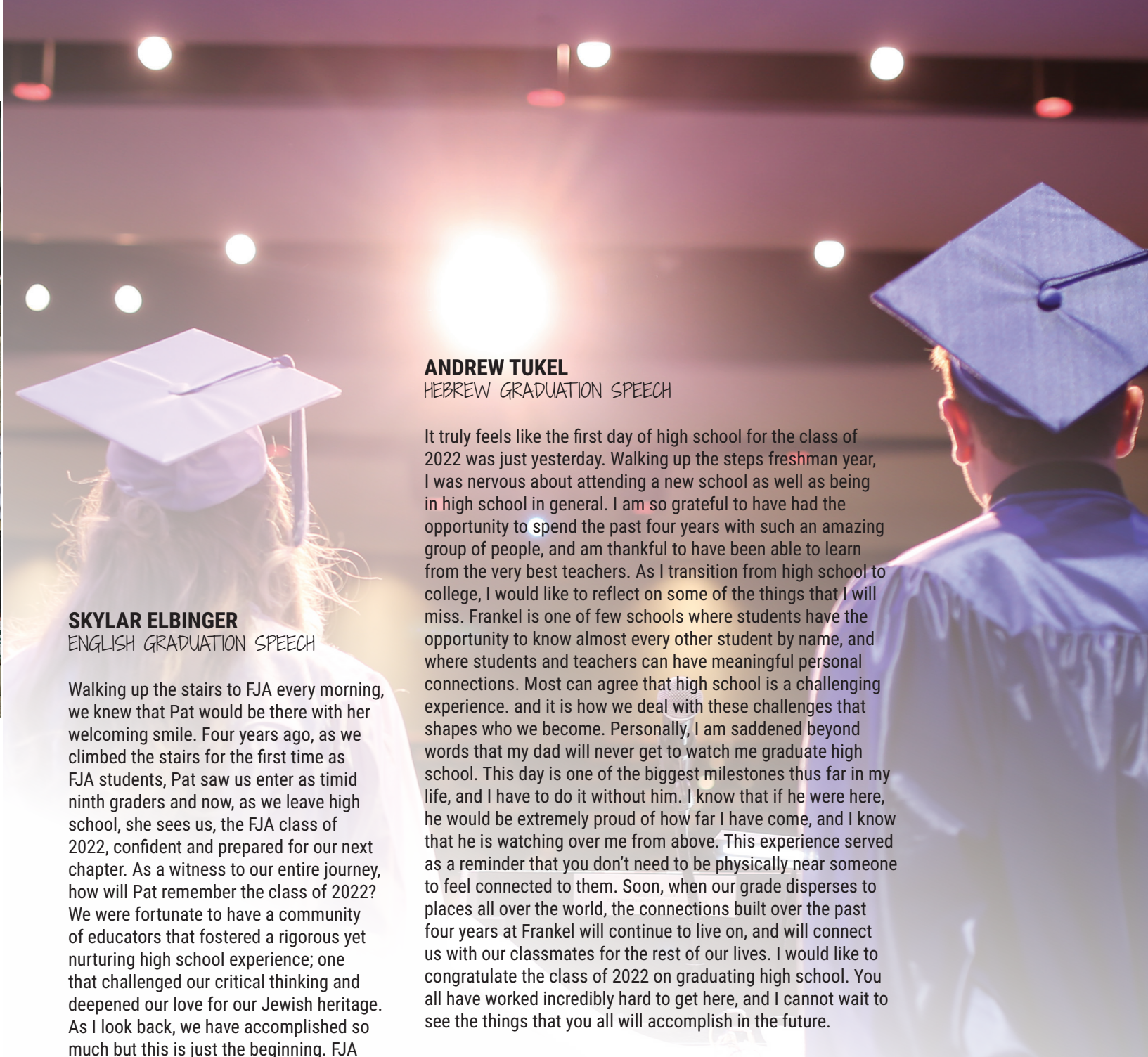


# מזל טוב

# MAZAL TOV

# SENIORS

OWN YOUR JOURNEY. DISCOVER YOUR TOMORROW.



## ANDREW TUKEL

### HEBREW GRADUATION SPEECH

It truly feels like the first day of high school for the class of 2022 was just yesterday. Walking up the steps freshman year, I was nervous about attending a new school as well as being in high school in general. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to spend the past four years with such an amazing group of people, and am thankful to have been able to learn from the very best teachers. As I transition from high school to college, I would like to reflect on some of the things that I will miss. Frankel is one of few schools where students have the opportunity to know almost every other student by name, and where students and teachers can have meaningful personal connections. Most can agree that high school is a challenging experience. and it is how we deal with these challenges that shapes who we become. Personally, I am saddened beyond words that my dad will never get to watch me graduate high school. This day is one of the biggest milestones thus far in my life, and I have to do it without him. I know that if he were here, he would be extremely proud of how far I have come, and I know that he is watching over me from above. This experience served as a reminder that you don't need to be physically near someone to feel connected to them. Soon, when our grade disperses to places all over the world, the connections built over the past four years at Frankel will continue to live on, and will connect us with our classmates for the rest of our lives. I would like to congratulate the class of 2022 on graduating high school. You all have worked incredibly hard to get here, and I cannot wait to see the things that you all will accomplish in the future.

אני מרגיש כאילו היום הראשון של בית ספר תיכון היה אתמול. כשעליתי במדרגות בפעם הראשונה, פחדתי ללמוד בבית ספר חדש, אבל ידעתי שזאת תהיה הזדמנות נהדרת ללמוד עם אנשים מצוינים, וללמוד ממורים הכי טובים. עכשיו, אני מסיים את בית ספר תיכון ואתחיל ללמוד באוניברסיטה בעוד כמה חודשים. אני רוצה לדבר על הדברים שאתגעגע אליהם. פראנקל מיוחד כי יש לכולם את האפשרות להכיר את החברים והמורים יותר טוב מבית ספר ציבורי. אני רוצה לומר תודה לכל המורים, כי בגללם אנחנו יכולים להצליח בכל דבר שנעשה אחרי פראנקל בחודשים הבאים, כולם יהיו בהרבה מקומות שונים בעולם, אבל הקשרים שקשרנו בפראנקל יהיו חזקים לתמיד. אני עצוב מאוד שאבא שלי לא יכול להיות פה כשאני מסיים את בית ספר תיכון. זה הזמן הכי חשוב בחיים שלי עד עכשיו, ולו הוא היה פה היום, אני יודע שהוא היה גאה מאוד. אני יודע שהוא שומר עלי מלמעלה, ולחלק מאיתנו היושבים פה חסר היום מישהו שמתגעגעים אליו או אליה: חשוב לזכור שהם שומרים עליכם ושמחים איתכם מלמעלה. לא תמיד צריכים להיות עם מישהו כדי להרגיש קשר איתם. אני רוצה לומר מזל טוב לכיתה שלנו. אנחנו עבדנו הרבה מאוד כדי להיות פה היום, ואני מחכה לראות את כל מה שנעשה בעתיד.

