

MAH HADASH?

מה חדש?

WHAT'S NEW?

**CELEBRATING
20 YEARS**
ALUMNI REFLECTIONS

**YEAR IN
REVIEW**
FROM SCHOOL TO ONLINE

**ALL OF THE EVENTS
FROM 2019-2020**



FRANKEL JEWISH ACADEMY

Fall 2020 / סתיו 5781

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MAH HADASH

A publication of
Frankel Jewish Academy

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LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

RABBI AZARYAH COHEN
HEAD OF SCHOOL

What does it take to redesign a learning community? As you will learn when you flip through these pages, FJA embraces change and innovation from the classrooms to the boardroom, from the performance stage to the laboratory, and from the art room to the chapel. Redesigning our learning community started with a commitment to work collaboratively toward the common goal of enhancing the learning experience for each student at FJA. We convened focus groups of students, parents, faculty, administrators, and potential parents. We collected their feedback about FJA and acted on it. We formed an Educational Revisioning Team (ERT) and worked closely with outside consultants to develop an educational vision that was unique to FJA. The Revisioning Team, made up of faculty, students, staff, a trustee and parent, proposed changes in line with our new vision and mission and developed priorities and action steps.

Change that is meaningful and sustained requires communal buy-in and support. The William Davidson Foundation provided critical funding, trustees engaged in key discussions around mission and rebranding, and teachers and staff developed an educational vision. This extensive process of gathering feedback, setting standards, and identifying goals, led to changes such as a reformulated schedule (with a later start time), revised graduation requirements, and new electives and core classes in Jewish and General Studies like engineering, advanced and updated visual arts, acting, and a new honors and core Rabbinics and Bible track. We introduced unique experiential opportunities like trips to Montana, Washington DC, Appalachia, AIPAC, and the Robotraffic competition at the Technion in

Israel. These opportunities will provide our students with authentic and impactful learning opportunities beyond the walls of the classroom. New learning spaces within our building are also being developed. FJA acquired the lower level of the JCC and completed renovations so it now contains a retrofitted state-of-the-art theatre, dance studio and a planned student center with collaborative learning spaces designed by students.

As you are all aware, this March we faced the challenge of moving from in-person instruction to distance learning. This meant pressing "pause" on some of our intended innovations, such as the trips to Montana and Washington DC, and dealing with unexpected temporary challenges. While the year did not quite go the way we had planned, teachers, staff, and administrators made an incredible transition. They shifted to a distance learning program where teachers and staff continued to support students, while providing exceptional academic instruction and social-emotional support.

Through expected and unexpected change, our FJA community remains as strong as ever. Our teachers delivered creative lessons, the JAG delivered yard signs to our new and current families, and our community served up a fabulous senior send off parade with a memorable outdoor commencement (albeit delayed) in August.

May we continue to go from strength to strength and may your family enjoy a year filled with blessing and joy.

Azaryah Cohen

B'RUCHIM HABA'IM WELCOME to NEW STAFF



Greetings! My name is **MARGARET-ANN WOMMER**, and I am a new Social Studies instructor. Born and raised in California, I moved to Philadelphia to attend La Salle University. This begins my eighth year as an educator, with past experiences in the great states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Michigan. I live in Troy with my husband, daughter, and two cats. I am most looking forward to sharing my love of learning with the FJA community.

Go Jags!



Hello Frankel Family! My name is **LOGAN PARKISON** and I cannot

begin to describe how excited I am to be teaching freshman biology, honors anatomy and physiology, and AP biology at Frankel Jewish Academy. Growing up in West Bloomfield, it has always been my desire to teach in the same community that helped to raise me. My aim is to be able to help in the process of fostering a new generation of objective, creative and socially conscious thinkers. I am so thankful for the opportunity to be able to help do this at Frankel.

Best regards,
Logan Parkison



Hi everybody! My name is **SARA WEINFELD** and I am honored to be the full-time social worker at FJA for the upcoming school year. I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Human Development and Family Studies as well as a minor in Health Promotions from Michigan State University. I received

a Master of Social Work from the University of Michigan with an emphasis on clinical work. During my Masters program, I was a Jewish Communal Leadership Scholar and completed a school social work certificate. I am looking forward to building connections and serving as a resource for students, teachers, parents, and the administrative team. I graduated from Frankel Jewish Academy and feel beyond grateful to return to a school that was both influential and supportive of me during my high school years.

L'HITRAOT FAREWELL to STAFF



B'hatzlacha - much continued success - to **DR. SETH KORELITZ**, who will return to Hillel Day School this fall where he taught for 18 years as a popular Jewish studies teacher. For the past

three years, Dr. Korelitz has been an essential part of FJA's story as the Director of Jewish Studies, helping the Jewish Studies curriculum evolve to meet the changing needs of our students, and the school's new mission. Dr. K was always there to lend an ear to students who needed him, and as part of the leadership team he was a steady voice advocating for Jewish Studies.

While it was a hard decision for **AMANDA NEATON** to leave teaching for a while, she decided to focus on



her family and growing her small business, Squirrel Run Farm, where she sells plants and plant novelties online. Biology students will miss her fun adventures outside and her attention to each student.

FAREWELL to STAFF
CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

YEAR IN REVIEW



IN A HEARTBEAT

The first day of the school year began with our 20th anniversary kickoff celebration. Students mingled with one another and caught up with teachers as energetic music played in the background. There was an array of doughnuts, fruit, and beverages for everyone to enjoy. The Jag even made an appearance! Rabbi Cohen spoke about the amazing school year ahead, followed by all-school President Andrew Schulman '20 and all-school Vice President Ben Goldstein '20 who wrote and shared "The Top 20 Things You Need to Know About FJA". All of the students were given 20th anniversary t-shirts and we took a group photo of the entire school.



THE TOP 20 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FJA:

1. FJA will challenge you but will support you every step of the way.
2. You have the ability to make close relationships with teachers and staff.
3. Staff and students will celebrate your personal successes.
4. If ever in need of a pick me up, stop by Mr. Gawel's office for a piece of candy.
5. FJA is a close-knit community.
6. The dual curriculum will prepare you to multi-task and take on challenges in college.
7. Athletic opportunities are available to students with all levels of experience.
8. Teachers are more than just teachers.
9. The schedule encourages students to pursue their interests in a secular and Jewish context.
10. FJA allows you to wear many hats: theatre, music, robotics, athletics. Take advantage of all the opportunities the school provides.
11. Pat loves you.
12. The vending machine kippahs are overpriced, get a free one from the JCC front desk instead.
13. Keep PowerSchool notifications off.
14. Students are recognized not only for their academic achievements but also for how they treat others.
15. Seek help when you need it.
16. Don't stress the little things.
17. Your opinion matters to the school, so voice it.
18. Appreciate your Hebrew teachers, you will always have a home in Israel.
19. Go to school events and sports games, show support for your friends and have a good time!
20. FJA is a community within a community that gives back to many communities.



