



# כוכב הציפור NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE HEBREW ACADEMY

EDITOR: MICHELLE RUTTA

FRIDAY NIGHT CANDLE LIGHTING: 5:53 PM הדלקת נרות:

SHABBAT ENDS: 7:00 PM זמן הבדלה:

Parashat Bereshit

## IN THE BEFORE TIME

### A Shabbat Message from Rabbi Dr. Jeffrey Kobrin

"When this is all over," a friend said to me recently, "you'll look back and laugh at it all." I responded that when "this" is all over, I don't ever want to look back at any of it at all. Urban Dictionary, I learned, has officially declared the phrase "The Before Time" as a reference to the days before the COVID pandemic changed all our lives.

One of the blessings we offer a chatan and kallah is that they should have the joy that God granted be-Gan Eden me-kedem, "in the Garden of Eden long ago."

Kedem means the Before Time. Rabbi Binyamin Lau in his wonderful Etnachta writes that the sin of eating the forbidden fruit fundamentally changed the relationship of Adam and Chava. Before eating the fruit in this week's parasha of Bereshit, Adam called her isha, "woman," a word derived from the word ish, "man." Adam said that she was etzem me-atzmi u-basar mi-besari, "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." They were partners, equals; they were two parts of the same whole. But that was in the Before Time.



After the sin, though, Adam gave her a new name, calling her Chava, the "mother of all life." She now had a role that was distinct from Adam's hunter and farmer role, and a hierarchy was established in their relationship: different roles, writes Rabbi Lau, can lead to conflict. (I have heard that even today, in some marriages, wives and husbands sometimes argue.) The sin of eating the fruit -- and the anxiety caused by the consequences of that sin -- permanently altered Adam and Chava's relationship. When we offer the beracha to a new bride and groom that their joy should be like those in Gan Eden in the Before Time, we wish them a marriage without conflict, without squabbling over whose fault it is or who was in charge or who should have done it.

We all continue to wonder what lasting impact this period of human history will have on our kids and their development. Not knowing how long it will last only makes those questions that much more fraught. How and when will we get back to the Before Time? And what will it feel like? More immediately, how do we help our kids and ourselves get through the Now Time?

We have family friends who ask each family member around their Shabbat table to share a personal "high" and "low" from their week. I never liked this game, as I felt it allowed people to complain with their "lows" at a time when they should be celebrating their "highs." But maybe that game has a place now: while we should definitely focus on the good parts, the highs of our week, we also can validate that we live in times -- the Now Time -- that have lows as well.

But we cannot dwell in those lows. We need to remind each other that we have many, many things for which to be grateful and many things we take for granted. We shouldn't gloss over the highs too quickly. With God's help and by using our own good judgement, we can appreciate the Now Time and not spend too much energy pining for the Before Time.

And then, perhaps the Before Time will be back before we know it.

Shabbat Shalom.

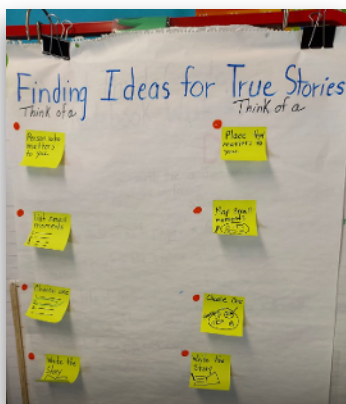
## A NEW WRITING CURRICULUM BEGINS AT CHERRY LANE

**By Lisa Weinstein, Director of Curriculum and Instruction**

While our students at North Shore Hebrew Academy have always been engaged with reading and writing on a daily basis, after a thorough analysis of the General Studies curriculum, we are implementing a formal writing curriculum this year that will explicitly teach students to write, by building upon skills over time, across grades 1-5. Our goal at NSHA is to prepare our students for any reading and writing task they will face or set for themselves, and to turn them into life-long, confident writers. We aim to develop and strengthen a generation of writers who are passionate about communicating through the written word.

This year, in grades 1-5, we are implementing the *Teachers College Units of Study in Opinion, Informational and Narrative Writing*. Over the summer, General Studies teachers participated in professional development sessions over Zoom and in person during Teacher Orientation to introduce the curriculum to them. Our teachers are also attending virtual conference days throughout the year with staff developers at the Teachers College and meet weekly with me to study student writing and learn best practices in implementing this new curriculum. Our teachers are excited by these new professional development opportunities and are eager to bring their new skills into the classroom.