## SKYLAR ELBINGER

### ENGLISH GRADUATION SPEECH

Walking up the stairs to FJA every morning, we knew that Pat would be there with her welcoming smile. Four years ago, as we climbed the stairs for the first time as FJA students, Pat saw us enter as timid ninth graders and now, as we leave high school, she sees us, the FJA class of 2022, confident and prepared for our next chapter. As a witness to our entire journey, how will Pat remember the class of 2022? We were fortunate to have a community of educators that fostered a rigorous yet nurturing high school experience; one that challenged our critical thinking and deepened our love for our Jewish heritage. As I look back, we have accomplished so much but this is just the beginning. FJA has given us the confidence to advocate for ourselves, and has reinforced our ability to learn and grow even when the circumstances were unexpected. I hope Pat and the FJA faculty, staff and community see us as resilient, thoughtful, and prepared to follow our dreams and goals. I hope that they will look back and be proud that the class of 2022 persevered and succeeded during a time when challenges were at every corner and that we exemplified the mission of FJA. Congratulations FJA Class of 2022.



# THRIVING & EXPLORING



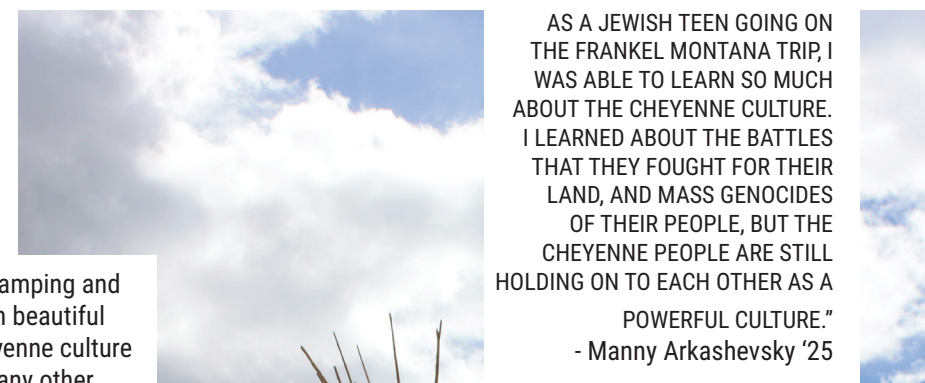
Beginning this year, all FJA students had multiple opportunities to leave the four walls of school behind and explore the world around them. These opportunities for experiential education were each framed by Jewish texts and values, and focused on the identity of each student. They offered unique experiences for students to take a physical journey, but also an educational journey. Students learned together, bonded over unique opportunities, and were challenged to create and build Jewish communities together. Faculty and staff guided them on explorations as they learned from the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, did community service in the Pacific Northwest, and traversed Israel. It was an opportunity for students to learn about themselves, too.



## NORTHERN CHEYENNE MONTANA EXPERIENCE



FJA's 9th grade students spent a week at the end of May camping and learning with members of the Northern Cheyenne Nation in beautiful Lame Deer, Montana. Students experienced Northern Cheyenne culture and ritual, including music, dance, the sweat lodge, and many other activities. They hiked and explored the landscape and met with high school students from the reservation. Hosted by The Lodge Approach, an organization that focuses on exploring commonalities between cultures through shared experiences, the students learned about tribal history, environmental issues, and learned cultural practices from tribal elders.



AS A JEWISH TEEN GOING ON THE FRANKEL MONTANA TRIP, I WAS ABLE TO LEARN SO MUCH ABOUT THE CHEYENNE CULTURE. I LEARNED ABOUT THE BATTLES THAT THEY FOUGHT FOR THEIR LAND, AND MASS GENOCIDES OF THEIR PEOPLE, BUT THE CHEYENNE PEOPLE ARE STILL HOLDING ON TO EACH OTHER AS A POWERFUL CULTURE."  
- Manny Arkashevsky '25





ISRAEL EXPERIENCE

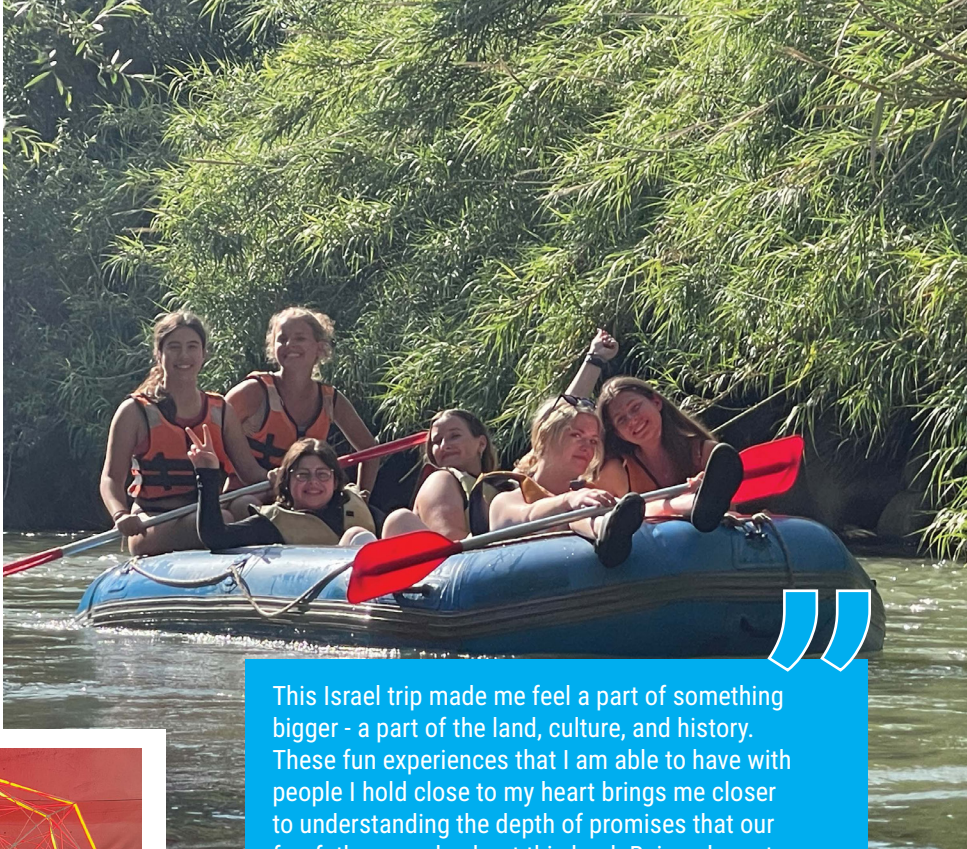


Students visited some of the traditional Israel tour highlights, but also learned about other cultures and religions in Israel, the environmental struggles in Israel today, and also had an opportunity to do community service. While the trip was sidelined for some by Covid-19, overall it was a great experience for the 11th and 12th grades.