SLEEP SUCCESS!

8:30 am START TIME - ONE YEAR LATER

RABBI AZARYAH COHEN
HEAD OF SCHOOL

While it seems like a lifetime ago, it was only last year when school often started at daybreak with stars still visible in the sky. Sleepy students drifted into school and tardies were a common issue that we discussed regularly. Each morning when I greeted students, my exuberant “good mornings,” were often met with a head nod or grunt in response.

We announced that we would change our start time to 8:30 am just one year ago. One year later, students are no longer rubbing their eyes or shaking the cobwebs out of their groggy heads. It was quickly apparent that a move from our 7:30 am start time, as it had been since we opened our doors

20 years ago, has had a significant impact on student performance and engagement. Teachers report, and we have noticed, from our morning greetings to our afternoon goodbyes, significant improvement in positive energy, greater interaction with peers and teachers, and more focused attention, curiosity, and creativity with regards to learning. In a survey conducted earlier this year, students enthusiastically expressed support for the new start time. They believe they are more productive throughout the day and teachers report significant improvement in student engagement.

It is therefore no surprise that states from California to Michigan are

considering the FJA model! This is just one of the significant changes and innovations we have made to improve healthy student growth, development, and engagement. While this change may have required some adjustment to logistics like carpools and schedules by parents and faculty, the overall impact is positive on our students and the FJA community.

Thank you to the administrators, students, faculty, and parents who helped us make this change a reality. We look forward to your continued partnership in creating the best educational environment for our students.

COURSES, CURRICULUM, CHANGES, OH MY!

This has been a year of momentous change for the students and staff of Frankel Jewish Academy. The most obvious difference between this and previous years has, of course, been that born out of necessity when faced with a global pandemic. Our students, staff, and faculty were told by the governor that Michigan schools were closed to in-person instruction on a Thursday night, and within a week, they were learning remotely – without missing a beat. This change was momentous in that it radically altered the way in which teachers taught and students learned; however, it also reinforced those foundations upon which our school has so consistently found success. While this transition was difficult, it provided an opportunity for our students, staff, and faculty to, in the face of something utterly unprecedented, rise up and prove themselves exceptional.

And though in years to come, the three month period of unanticipated change is what we will likely most remember, there were many anticipated changes that preceded the pandemic that positively shaped FJA.

- **School Start Time:** This year the school start time was moved from 7:30 am to 8:30 am. This decision was made after extensive research and community feedback made clear to us that our students needed more sleep. Since sleep is both a cognitive enhancer and stress reliever, as you can imagine: FJA was a happier place.
- **Schedule:** This year we completely restructured our school schedule to provide greater variation to class meeting time, when classes met, and the length of the school day. This more collegiate structure allowed for greater student focus, flexibility in scheduling, and student pursuit of individual interests.
- **Courses and Individual Choice:** Through conversations that evolved during our educational revisioning process, it became apparent that more choices for students in their course selections and greater variety in their possible educational pathways was needed. As a result, we added nearly twenty new classes across all academic areas—core and elective, Jewish and General Studies—much to the benefit of our students and staff.
- **Graduation Requirements:** FJA students now have more individualized educational options with greater



RANDY GAWEL
PRINCIPAL

choices for classes in a wider number of areas and elective options than ever before.

- **Teacher Learning and Support:** Professional development for staff and faculty is now more closely aligned with the educational vision of the school in ways that support both collaboration between teachers and shared practice across curricular areas. Moreover, teacher evaluation is more practically aligned with teaching and learning goals and designed to be more supportive of good educational practice.
- **Administrative Structure:** The administrative structure of the school has been streamlined to allow for both greater support of the educational community and wider flexibility in the way in which this support is provided.

So this has, indeed, been a year of monumental change for FJA. There have been both anticipated and unanticipated changes to be sure, but these changes that have, despite some challenges interspersed, brought out the very best in our school community. We have been invigorated by what we have faced and energized by the many changes we have put into place.

What was a watershed moment that could have moved the school forward or backward, as such moments are wont to be, has found us thriving. As we look to the next twenty years, know that the path we have set for ourselves is not one that we will rest upon. Rather, these changes are the beginning of still greater opportunities in years to come.

A NEW IMAGE

Change is in full swing at FJA. A later start time, revised class schedule, more electives, and, you may have noticed - a new look!

In our 20th year, it is time for our image to represent all of the changes we have made. How does a Jewish college preparatory school with an environment that is caring, innovative, joyful and supportive, represent itself through images, colors, and words? We spent time considering crests and shields, menorahs and torahs, stars and symbols, and we looked at our mission statement. After much collaboration and consideration, we identified a symbol that is as Jewish as apple pie is American and colors that are as vibrant and energetic as our students.

Introducing our new logo - the FJA pomegranate. It is a symbol that is timeless and fresh; it represents tradition and renewal, it is one of the seven species mentioned in the Bible as native to Israel, it is the fruit that inaugurates Rosh HaShanah, the new year, and whose seeds are said to represent the Mitzvot, the commandments of the Torah. The pomegranate is much more than a fruit, as Frankel Jewish Academy is much more than a school. Our new tagline, "Own Your Journey. Discover Your Tomorrow." expresses our belief that each student is unique, with interests and skills waiting to be discovered and honed.



JAGS FOR LIFE

Throughout FJA's history, "the Jag" has always been the perfect athletic mascot and logo. The school's logo has changed a number of times, but the Jag has stayed the same. We look forward to seeing the Jag logo on athletic gear, and the mascot inspiring school spirit for years to come!



JAGS IN THE NEWS



SENIORS ANDREW SCHULMAN & BEN GOLDSTEIN

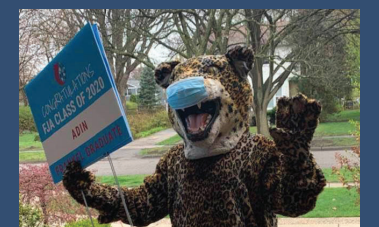
had another successful season, becoming the winningest debaters in the history of FJA!

In early March, they pushed the *undefeated*, best team in the league to the very limit, losing 29.2 to 29.3 (out of a possible 30 points) - the slimmest of margins in the biggest match of the night.