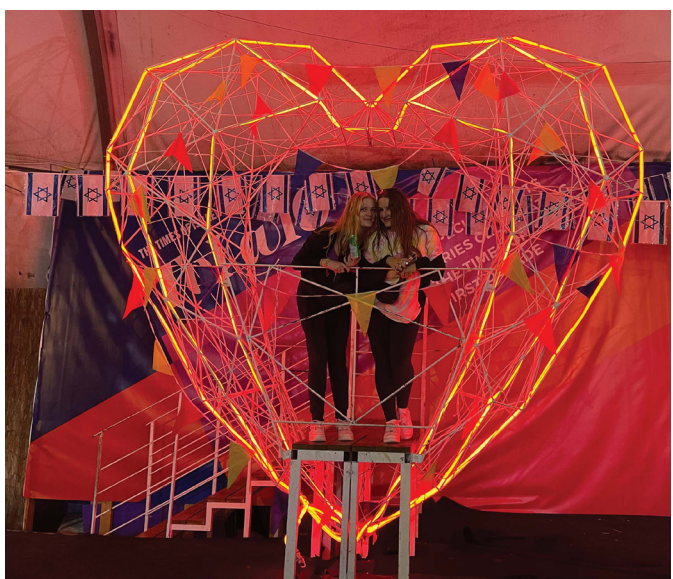
“

AS I ENTERED ISRAEL, MY JEWISH HOMELAND, FOR THE FIFTH TIME, I APPRECIATED THE FEELING OF WELCOME THAT ENGULFED ME. I REMEMBER THINKING THAT ALL OF THE OBSTACLES ALONG THE WAY WERE COMPLETELY WORTH IT TO BE IN ISRAEL, WHERE I STRENGTHENED BONDS WITHIN MY RELIGION, CULTURE, AND PEOPLE.  
Ethan Grey '23



”

This Israel trip made me feel a part of something bigger - a part of the land, culture, and history. These fun experiences that I am able to have with people I hold close to my heart brings me closer to understanding the depth of promises that our forefathers made about this land. Being closer to a God that I usually felt little connection with and performing family rituals and values in Israel filled me with a sense of being young again in the sense that I felt a lot smaller in a big world. Like the visit itself was a parent, holding my hand and guiding me through things I can't understand yet but stand amazed to see. I have also gotten closer to the people around me. Being in a different setting than school and in a place we all share awe for shows us a different side of each other that we wouldn't have been able to see otherwise. The food that we shared in the Shuk, the nights in Jerusalem, the hikes we share in the beautiful scenery, it all lets us get closer.  
Leah Phillips '22



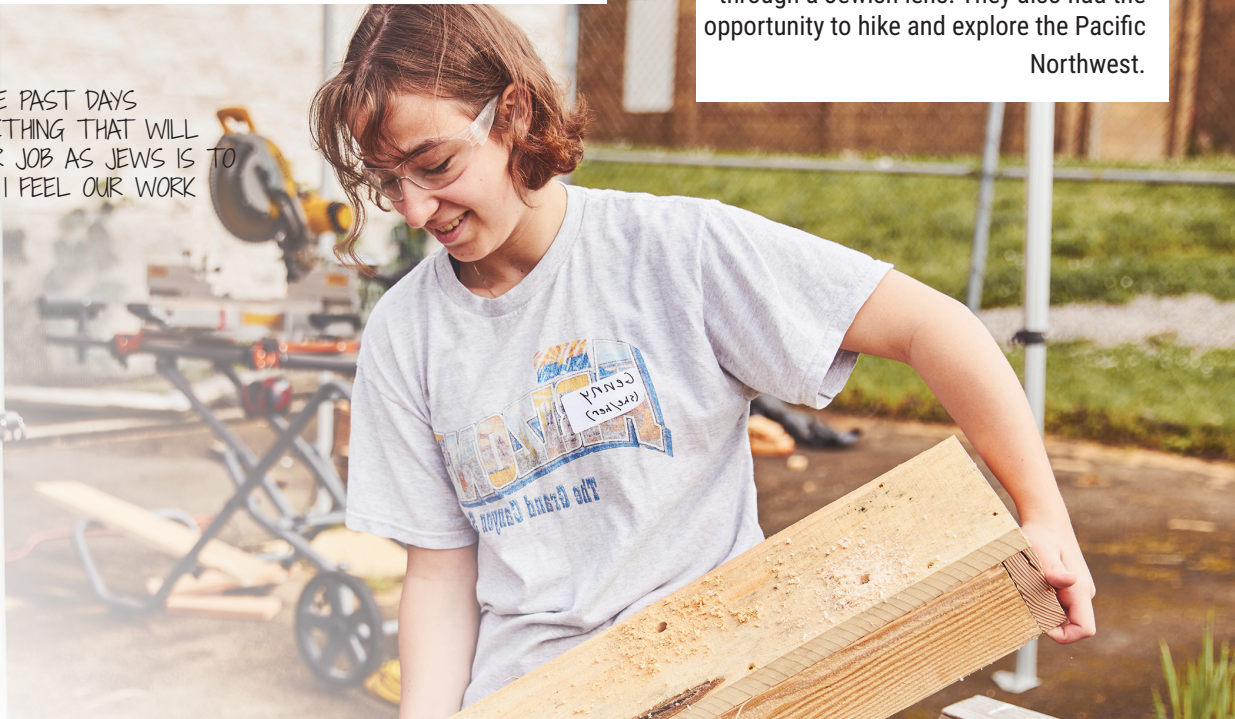


PORTLAND COMMUNITY SERVICE  
EXPERIENCE



This five-day experience provided by our partner Tivnu introduced students to the history, culture, and scenery of the Pacific Northwest, as well as provided an opportunity for students to do community service. In keeping with FJA's values of serving the Jewish and general community, students learned about the issue of affordable housing and helped build homes in a "tiny home" community. They learned about some of today's most pressing social issues, including housing, food, and environmental challenges through a Jewish lens. They also had the opportunity to hike and explore the Pacific Northwest.