JACK HARRIS '21 FEATURED ON RHONDA'S BRAG BOOK
Local 4 News, February 11, 2020

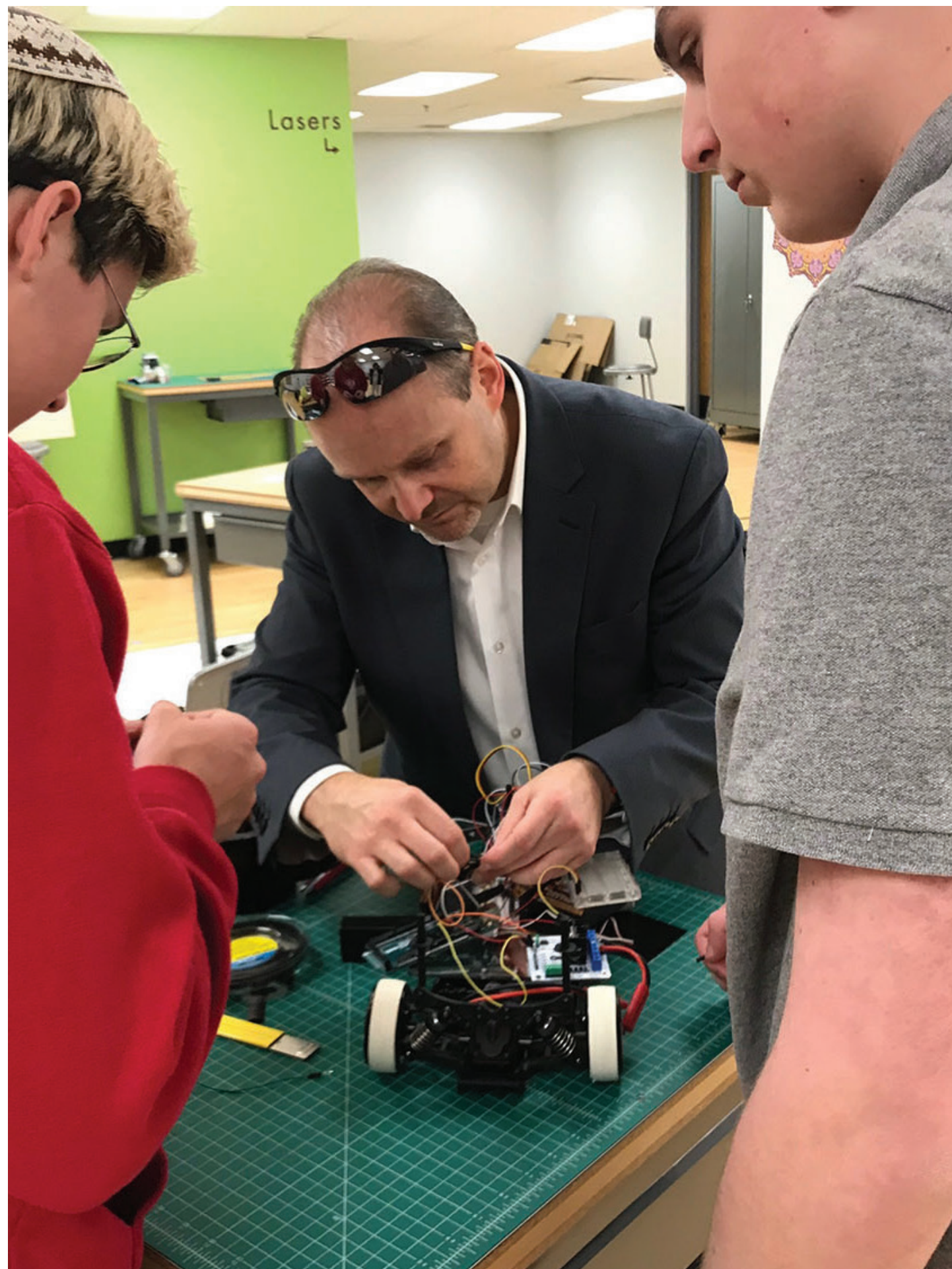
JAG DELIVERS LAWN SIGNS TO GRADUATING SENIORS AND NEW STUDENTS
The Jewish News, May 6, 2020



WILL BLOOMBERG '20 FEATURED IN THE JN'S YOUNG JEWS MAKING MOVES
The Jewish News, November 20, 2019

EMILY WEINGARDEN '21 FEATURED IN THE JN'S YOUNG JEWS MAKING MOVES
The Jewish News, October 28, 2019





STELLAR STEAM!

FJA Top 1% STEM School

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 this 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 - 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."

VISIT

<https://www.newsweek.com/americas-best-stem-high-schools-2020/best-stem-schools>
for a full list of rankings



FJA on the FRONT LINES

FJA MAKES FACE SHIELDS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS


When medical supplies were running low due to the rapid spread of Covid-19, two FJA staff members, Director of Innovation and Technology Dan Bourdeau and STEAM lab manager Dale Rogers used the school's 3D printers to create protective face shields for the medical community.

Mr. Bourdeau and Mr. Rogers created a plethora of masks in the spring, a time when essential medical equipment was running low and was desperately needed. FJA was able to coordinate pick-ups for nurses and doctors stationed at local mobile COVID-19 testing sites.

FJA received a few special donations to support production of the face shields. These enabled Mr. Bourdeau and Mr. Rogers to continue making shields throughout the spring and to satisfy the needs of Jewish organizations, hospitals, and private medical facilities. They were quoted in the *Detroit Jewish News* at the time, saying "This whole process has been gratifying to be able to help in some very small way."

NEW NORMAL - ONLINE LEARNING

FIRST DAY OF ONLINE LEARNING - REFLECTIONS FROM TEACHERS



"We will learn together, be friends together, and look forward to the time when we are all in the same classroom."

"Funny the difference a week or two can make; when we were wishing for a snow day or a longer vacation. I suppose this falls into the category of be careful for what you wish for, because you might actually get it.

I taught two classes this afternoon, a relatively light day. But it was great seeing the faces of our community. For a minute we were able to laugh,



converse, and learn. This is a new experience for us all; everyone had questions and a bunch of wondering if this will work, if we will see our friends and classmates. As strange as it was, after a minute of questions it was as if we were in the same room. Joking, asking questions, ensuring each other that we are not going a bit loony. Yeah this is our new normal; at least for a month or two or perhaps even to the end of the school year. But we will learn together, be friends together, and look forward to the time when we are all in the same classroom. I'm sad. Sad that I don't get to see the students... Sad we don't get to play baseball... Sad won't see the play until the fall... Sad I won't get to see the seniors do their senior thing. I am inspired though, that we all came together... And we will get through this as a community. "

- MR. BERNSTEIN,
Social Studies Instructor



"The online meetings were rejuvenating, and I feel like no matter how stressful things get in the weeks to come, it will be uplifting to continue to come together in this way."