"I REALLY ENJOYED THESE PAST DAYS VOLUNTEERING FOR SOMETHING THAT WILL TRULY HELP PEOPLE. OUR JOB AS JEWS IS TO REPAIR THE WORLD, AND I FEEL OUR WORK REALLY DID!"  
Cami Katzen '24



“WHILE I ANTICIPATED THIS WOULD BE A FUN WEEK WITH MY FRIENDS IN A COOL CITY, I CAME HOME FEELING A VERY STRONG SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AND THE REWARD OF CHANGING PEOPLE'S LIVES FOR THE BETTER. I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER HOW I INTEGRATED MY HEAD, HEART, AND HANDS INTO THE PERFORMANCE OF CHARITABLE ACTS.  
Jonah Miller '24





# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## RACHAEL DAWSON-BAGLIEN '04

When Rachael Dawson-Baglien '04 graduated from FJA/JAMD, she knew she wanted to have a career where she could help others. After majoring in psychology at Albion College, she completed an accelerated masters program in clinical psychology at the Michigan School of Psychology. Upon graduation, she served two terms with AmeriCorps to earn her clinical psychology license. While in AmeriCorps, she worked with teenagers in Wayne County. When recounting her experience, she says, "I realized that I could be the best therapist/probation officer in the world, but unless systemic community issues were addressed, nothing would change."



She decided to go back to school for macro social work to focus on creating healthier communities, receiving her masters in macro social work/community organizing from the University of Michigan. "Now I have a job I love where I get to help make Washtenaw County an aging-friendly community and connect caregivers and older adults with resources."

Rachael works for Catholic Social Services as project manager for their newest initiative, Ahead of the Curve. This innovative, web-based project connects older adults and caregivers with local resources and trains community members to recognize signs of elder abuse so they're able to reach out to vulnerable older adults in their community. She manages

an online directory of 500+ resources, publishes a weekly blog, schedules presentations, and is out in the community raising awareness.

Rachael is proud to be a connector for older adults, helping them to reduce barriers and find ways to pair needs with solutions. As a member of the AARP Ride @50+ Advisory Council, one of the accomplishments she is most proud of is connecting the Detroit Area Vaccine Hunters, who help schedule vaccine appointments, with the AARP Ride @50+ program, which helps schedule rides to vaccine appointments. In this role, Rachael helped increase the number of older adults who were able to be vaccinated.

Rachael's journey at FJA helped lead her to where she is today. "There was such a sense of possibility when I went to FJA because everything was so new. If we wanted a club or a specific type of minivan, we were empowered to make it happen. This is something I definitely took with me when I was doing programming for Jewish Young Professionals in Ann Arbor" she says.

We are so proud of the work Rachael is doing in the community.



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## ADAM LUGER '06

When he was a prospective student, one unique fact about FJA (then the Jewish Academy of Metropolitan Detroit - JAMD) that stuck out to Adam Luger '06 was that it gave students the ability to be self-starters. Whether it was starting a club, a new sports team, or even a class, the school was always supportive of students being leaders, and following their passions. "I think this definitely had an impact on me while I was a student at FJA, and, years later, gave me the confidence to start my own business."

Today, Adam runs his own business, Blue Racer Productions, a small video production company that specializes in wedding films, and also does a lot of work with local non-profit organizations, schools across Michigan, and small businesses. Prior to starting his own business, Adam graduated from Michigan State University with a major in Telecommunications with a focus on Digital Media Arts.

His first stop after graduation? His Alma Mater. Adam worked at FJA for six years as a communications specialist, creating various videos for the school, working on the weekly newsletter (Sof Shavua), and was in charge of the FJA social media channels. He also taught video production and coached JV basketball (in his first season coaching, the team went 12-6).



When reflecting on his time as a student, Adam says "I remember feeling like there was always something amazing that happened every day at JAMD, to the point where I would never want to miss a day of school, or even be late."

Adam's friendships with his fellow alumni extend far beyond the walls of FJA. In 2021 alone, he filmed the weddings of 11 alumni (two of those couples met at FJA!) We look forward to seeing many more FJA weddings and exciting projects he films this year and beyond.



If you would like to be featured in an alumni spotlight, please reach out to Jackie Yashinsky at [jyashinsky@frankelja.org](mailto:jyashinsky@frankelja.org)



# ח ד ש ו ת

# ב ו ג ר י ם

# A L U M N I N E W S

## MAZAL TOV to...



Alexis Sack '03 on the birth of her triplets Brody, Olivia, and Drew.

Stefanie Blechman Shoag '03 and her husband Yoni on the birth of their daughter, Sari Ruth.

Monica Rosen '03, Rachael Dawson-Baglien '04, Amira Soleimani '04, Jonathon Margolis '06, Eli Newman '09, Ilana Woronoff '12, and Noah Arbit '13 for being named as Detroit Jewish News 36 Under 36 winners!

Aaron Schaer '04 and his wife Keren Thoms on the birth of their son Noah Aviv Schaer.



Dr. Tova Gardin Kahn '05 for graduating from Stern College, then Harvard Medical School. She completed a Neurology Residency at Yale and is now pursuing a Psychiatry Residency at Yale. She is married to Dr. Peter Kahn. They have three beautiful children.

Adam Luger '06, Simon Pinter '06, Scott Wasserman '12 and their team at "52 Scripts" who won Best Film in the 2021 48 Hour Film Project: Detroit and will go on to compete internationally at Filmapalooza 2022 in Washington, DC.

Adam Luger '06 on his marriage to Jessica Sternberg.

Rebecca Nadis Strobehn '06 and her husband Zach on the birth of their son, Noah Shai Strobehn.



Sam Appel '08 on his marriage to Ariel Oppenheim.



Danielle DePriest '08 and her husband Matt Newman on the birth of their son Max Avery Newman.

Teddie Olender Eisenberg '08 and her husband Adam on the birth of their daughter Dillan Elle Eisenberg.

Bradley Gladstone '08 for the growth of his business, Urban Bee LLC. Starting the business in 2017, he is now up to 11 clients. Urban Bee LLC aims to educate Oakland County and Wayne County residents/businesses on the importance of bees to our lives, environment, and biodiversity, via a fun, safe, and unique sustainability project to invest in.

Erinn Kohn '08 and Matthew Greenberg '09 on their marriage.

Liz Traison '08 and husband Ari on the birth of their son Raviv Shalev Traison Witkin.

Ben Gutkovitch '09 and his wife Mary on the birth of their son Mataan Chaim Gutkovitch.



Stephanie Horwitz '09 on her marriage to Itai Reuveni.

Rachel Belsky Moss '09 and Justin Moss '10 on the birth of their son Tyler Ronnie Moss.

Hannah Cohen Eichenholtz '10 on her marriage to Eric Eichenholtz.

Moshe Alishayev '11 for graduating from Midwestern University College of Pharmacy in Glendale, Arizona.



Samantha Zwick Jacoby '12 and her husband Daniel on the birth of their son, Aiden Michael Jacoby.

Justin Kelman '12 on his engagement to Jen Reich from Queens, NY.

Sarah Baruch Platt '08 and her husband Kevin on the birth of their son Noah Aviv Platt.



Scott Wasserman '12 on receiving the President's Award from Tamarack Camps.

Noah Arbit '13 who won his primary for State Representative.

Natalie Bloom '13 on her engagement to Daniel Behrman.

Avital Elyazam '13 on her marriage to Mitchell Rosenfeld.

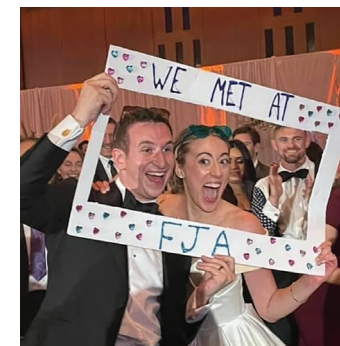
Laurenne Kaufman Klinger '13 on her marriage to Bernard Klinger.

Katie Miller '13 on her engagement to Rafi Lowenstein.

Arica Cykiert '14 on her engagement to Logan Nathanson.

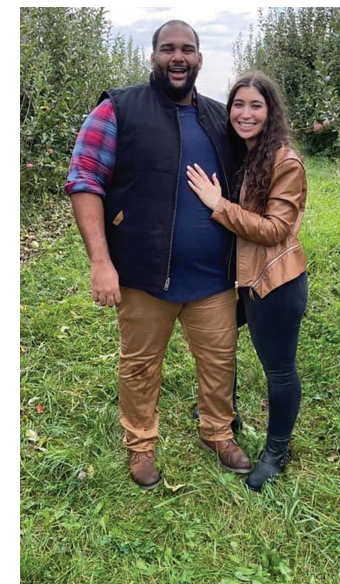
Emery Weiss '14 on his engagement to Jordyn Rosenzweig, and has now graduated from MSU medical school.

Annie Slabotsky '15 and her company, GoNanas for being featured on BuzzFeed, Good Morning America, and QVC.



Jake Berlin '16 and Talia Gothelf '16 on their marriage.

Atara Krakoff '16 on her engagement to Shane Sperling.



Nathan Klausner '17 for graduating magna cum laude from Binghamton University and his acceptance to Central Michigan University Medical School.

Elisheva Phillips '17 for finishing her Masters in Aerospace Engineering at the University of Michigan and for starting at Northrop Grumman in the summer, where she will be working on spaceships for NASA.



Jeremy Rosenberg '17 on his marriage to Menuchah Bluth.

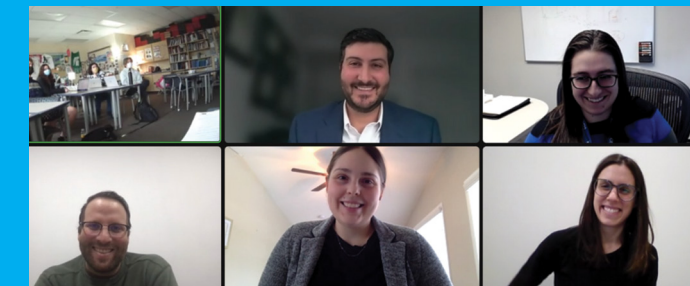
Yael Elrom '18 for graduating from Michigan State with a bachelors in Psychology and for starting grad school at Michigan State University working towards her masters in social work. She will be doing a certificate program specializing in addiction studies and will be interning/working at the 30th District Circuit Court - Juvenile Division as a Judicial Court Officer for Ingham County.

Andrew Weiss '18 for graduating from MSU undergrad and is now entering a graduate program for physical therapy at the University of Miami.

Rachel Baker '21 for graduating from Army Basic Combat Training.