"This week has been really difficult. The anxiety provoked by the situation itself, the uncertainty of what is to come, the rush to convert our classes to virtual format, and the days spent managing my own little kids while trying to handle everything else left me feeling completely overwhelmed. Seeing my students today was a breath of fresh air. The online meetings were rejuvenating, and I feel like no matter how stressful things get in the weeks to come, it will be uplifting to continue to come together in this way."

- MRS. KAHN,
English Instructor + Department Chair

"I had my Bible I Honors class today. It was SOOOO wonderful seeing, and speaking with, my lovely students. The half hour went by much too quickly. At the beginning we did our normal ritual of reciting Torah blessings. Just before we started, one of my male students said: 'Guys, put on your kippah'. They did it! I was surprised and delighted. After the blessings we did our next ritual, which was to play Word Warp--a challenging word game from the Detroit Free Press that I love, and I now bring them to class to do together. We did a little bit of Bible, which also went well, and I

gave an assignment, which they all seemed actually eager to do. One more thing--when I first entered the 'classroom'--all but one student was already waiting for me. I started talking very excitedly, and then one of my brilliant students said, 'Rabbi, you need to unmute yourself.' They

hadn't heard anything I had said. Later in the session, one of my students, frankly one of the most talkative, said to the classmates: 'Let's all mute now so we can just listen to Rabbi Pachter.' Altogether, delightful!"

- RABBI PACTHER,
Rabbinic Advisor



JAGS ON THE FIELD

FJA Boys Tennis Team Attends Division 4 State Finals

The FJA boys tennis team was the only Oakland County tennis team at the MHSAA Division 4 State Finals this season. Eli Grey '20 made it to the semifinals of the singles number three flight, but ultimately lost the match. By getting to the semifinals he was top four in the state in his flight. Eli won three matches and lost one at the tournament. Alex Bean '20, Eric Adelson '20, and the doubles team of Elan Krakoff '20 and Aidan Charlip '23 won one match each. Rafi Weinstein '23 won two matches. The team finished the weekend tied for 13th out of 25 total teams with seven points. The team is looking forward to another great season this coming school year!



TEAMWORK IN TOUGH TIMES

RICK DORN
ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

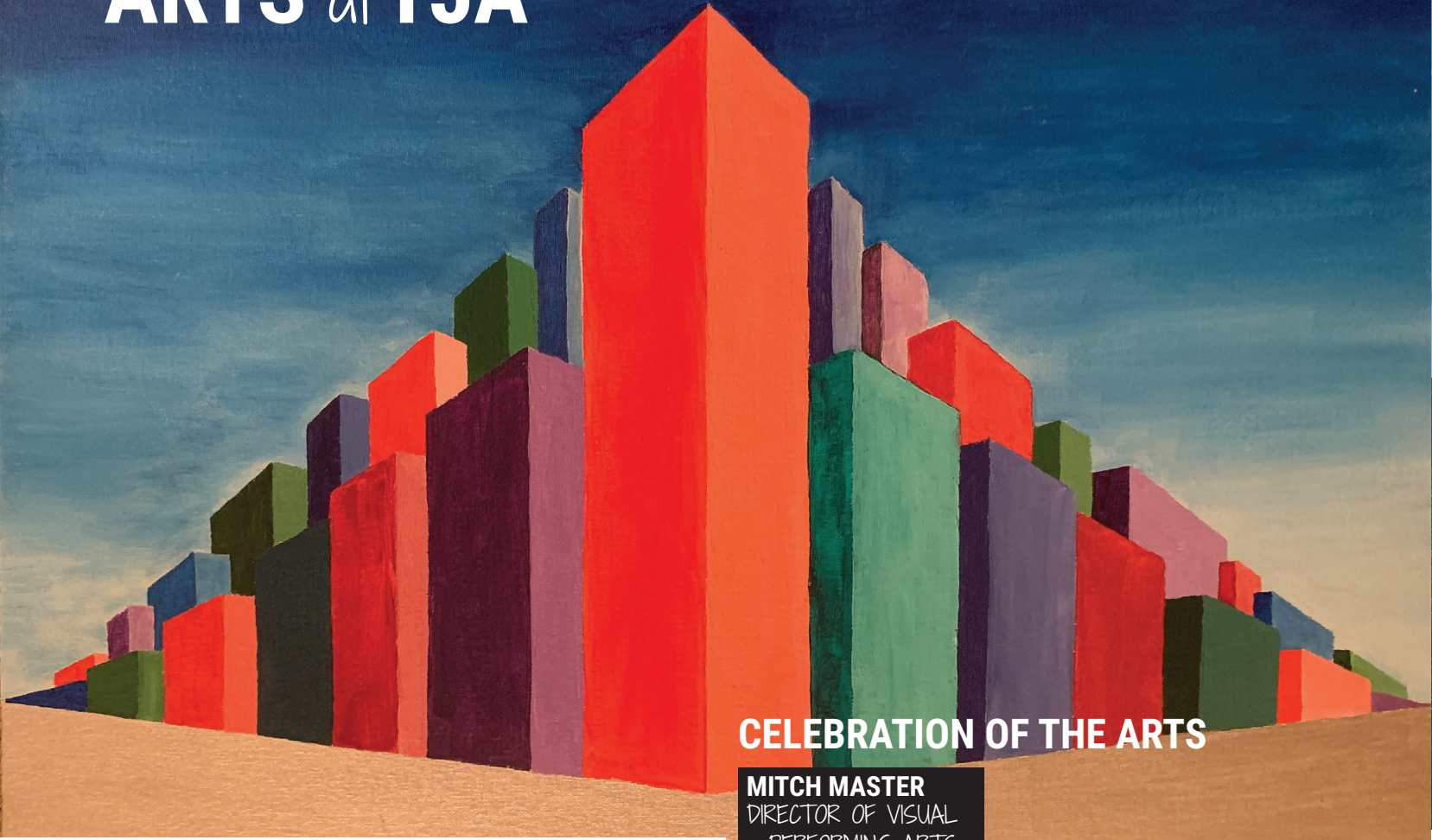
No one could have expected how the 2019-2020 school year would end when we started our journey back in August. After completing very successful fall and winter sports seasons, the spring started off just like every other season I have experienced over the last 23 years. Teams met with their coaches, athletes discussed the possibilities for the upcoming season, optimism abound. No one could have predicted what would occur. It was a punch right to the gut as the spring season was cancelled.

As disappointed as we were to hear this news, our staff and students all rose to the occasion. Instead of feeling sorry for ourselves, teachers learned a new way to deliver



lessons, students learned a new way to go to school, and parents learned a new way to support all of the above. From an athletic department perspective, we were able to produce workouts and development videos for our students, we met over Zoom to discuss the situation that we are currently navigating, and we met as teams to prepare for the fall. When the fall season starts we will be ready and we will

be more prepared then we have ever been. We will and are currently following all the guidelines that the MHSAA and the Detroit Catholic League are providing. Our coaches are dedicated to delivering our student-athletes with safe, fun, and competitive experience. We will be ready for whatever is thrown our way. We have to be, because that is what it means to be a Jaguar!



CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS

MITCH MASTER
DIRECTOR OF VISUAL
+ PERFORMING ARTS



Students need to experience the arts in an environment that fosters trust, comfort, creativity, and encourages a journey of self-discovery. This journey is vitally important to building self-esteem, and helping students take risks as they encounter challenges. Both on and off the stage, or in and out of the art studio, students learn to let go of inhibitions and challenge themselves. FJA arts instructors guide students to comprehend, appreciate, and make educated choices, while applying the creative process to all areas of their lives. Each semester, an event called 'The Evening of the Arts' showcases student work and talents. When in-person classes were interrupted by Covid-19, the arts continued to bloom outside the classroom. We celebrated the arts in a virtual format that you can view on FJA's website. Thank you for helping us celebrate the arts!

To enjoy more **FJA Student Art** pieces visit
<https://www.frankelja.org/arts/celebration-of-the-arts>



NEW THEATER SPACE
SHINES A SPOTLIGHT ON FJA TALENT

Frankel Jewish Academy's performing arts program took a huge step forward during the 2019-2020 school year. Mitch Master, FJA's longtime Director of Performing and Visual Arts and theater director, has always offered students an incomparable theater experience. With the newly acquired Aaron DeRoy Theater on the lower level of the JCC, FJA now has its own home for this fabulous theater program. While FJA will still use the Berman Center for the Performing Arts for larger performances and events, the Aaron DeRoy theater is a wonderful intimate theater with just over 100 seats.

After renovations to the space, including new lights, a new sound system, and decor in the lobby, the Aaron DeRoy Theater was ready for FJA theater and music productions. **You're A Good Man Charlie Brown** was the first performance in December 2019. Evening of the Arts followed in January 2020 with performances by music ensemble, a one-act play, and visual artwork displayed in the theater lobby.



CLASS OF 2020 SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

ERIC ADELSON




Michigan State University
Major: Business

ALEX BEAN



Indiana University
Major: Media Technologies and Culture
Minor: Fashion Design

MADELINE BERGER



Purdue University
Major: Health and Pre-Professional Program

MITCH BLACKMAN



Eli Broad College of Business at Michigan State University

BEN GOLDSTEIN



James Madison College at Michigan State University
Major: Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy
Minor: Creative Writing

ELI GREY



Lyman Briggs College at Michigan State University
Major: Neuroscience

NURI HADAR




Gap Year in Israel with the Aardvark Program

REENA HERSCHFUS




Western Michigan University
Major: Business

WILL BLOOMBERG



Michigan State University
Major: Undecided

ELISHA COOPER



University of Michigan
Major: Biology on Pre-Med track

AVERY FELDMAN




University of Michigan
Major: Undecided

EMILY FELDMAN



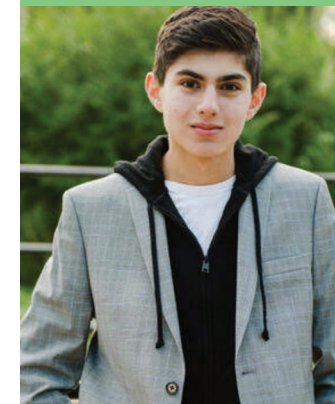
University of Michigan
Major: Women's Studies with a Pre-Med focus

RAFI IFRAIMOV



Northwood University
Major: International Business

ELLIOT KAFTAN



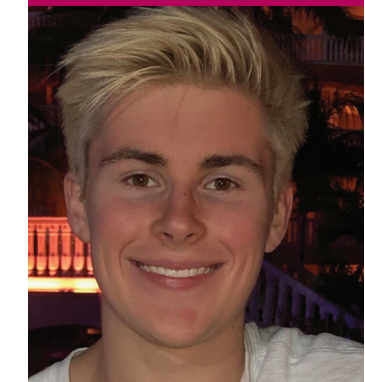
University of Michigan
Major: Undecided

ADAM KARP




School of Engineering and Applied Science at George Washington University

Aidan Keenan



Purdue University
Major: Undecided

JONAH FELDMAN



University of Michigan
Major: Undecided

OLIVIA FELDMAN




Hevruta Gap Year at the Hartman Institute in Jerusalem

MAYA GAMER




Binghamton University
Major: Philosophy, Politics, and Law
Also researching Human Rights through the Source Project

JONAH GILAN



Wayne State University Mike Illitch School of Business

ADIN KLEINFELDT



Gap Year in Israel with Kivunim, then attending IDC Herzliyah in Israel

ELAN KRAKOFF




Michigan State University
Major: Mechanical Engineering

ETHAN MOSTYN




Michigan State University
Major: Undecided

RUSSELL PRESSER



The University of Arizona
Major: Physiology and Medical Sciences

HANNAH RESNICK




Lawrence Tech University
Major: Architecture
LTU Volleyball and Bowling Teams

TAL RUBIN



Michigan State University
Major: Undecided

LAELA SAULSON



Michigan State University
Major: Communications
Minor: Dance

ANDREW SCHULMAN




Michigan State University
Major: International Relations
Minor: Film

BENNY SHAEVSKY



University of Michigan
Ross School of Business

AVAROSE SHAW



Multimedia Makeup Academy
Major: Special Effects Makeup

SHOSHANA SHUMUNOV



Gap Year
at Meorot Yerushalayim
Michigan State University
Major: Business

HANNAH STRYK



University of Michigan
Major: Biology

VADIM YAKUBOV

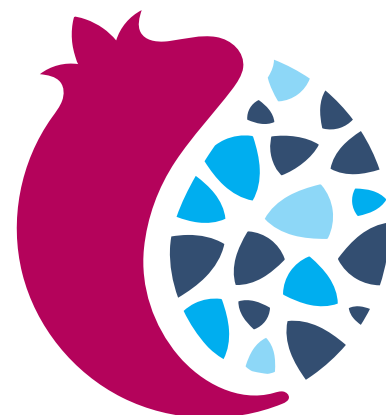


Gap Year

DANIEL YLAGUEV



Michigan State University
Major: Finance



MAZAL TOV

FRANKEL JEWISH ACADEMY

CLASS OF 2020



OWN YOUR JOURNEY. DISCOVER YOUR TOMORROW.