**SUBMIT YOUR NEWS DIRECTLY THROUGH OUR WEBSITE**  
[frankelja.org/alumni](http://frankelja.org/alumni)

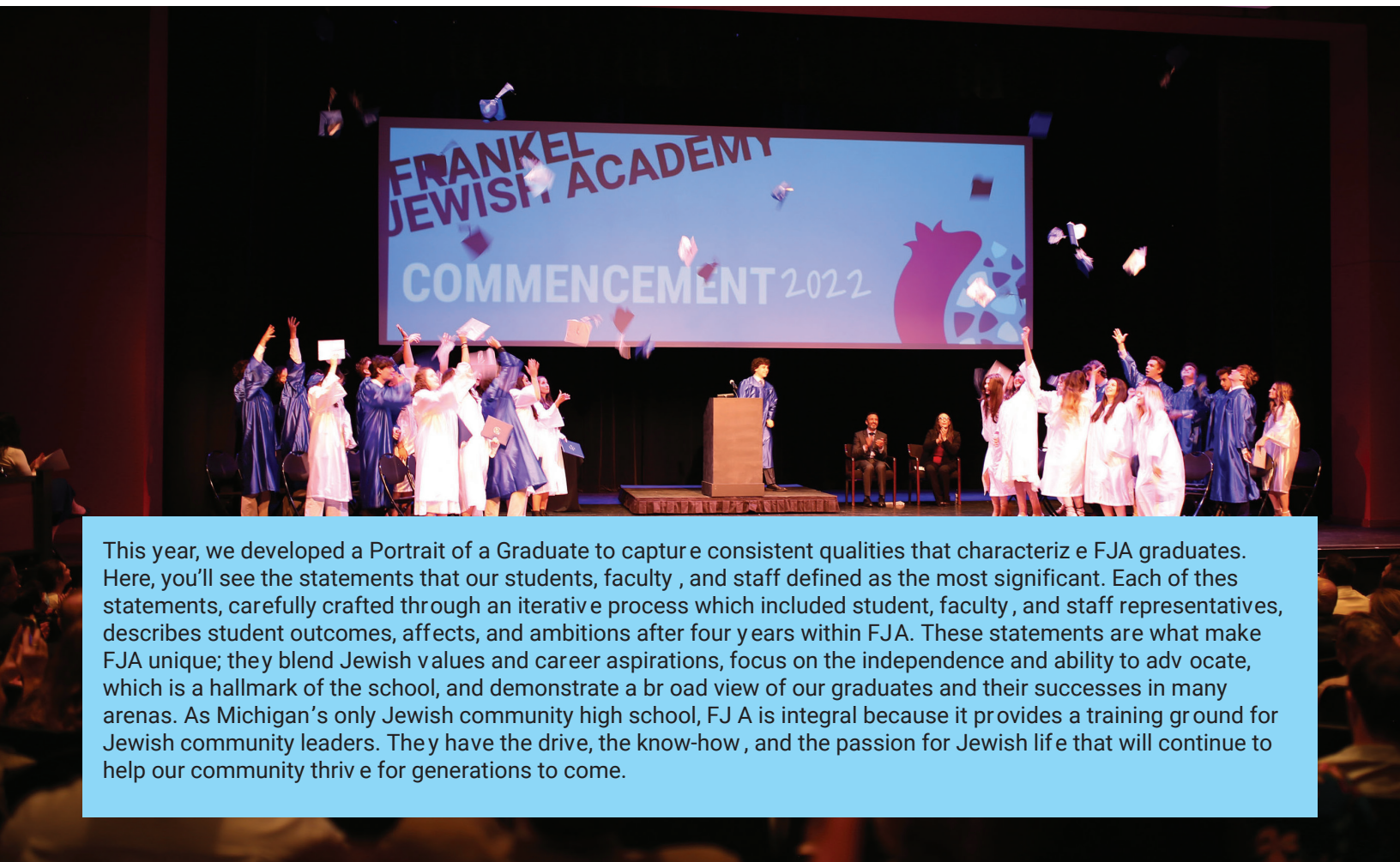
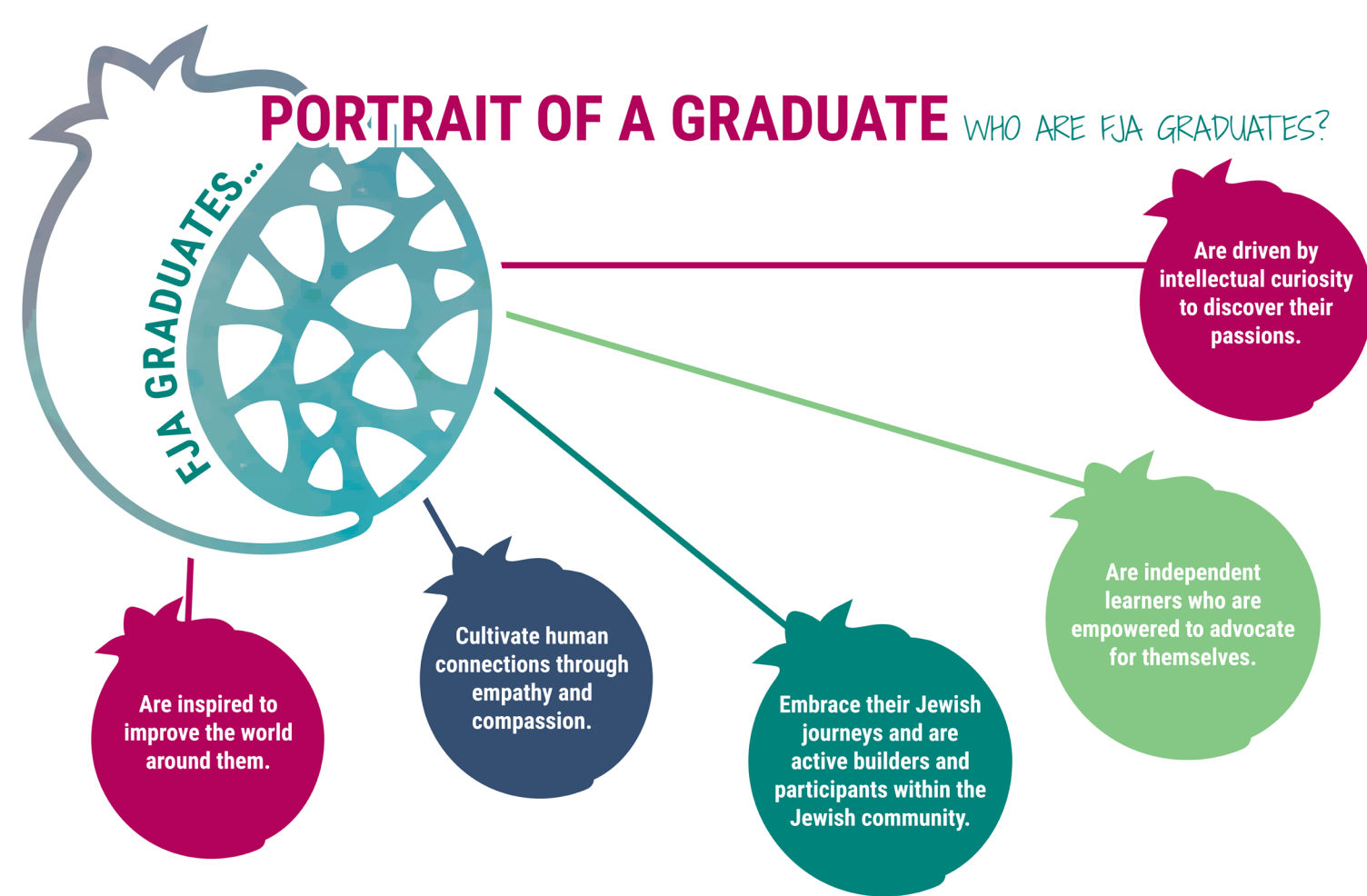
## ALUMNI in the CLASSROOM



In the winter, Mrs. Sesi's Practical Law class went through an introduction to law and the legal system. The class studied what it takes to be a lawyer, and what a career as a lawyer could look like beyond what students see on television. The class hosted their annual panel of lawyers, and the majority of the guests were FJA alumni. Thank you to Sarah Sallen '04, Leah Schloss '05, Danielle Depriest '08, Josh Lowenthal '10, and Ryan Shaening-Pokrasso for joining us and sharing your expertise!



# PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE WHO ARE FJA GRADUATES?



This year, we developed a Portrait of a Graduate to capture consistent qualities that characterize FJA graduates. Here, you'll see the statements that our students, faculty, and staff defined as the most significant. Each of these statements, carefully crafted through an iterative process which included student, faculty, and staff representatives, describes student outcomes, affects, and ambitions after four years within FJA. These statements are what make FJA unique; they blend Jewish values and career aspirations, focus on the independence and ability to advocate, which is a hallmark of the school, and demonstrate a broad view of our graduates and their successes in many arenas. As Michigan's only Jewish community high school, FJA is integral because it provides a training ground for Jewish community leaders. They have the drive, the know-how, and the passion for Jewish life that will continue to help our community thrive for generations to come.

## FROM FRESHMAN TO SENIOR YEAR Reflections by Sabrina Carson '21



**Q: Tell us why you decided to attend to FJA.**

A: I decided to attend FJA because of the community. I had already known a bunch of people coming into my grade from the Jewish community around the West Bloomfield area and knew they were all super nice. Not only did I make a ton of friends, but the academics and opportunities also did not disappoint, with ample possibilities and resources to delve into any niche studies I wished to pursue.

**Q: Who were your greatest influences while you were here?**

A: I had many great influences, however, I have to believe that Mrs. Dunajsky, FJA's college counselor, was my biggest role model. Not only did she help me with preparing for college, but she also helped me decide to pursue what eventually became my passion, journalism. She even oversaw an internship I had made for myself to be able to study journalism in a more in-depth manner! However, I do also want to mention Mrs. Untener who had a big hand in helping me with all of my in-class journalism pursuits.