מזל טוב

FRANKEL JEWISH ACADEMY

CLASS OF 2020 STUDENT SPEAKERS



EMILY FELDMAN

Good evening. I am humbled and honored to be here representing the FJA class of 2020. Tonight, we are here to honor excellence. Among us, we have aspiring performers, National Honors Society members, distinguished athletes, student government representatives, international robotics competitors, AIPAC delegates, youth group leaders, awarded writers, and passionate Zionists. To my fellow graduates, congratulations on a job well done! An esteemed professor at Yale University once said, "Go into the world and do well. But more importantly, go into the world and do good." Our peers around the country have learned math and science, read Shakespeare and learned history just like us and we are all primed to go into the world and do well. But what sets us apart is our FJA education. It is the sense of purpose, connectedness, values, roots, the tremendous sense of self and community that is necessary to go into the world and do good. We will be philanthropic, we will

be leaders on our campuses, we will be champions for those less fortunate, we will be advocates for Israel, we will stay close friends, we will know the difference between right and wrong, we will practice Tikun Olam and we will always know where we came from. FJA Administration, teachers, parents, siblings, grandparents and friends; thank you. You have given us the most tremendous gift. This gift, these four years, will help us handle challenges, face adversity, rise above hate and build lives that make the world a better place. FJA Class of 2020 let's not only go into the world and do well, let's go into the world and do good.



ELISHA COOPER

זה כבוד וזכות בשבילי להציג את קבוצת התלמידים המדהימים שאיתם חוויתי זכרונות בלתי נשכחים. אלו שהיו איתי בזמנים הטובים והגרועים ביותר, ומי שאני גאה לקרוא להם החברים שלי לנצח. למדתי מה המשמעות של להיות תלמידה בבית ספר תיכון יהודי במאה העשרים ואחת, והיפנמתי את חשיבותה וערכה של מדינת ישראל לא רק בגלל חשיבותה ההיסטורית, אלא גם כמדינה מודרנית שסוללת את הדרך לחדשנות עולמית. כמה תלמידים יכולים לומר שהיו להם הזדמנויות לנסוע לישראל ולהשתתף בתחרות רובוטקה בין-לאומית נגד בתי ספר יהודיים אחרים מכל העולם? זה לא כל כך יוצא דופן בא FJA שנתן לי יותר הזדמנויות ממה שיכולתי אי-פעם לדמיין. אז תודה לכולם: למורים, לצוות, לחברי הבוגרים, ולמשפחות שהיו חלק מהמסע המדהים. אני יודעת שהפיתה שלנו תצליח לעשות דברים מדהימים, ואני באמת גאה להיות אחת מרימוני FJA.

Translation

It is an honor and a privilege to be representing this incredible group of individuals with whom I have shared unforgettable memories, who have been there for me in my best and worst moments, and who I am proud to call my forever friends. I have learned what it means to be a Jewish high school student living in the 21st century and have been instilled with an even greater appreciation for Israel, not only because of its historical importance, but also as a modern country paving the way for global innovation. How many students could say that they had the opportunity to travel to Israel and participate in an international robotics competition against other Jewish schools from around the world? This is not so far fetched here at FJA where I have been given more opportunities than I could have ever imagined.

So thank you to everyone, teachers, staff, and my fellow graduates, who have been part of my incredible FJA journey. I know that this graduating class will accomplish amazing things, and I am truly proud to have been one of the רימוני FJA. (FJA pomegranates)



CARING COMMUNITY

MARCY KOLB
SOCIAL WORKER

One of the things that makes FJA so unique is the caring community that staff and students consistently foster. Led by FJA's Social Worker, Marcy Kolb, students and staff participated in various projects to help strengthen this bond.

Some of these projects included an interactive bulletin board labeled, "Take What You Need," with positive messages, imagery, candy, journals, and pencils for students to use. FJA Board member Barbara Kappy, brought her therapy dog to spend quality time with students and help them de-stress before exams. During midterms, Marcy set up a self-care station in the commons for students and staff, reminding them to eat well, get plenty of rest, and take time to relax during exam week. During UMatter week, a student committee planned fun activities for students to focus on their individual growth, including self-care activities, art, cooking, discussion, and community service.

When school went online, Marcy and Student Life Coordinator, Ariella Monson, began weekly Google

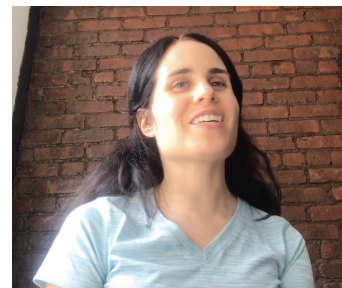


chats with staff, administration and students. This gave the students a social outlet and an opportunity to discuss the impact of the quarantine on their lives. Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week was also mostly online, and consisted of special video and email messages from students and their families to staff members. The messages were heartfelt and so meaningful to their recipients, further strengthening the bond in our caring community.

We welcome alumna Sara Weinfeld ('14), who joined the staff as FJA's second social worker. With her help, the FJA caring community will continue to grow and thrive.

20 YEARS, 20 ALUMNI

To celebrate 20 years of FJA, we asked 20 alumni to be part of a video showing our alumni and how much they have accomplished. These are the 20 alumni. To hear their stories, you can see the video at: frankelja.org/alumni



DEBORAH ANSTANDIG '03
NYC
Middle school teacher



IAN ROBINSON '04
Ann Arbor
Managing Director, BlueConduit

“Everyone had their place. It was a great amalgamation of people and that made it really fun to be at school everyday.”

- Katie Rosen Kurzmann



KATIE ROSEN KURZMANN '04 & MATT KURZMANN '07
Bloomfield Hills
Doctor, Michigan Institute of Urology & Senior National Director, Affordable Housing Advisors

“FJA taught me that you can take initiative to fight for something you want... having that confidence that I learned in that safe, supportive community has been helpful to me as I got into college and my jobs afterward.”

- Leor Shtull Leber



JASON DOVITZ '09
LA, CA
Director of social media, ARod Corp



KATY & YOSHI LICHTERMAN '09
Baltimore, MD
Anesthesia resident & Journalist

“I really took to heart the idea of FJA being a community school of all different types of Jews that do really different things and practice Judaism in really different ways. That set the groundwork for how I view the world and how I view the Jewish community and for what I hope for the Jewish community.”

- Zoe Pinter

“There is a direct correlation between hard work and results in anything that you do and I think that the teachers that I had at Jewish Academy, that is what they were always trying to impress upon me.”

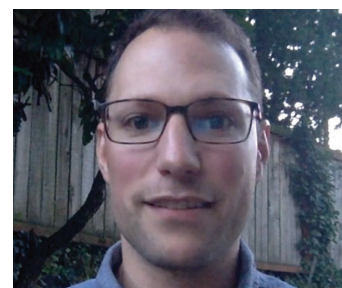
-Matt Kurzmann



JOSH DISKIN '04
Huntington Woods
Director of Business Dev, Detroit Labs

“For me, it was a pretty natural transition going from my experiences at JAMD and then going to work at a startup where you had to wear many different hats. The way you prove your value at any company is by doing what needs to get done to help the company out. We felt that way while I was at the Academy and I certainly felt that way at my job when I joined. It's done me well.”

-Josh Diskin



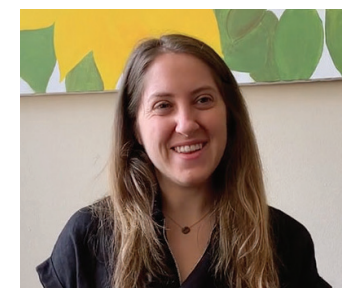
AARON SCHAEER '04
Seattle, WA
Lawyer



ZOE PINTER '10
Ann Arbor
Social Worker



LEVI STEWART '06
Lawrence, NJ
Attorney



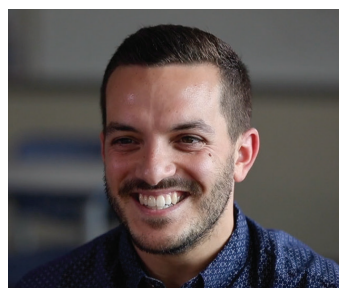
LAURENNE KAUFMAN '13
NYC
student, Cardozo School of Law

“FJA just made me more of a well rounded person. It really nurtured my interest in both science and in art.”

- Stephanie Schulman

“Jewish Academy was a place, because of its small and intimate environment, that you weren't allowed to slip between the cracks, and what JAMD really taught me is how to try at things that are really difficult.”

- Aaron Schaar



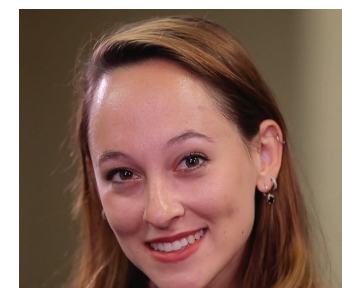
ADAM LUGER '06
Ferndale, MI
Owner, Blue Racer Productions

“When I think back to how I started my own business, I think about the confidence I was given and the resources that were available to me.”

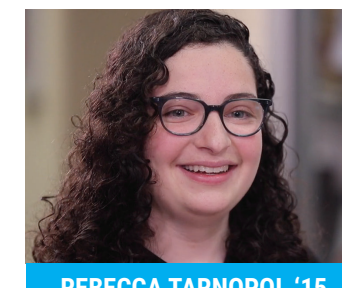
- Adam Luger



ARIC KLAR '07
Bloomfield Hills, MI
Owner, Toyology Toys



STEPHANIE SCHULMAN '14
NYC
student, NY Medical College



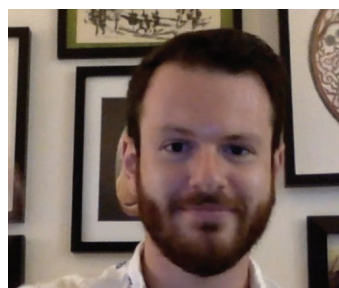
REBECCA TARNOPOL '15
San Francisco, CA
Graduate student at Univ of California, Berkley



JESSI KAHN '11 & BASIL WILLIAMS '10
New Brunswick, NJ
Buyer at Gucci & Law clerk

“Attending Jewish Academy really prepared me for my business career. It forced me to be diversified, forced me to learn how to establish a team, to understand multitasking, which has made me become a great entrepreneur.”

- Aric Klar



DAVID DEVRIES '07
LA, CA
Movie producer, Studio 71

“The community really stretched beyond inside the school. You really felt like you had a family at FJA.”

- David Devries



LEOR SHTULL LEBER '08
Boston, MA
Program Manager, Uber Health

frankelja.org/alumni



JAMD/FJA Alumni

SHARE YOUR SIMCHAS

Adam Luger '06 and Scott Wasserman '12 won a national film competition in August, then won again at the International event in the Netherlands in March. Their win will take them to Cannes Film Festival. They also created the Detroit Ghost Town video narrated by actor Jeff Daniels and Rapper Big Sean.

Danielle Keith '14 started her new business "Healthy Girl Kitchen", and is getting married!

Mikhl Yashinsky '07 performed in the Yiddish Broadway production of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Shira Wolf '12 co-founded CreateHER, the official educational program for SheNYC, a non-profit founded to give female writers, composers and directors a chance to showcase their work in theater.

Talia Freedman '11 married Corey Eisen in NYC on Jan 18, 2020.



**ALUMNI ENJOY SOME TIME ON
NATHAN LADA'S '04
GREEN THINGS FARM
IN ANN ARBOR
SEPTEMBER 2019**

Vadim Avshalumov '03, Ryan Landau '06, Adam Denenberger '11, Noah Arbit '13, Teddie Olender Eisenberg '08, and Danielle DePriest '08 were named in the Detroit Jewish News 36 under 36 list of influencers.

Jessica (Polk) Barris '11 and mom Jodie Polk opened new business, Culinary Combo.

Mazal Tov Rebecca Nadis Strobehn '06 and Zach, who welcomed their son, Maxwell Simon, on December 11, 2019.

Jackson Partrich '18 started his business, "Schlepper Boy Vision", booking artists and performers.

Matthew '13 and Connor Tukul '15 invented an aerial anti-overdose drone delivery system, winning top honors at the Michigan American College of Physicians' annual meeting in Grand Rapids.

Mazal Tov to Judy Margolin Landau '07 and Andrew Landau on the birth of their daughter, Emma.

Mazal Tov to Zach Firestone '09 and wife Ilana on the birth of their daughter, Abigail.

Mazal Tov to Orly Benaderet Rocklin '09 and husband Mark on the birth of their son, David.

Welcome to the world Emeric Francis!! Mazal tov Asher Rodriguez-Dunn '04 and husband Adam.