**Q: What activities had an impact on your development from freshman year to graduation, and why?**

A: I loved activities, clubs, and sports at FJA as they were all super fun and manageable with my schedule. I was a part of many school drama productions, the tennis team, and even the school newspaper, all of which had an immense impact on me as I grew throughout my high school career. While the drama department helped me with public speaking, the tennis team helped with staying healthy! Not to mention the school newspaper eventually led me to my college major. One underlying theme that I do want to emphasize is that all of these activities had their own community. I absolutely loved getting to be a part of the drama department and have many fond memories of practice and getting ready in the dressing rooms, as well as fun tennis memories on the court with teammates cheering.

**Q: How did you decide on your current career path?**

A: I decided to pursue journalism as I love to write and participate in public speaking events. I eventually started the newspaper as a club in sophomore year, which then blossomed over time into something more. By the end of senior year I had become Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper class, had an internship where I was able to study journalism on an individual level, and even had started a podcast! The teachers and staff helped play a big part in helping me identify this niche I gave myself and helped hone my skills in both writing and speaking to be able to properly prepare for my now college major of journalism.

**Q: How would you describe yourself in freshman year versus who you are now?**

A: Entering as a freshman, I was like many other kids who have come to FJA over the years; resolute in my studies and life goals. However, over the course of my time at FJA, I was able to realize that grades aren't everything and that I did not need to have my entire life figured out at the age of 15. FJA gave me the chance to explore many different paths and parts of myself that I would have never known about if I had just stayed persistent in my unidirectional way of life, and I am grateful for those experiences everyday.

**Q: Looking back on your experience at FJA, what are your strongest memories?**

A: I have a ton of memories from my time at FJA. I remember eating pizza with the drama department, spirit week Jenga tournaments, and even morning Minyans. I remember a classmate's inflatable shark costume during Purim, Morah Kidron's voice saying, "Bye Metukah (sweetheart)!" everytime I left class, and I even remember emotional support puppies during midterms. However, my favorite set of memories has to be me screaming, "1, 2, 3, JAGSI!" at every single tennis match. I will never forget the soreness of my voice after, but it was always worth it.



# ADVANCEMENT NEWS

## ROOTS TO GROW

This year Frankel Jewish Academy introduced the Shorashim Grant program - an opportunity for current and incoming families to opt-in to grants that help reduce the cost of annual tuition. Shorashim Grants are available at up to \$10,000 per student annually and are guaranteed for a student's entire tenure at FJA.

"The goal of the Shorashim Grants is to increase the number of Jewish teens who have access to Frankel Jewish Academy's exceptional education, meaningful student and faculty relationships, and opportunities that are not available to all students in larger schools," said Rabbi Azaryah Cohen, FJA's Head of School. "Our mission is to inspire Jewish students, and that remains a priority for our community."

The word Shorashim means "roots" in Hebrew. These grants will help FJA provide roots for the Jewish community in metro Detroit by educating our Jewish young adults and preparing them to be lifelong leaders.

The Shorashim Grants are made possible through contributions from a generous group of donors. In addition to the Shorashim Grants, Frankel Jewish Academy continues to offer generous tuition assistance to keep FJA's incredible education affordable for all families.



## COMMUNITY APPRECIATION

The school year started off with a celebration courtesy of the William Davidson Foundation and the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. Staff and faculty were treated to a brunch to show appreciation, and each person was given a \$200 gift card.

"Over the last year and a half, our teachers have been so resilient and courageous in the face of the pandemic," said Steven Ingber, Federation CEO. "Many, in fact, put the well-being of our children above their own. We owe everyone who works in our schools an immense debt of gratitude and the teacher appreciation initiative was just one small way for us to say thank you."



## FJA'S ANNUAL GALA

We were thrilled to gather in person at this year's Annual Gala, honoring Vadim Avshalumov '03 and distinguished faculty member Eric Rapp! After two years of hosting the event virtually, we celebrated the opportunity to gather together. FJA parents, students, grandparents, alumni, and community members came together on a picture-perfect evening. Guests enjoyed an indoor/outdoor strolling dinner, followed by a program in the Berman Theater.



At the program, we had the opportunity to recognize our honorees for their impact on FJA over the years. Vadim Avshalumov was a part of the first graduating class of FJA. Vadim inspired classes of students after him to participate in a day of community service projects called "Vadim Day". Vadim is a past board member of FJA, in addition to being involved

in several other community organizations.

Eric Rapp has been a part of FJA's faculty for ten years. He teaches Calculus and Physics and is the Mathematics Department Chair. Eric exemplifies one of the most impactful parts of FJA - the student/teacher relationship. The bonds created last well beyond graduation. Years later, he still meets with a group of past students to see the latest Star Wars movie whenever a new one is released.

Thanks to our generous community, the Gala helped to raise crucial funds for FJA's Annual Fund.

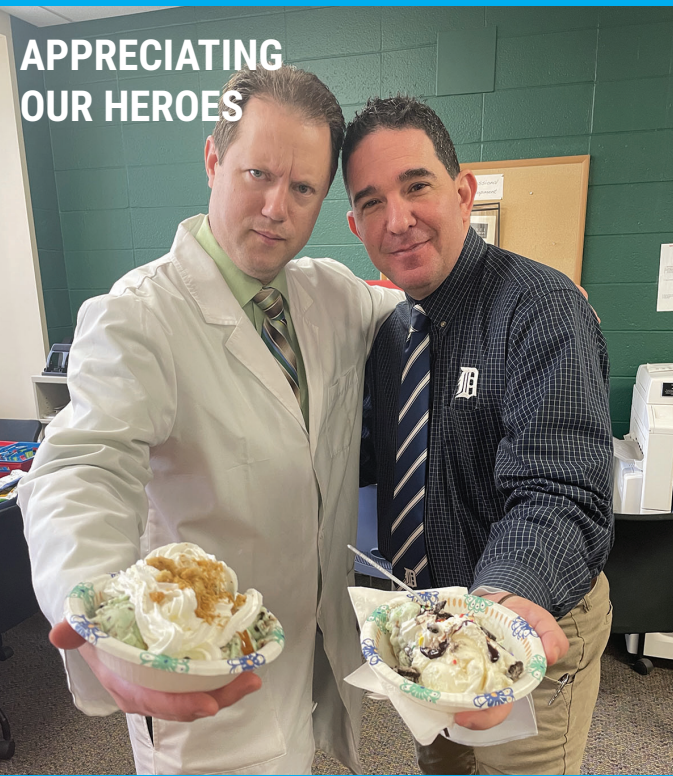


## CROWDED WITH SUCCESS!

For the first time ever, FJA held a crowdfunding campaign. We were blown away by the support from our community. Thanks to Nancy and Jim Grosfeld, all gifts made during the crowdfunding campaign were 3x matched. In two days, we raised \$152,642! Special thanks to all of the donors who helped surpass our goal, especially the crowdfunding ambassadors! In addition to hitting our goal, we were so proud to see a significant rise in alumni donors, more than any other year.