Mazal Tov to Raphael Levi '14 and fiancé Daphne.

Mazal Tov to Jason Garden '03 on being recognized as one of Oy! Chicago's double chai in Chicago's 36 under 36!

Congrats Basil Williams '10 and Jessi Kahn '11 on their engagement.

Mazal Tov to Katie Rosen Kurzmann '04 and Matt Kurzmann '07 on the birth of their son, Brock.

After 3 years as Director of Media Affairs for the Israeli Consulate in Los Angeles, Anna Rubin '12 made aliyah and is currently working in marketing for Keren Hayesod - United Israel Appeal - one of the largest fundraising organizations for Israel.

Michael Baum '08, wife Traci, and big brother Parker welcomed their second child, Madison.

Mara Cranis '14 graduated from the University of Michigan School of Public Health with her MPH in Hospital and Molecular Epidemiology, and accepted a job as an Infection Preventionist at the Detroit Medical Center's Detroit Receiving and Harper University Hospitals. "I am very proud to start my professional career in a position that is so crucial to today's world, and at a hospital located one of the country's epicenters of this crisis."

Ellie Yerman '19 made the Dean's List as a freshman at Grand Valley State University.

George Victor '18 recently accepted an offer from Rothschild & Co to work as an investment banking analyst in NYC next summer.

Mazal Tov to Ilana and Adam Greenbaum '03 on the birth of their daughter, Emma Rose (Meira Rut). Emma joins big sister, Gabby.

Mazal tov to Alexandra Gudenau '11 and Albert Budnitskiy '08 on their engagement

Elisheva Phillips '17 is currently a senior in Aerospace Engineering at U of M doing research on 3D printed materials for aerospace structures.

Mazal Tov to Sarah Baruch Platt '08 and husband Kevin on the birth of Jacob Ezra Platt on 12/9/2019.

After graduating from MSU, Miles Menuck '17 is getting an accelerated MBA at Coventry University in London, UK.

Jamie Menuck '15 is living in NYC and working for Edelman marketing ice cream. Check out her @dropdeadcornbread blog!

Rachel Behar '06 and her husband welcomed their first child, a boy, on 12/2/19 named Rio Allen Behar.

Michael Diskin '06 received a Masters of Science in Anesthesia and is currently a Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant (an anesthetist) working at DC's biggest hospital, MedStar Washington Hospital Center.

Josh Diskin '04 has two beautiful kids.

Adam Lev Gardin '03 is a partner at LocalBizGuru - a digital marketing company

Adam Gorman '11 Graduated from Wayne State medical school and is heading to the University of Michigan for a residency in Pediatrics.

After graduating from the University of Michigan Medical School, Michelle Kappy '10 is in her 3rd year of an ob/gyn residency at Albert Einstein/Montefiore Medical Center.



Last summer, alumni living in NYC came together for a mini reunion. Alumni of all ages joined in the fun, from the first years of the school to those still in college. Everyone enjoyed catching up with one another and hearing about plans for the school as we celebrated 20 years!

The FJA Class of 2009 held their ten year reunion at Bistro Joe's in Birmingham last November. Over two dozen alumni schmoozed and caught up with their old classmates.

Everyone had a great time! We can't believe it has already been ten years!



FRANKEL JEWISH ACADEMY 20TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

20 years of inspiring our community's next generation of leaders



RABBI AZARYAH COHEN
Head of School



SAMANTHA & ROSS PARTRICH
2020 Honorees

FJA is proud to be an exceptional school where the relationships between students and teachers is paramount, Jewish tradition and peoplehood thrive, and there is a strong focus on critical thinking, creativity, and compassion. Our school's future depends on supporters who contribute financially to the long-term success of our mission and vision.

When FJA went virtual this spring, alumni, parents, and friends stepped up to support the school in significant ways. Despite the unsettled economic environment, FJA's Annual Fund received more than 800 gifts totalling more than \$700,000.

Much of the credit for this success is due to FJA's wonderful Gala Honorees, who helped make our first-ever virtual gala a stunning event. We had the opportunity to celebrate Samantha

and Ross Partrich, alumna Rachel Devries '09, and faculty member Melanie Sesi. More than 500 guests joined us live online to remember FJA's first 20 years and celebrate the school's anniversary. Thousands more viewed the event later on Facebook. We heard the stories of twenty alumni, and how FJA's faculty and community still influence their lives today. While



MELANIE SESI
Faculty Honoree

the event was originally intended to be an in-person celebration, we transitioned to a virtual gala with the expert assistance of alumnus Scott Wasserman '12 and his company Flow Video.

Each honoree reflected on the reasons they love and appreciate FJA, "Students and faculty truly know what it means to repair the world, and make doing so part of their daily lives," said Rachel Devries '09. Faculty honoree Melanie Sesi explained how teaching at FJA has been a much richer experience than she expected from a teaching job. "I had no idea how



RACHEL DEVRIES
Alumni Honoree (Class of 2009)

much I would grow, personally and professionally, at FJA. Witnessing these students connect to their own religious and cultural identity, has inspired me to connect more to my own faith."

Their words were then summarized by Samantha Partrich who explained, "Students graduate from Frankel Jewish Academy knowing who they are, and feeling confident about who they are as Jews and as members of our society. FJA doesn't just make good students, it makes good people, and that is invaluable."

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS



TO LEARN ABOUT SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, PLEASE CONTACT
Shana Kantor skantor@frankelja.org or Julie Ohana johana@frankelja.org.

L'HITRAOT FAREWELL to STAFF (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)



We wish **KAIT GUSTAFSON** best of luck in her new role at Fowlerville Community Schools. While Ms. Gustafson now has a much shorter commute, she has wonderful memories of her five years at FJA. "My big advice for FJA students would be to really savor the environment they are fortunate enough to be in while they're in it - the resources, people, and tools at their fingertips are

unmatched with any other school or district I've worked in during my career and are such an asset to their education."



RABBI AVI SPODEK will return to the east coast, continuing his career in Jewish day schools at the Melvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy where he will teach Tanach and Jewish History. We wish him the best of luck in his new role.



GARY GATES has been the boys assistant tennis coach for the last five years. Gary was coach Larry Stark's right hand man, and the duo has led the FJA tennis program to four state finals appearances. Thank you Gary and best of luck in your retirement!



After 8 years at FJA, **PAUL THEBERT** will leave to join the Detroit Public School system. He shared with faculty and staff that he feels "called to serve that community in this new chapter" of his career. Although he won't be far away, we know that FJA students will miss his passion, his sense of humor, and his steady calm.

HOW TO DONATE

Online - 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.

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, visual and 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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