## APPRECIATING OUR HEROES



Parent volunteers and the Board of Trustees honored FJA teachers and staff during Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week. The theme of the week was "Superheroes", because our teachers and staff are superheroes! Each day included something special to show gratitude from the FJA community for the team that makes it all possible. Thank you to the parents, students, and board members who helped to make the week super for our superheroes.



B'RUCHIM HABA'IM פ"כ"ס פ"כ"ס פ"כ"ס  
WELCOME to NEW STAFF



**PAUL JONES** joins FJA as the new Director of College Counseling. He has been working in education for 20 years. Born in Australia, Mr. Jones moved to the United States in 2018. He holds an MA in Counseling Psychology, an EDM (Educational Masters) in school counseling, and an advanced certificate in college advising. Mr. Jones is an avid traveler, visiting 27 countries in total. He currently resides in Detroit with his wife and two cats. We look forward to seeing Mr. Jones guide our students through the college process.



**ANGI CHANDLER** joins FJA as the new Learning Specialist. Mrs. Chandler has taught special education for 32 years and worked for the State of Michigan for the past two

years. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling with her husband, reading, golfing, and watching Michigan State sports (from which she is a proud alumna). She is thrilled to be a part of the FJA community and we are thrilled to have her.



**JACKIE YASHINSKY** joined Frankel Jewish Academy as the Associate Director of the Annual Campaign. Mrs. Yashinsky was previously part of the year-round staff of Tamarack Camps for six years, most recently as the Director of Teen Programs. She is excited to reconnect with many of her former campers and staff who are now FJA alumni.



**HANK PINTER '15** is a proud alumnus of Frankel Jewish

Academy and returned as a Science and Technology Instructor. Mr. Pinter attended the University of Michigan and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Computer Science Engineering. Before teaching at FJA, he was a math teacher at Hillel Day School. He currently lives in West Bloomfield and enjoys watching all Detroit and U of M sports, cooking, hiking, playing guitar, and walking his family's dog.



**AMANDA NEATON** returned to FJA this year as a biology instructor. Mrs. Neaton first joined the FJA faculty in 2018 and we are so happy to have her back with us!



**ALEX COMPTON** joined FJA over the summer as the new Technical Support Specialist.

Mr. Compton has always had a fascination and passion for technology, and loves to keep up with the latest technologies and ways to incorporate its uses in everyday life.

להתראות  
L'HITRAOT  
FAREWELL to  
STAFF



We are extremely grateful to **ELLA DUNAJSKY** for her years of devotion and for the personal guidance she has provided to each of our students as the Director of College Counseling. Mrs. Dunajsky has been an integral part of our FJA families' experience for the past 12 years. The process that she created will be a wonderful foundation for the future of FJA's college counseling program. We wish her happiness in her newest role yet - retirement!

WE WISH ALL THE BEST TO THE FOLLOWING DEPARTING FACULTY & STAFF MEMBERS:

Daniel Bourdeau, Arielle Endelman, Logan Parkison Elektra Petrucci '04, Rabbi JJ Polter, Adam Shireman, Rabbi Abi Taylor-Abt & Mary-Kate Vincent.

LOOKING BACK & LOOKING AHEAD



FJA is an incredibly important institution in our community. Those of us who have had students here and experienced the power of an FJA education, understand what it means to invest in a Jewish education for our children. It is an investment because FJA graduates become the leaders of our community, including the professional and volunteer leadership at NEXTGen, JARC, Federation, and JFS to name a few.

As I write this, I am thrilled to pass the mantle of leadership to Marc Weinbaum, who just began his term as the president of FJA's Board of Trustees. As you'll read in this issue of Mah Hadash, FJA was tremendously successful this past year. Not only did we emerge stronger from the Covid-19 pandemic, but we created unique educational experiences that brought FJA students outside the building to explore the world around them. These opportunities only added to the incredible relationships built between our students and teachers, the success of our college counseling program, and the strength of FJA's athletic and arts programs.

May we go from strength to strength under Marc's leadership in partnership with Rabbi Cohen, our dedicated and outstanding faculty, and our committed students, parents and community.

**Bob Canvasser,**  
Immediate Past President

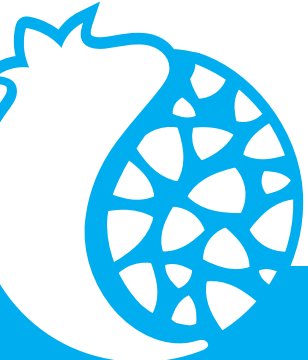
Q & A with FJA'S NEW BOARD CHAIR  
MARC WEINBAUM

**Q: What is your connection to FJA and how do you find yourself in this role?**

A: My wife Lisa and I have been FJA parents now for more than 10 years. Being involved in leadership is a way for me to repay the school that has done so much for my family. FJA has been able to educate and help to craft each of my four very unique children into the quality and confident people that they are today. I believe that we have a responsibility and a small role to play to help ensure that FJA continues to thrive and provide this special magic to other families within our community.

**Q: What was your childrens' experience at FJA like?**

A: My children are as different and unique as anyone I can imagine, and I give credit in large measure to FJA for the incredible young people that they have become. My children are kind, respectful, thoughtful, and inquisitive mensches, in part because of the individual nurturing by FJA faculty, the relationships that they formed, the faculty's mentoring and love of learning and derech ertz, and all of their support and assistance at every turn along the way.



**Q: Where does your passion for Jewish education come from?**

A: I am a product of a Jewish day school education, having gone to Hillel Day School, an experience which I always look back upon fondly and consider it to be one of the most formative elements of my youth. It instilled in me a love for Israel and the importance of being a part of the Jewish Community that animates me still today. It was unfortunate for me that when I departed Hillel, FJA had not yet been established. The opportunity for my children to attend Hillel and FJA has been the greatest gift my wife and I will ever bestow. It is the FJA Board's mission to ensure that any family that wishes for their children to experience all that a Jewish Day School education has to offer, has the ability to do so, irrespective of cost.



## 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 doesn't end at graduation

### HOW TO DONATE

#### Online

[www.frankelja.org/give](http://www.frankelja.org/give)

#### 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.*

### 2021-2022 BOARD OF TRUSTEES Officers

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Marc Weinbaum, 1st Vice President  
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Michael Eizelman, Treasurer  
Beth Margolin, Secretary  
Amy Folbe, Immediate Past President

Michael Berger  
Nancy Berman  
Rabbi Joseph Krakoff  
Matthew Kurzman '07  
Stacey Lee  
Samantha Partrich  
Sheila Tyner  
Aaron Schaer '04  
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**FJA Leadership Team 2021 - 2022**  
Rabbi Azaryah Cohen, Head of School  
Erika Weiler, General Studies Principal  
Cynthia Baker, Chief Operating Officer  
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