Students started the year by writing a *narrative on-demand*, which is a writing sample that serves as a baseline for teachers to learn about a child's writing. Teachers met in grade-level groups, studied narrative writing exemplars, and read and discussed several of the student writing samples together in order to create a shared vision of what an excellent piece of writing at their grade level looks like. Teachers also identified the strengths and weaknesses in each student's writing, and looked for trends across their class, so that they can modify their writing lessons to exactly what our students need to strengthen their writing.

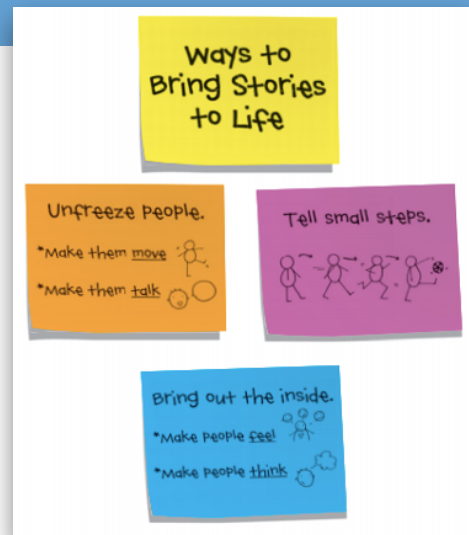


Each grade began the year with a narrative writing unit. Students will read published personal narratives, brainstorm ideas for their own writing, draft, revise, edit, and ultimately publish a writing piece. A huge emphasis in this curriculum is the writing process, and on the writer's craft - i.e. the things that a writer does to make his/her writing stronger and better. While spelling and grammar are important elements in writing, it is equally important that students understand that they are writing for an audience, and that the choices they make in their writing affect its quality.

We can't wait to see the impact of our new writing curriculum on our students, and look forward to sharing more about our students' writing and their accomplishments as the year progresses.

**School-to-Home Connection or Ways you Can Support Your Child at Home:** The next time you read a fiction picture book to your child, read it twice with them.

- First, read it as a reader, asking questions like, "Who are the characters? How would you describe them? What's the problem in the story? How was it solved?"
- Next, read the story again, as a **writer**, asking questions like, "How did the author begin the story? Did he/she use words to describe the setting? Or dialogue to bring you right into a conversation between the characters? Or did the words begin some other way? Why do you think the author chose to write the story this way?"



The NSHA 2020-2021 Calendar will be placed in student backpacks of families who are paid in full for their PTA dues. If you do not receive your copy, please email [PTA@nsa.org](mailto:PTA@nsa.org).





**By: Ofier Sigal, General Studies Principal**

One conversation that I often have with parents is how they can help their children learn and grow beyond the homework table's typical evening. I loved that this week, our PTA recognized the importance of just that by partnering with our teachers to designate a homework-free evening with an emphasis on engaging in a family activity. Below are some of my favorite activities for bonding with my own children in an educational way, which you might enjoy incorporating into your family routine:

- 1. Learn about your child's reading interests:** By taking a family trip to the library (or Amazon), you can learn a lot about your child's reading interests. While our classrooms have robust leveled libraries so that various books are right at our students' fingertips, you may just be beginning to grow your at-home library. Instead of selecting books for your kids based on what you want them to read, ask your child what his or her reading interests are. You'll find that children are much more eager to read when they are empowered to select their own books per their own interests. If you're not sure where to start, you can check in with your child's teacher to find out his/her reading level. Then head to the library or shop online together with your child to find the books that interest him or her most. Create a designated family reading time on Shabbat or each evening where your family cozies up in the living room to read or read a book out loud together as a family. If reading is a priority for you in your personal time, it will serve to inspire your child to read as well.
- 2. Find learning opportunities while playing:** Exercising our brains helps us become stronger learners. Math and logic games are an excellent way to engage children to think critically and analytically, which are also important tools for getting the most out of reading and classroom learning. Checkers and chess are strategic games that keep kids on their toes. These kinds of activities are great ways to connect with your child and can provide insight into how your child thinks and processes as he/she learns.
- 3. Get Moving!** One of the best gifts we can give our children is our undivided attention. Try combining this with physical activity. During periods of remote learning, I loved seeing how many of our parents and siblings joined in on Coach Hall's remote Phys Ed classes, and it got me thinking about the ways we can use our devices for good family bonding. Try downloading an app and learning a new form of physical activity that can also strengthen your and your child's minds. A colleague of mine recently shared that she and her 7-year-old daughter began using the free Peloton app for evening yoga sessions during the NY State shutdown in the Spring. She said that doing these challenging but rewarding sessions together was a great bonding experience. She and her daughter also reported feeling stronger, calmer, and less anxious, as the physical activity helped their moods and minds.
- 4. Use your home as a classroom (and I don't mean on Zoom):** One of our favorite family activities is cooking. Kitchens are naturally a gathering space for families, and we all need to eat, so why not engage your children in the process? Together with your children, pick a recipe or meal to create together. Following recipes is a great way to practice sequencing with your child (you can ask them questions along the way, such as "Why do you think we need to heat the oven before we put in the cake batter?"). Cooking can be a great vehicle for science experimentation too. This week, I heard that Mr. Imburgia, our K-5 science teacher, was working with our 5th graders on questions of how acids react with different ingredients. I bet our students can teach you a whole lot now about how and why we use baking powder in our desserts. You can find some great cookbooks with science twists for some great family fun in the kitchen.
- 5. Learn something new together:** Model lifetime learning for your child by showing excitement and enthusiasm for a new skill, hobby, or interest. Every year I love walking through Central Park in the Fall. The colors and natural wonders that I find in NYC are so inspiring. This year, my children and I are learning about the birds that migrate through NYC by purchasing a bird watcher book and seeing which ones we spot. I love that this is something new that my children and I can do together. They see me as a novice and know that we are learning from the beginning together. It's ok to show our children that we have much to learn, no matter how old we are. In fact, a great gift we can give to our children is to teach them to be forever curious and interested.

What are some of your favorite ways to learn together with your child? I would love to hear your ideas and look forward to incorporating them into my own life.



We are happy to be back after all the chagim whether it is in person or by zoom. Our CL staff is zooming from their classrooms and creating fun filled days of learning and activities for all our Pre K and Kindergarten students. Our goal is to keep our students engaged in their daily learning while keeping to a schedule similar to their in-class schedule. Keeping routines intact is an important goal and we are trying our best to do that when we are on zoom. We hope to resume "in person" learning next week.



Our YIGN classes are lucky to have remained open. Each day we are open, we bond with our students creating routines that are comfortable for them. Our children are happy, well-adjusted, and full of smiles when they arrive at school each morning. It is a joy to see!

Our Toddler and Nursery students enjoyed their snacks in the YIGN Sukkah and Simchat Torah parades in our playground. A short but nice chol hamoed sukkot was enjoyed there by all!

Thank you to all our parents for your warm and encouraging emails. We are so happy that you are pleased with your child's adjustment to school during these challenging times. We are happy to hear that your children are learning and engaged even while on zoom. We were also thrilled to hear how prepared your children were for each chag. Kudos to our amazing EC Teaching Team!

We thank all our parents for helping us keep our school safe and for following all the protocols set forth. We know that each new rule and procedure can be challenging but if we all work together to stay safe the better the chances are that we can remain open and all of us can stay healthy.

Thank you so much for your cooperation. We will get through this pandemic together and hope that soon it will be a distant memory.

We look forward to smooth uninterrupted weeks of learning and fun!

Wishing you all health and safety during this time!



## NSHA LAUNCHES A SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM

NSHA is excited to announce the launch of our school-wide Social Emotional Learning Program. Now more than ever- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is crucial to each student's emotional well-being and growth. It is our responsibility as educators and a community to ensure that our students learn how to behave positively and learn language for healthy emotional development. Social and emotional learning (SEL) provides the foundation for safe and positive learning and enhances students' ability to succeed in school, careers, and beyond.

The "five keys" to successful SEL programs are Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision Making. Research shows that SEL not only improves academic achievement by an average of 11 percentile points, but it also increases prosocial behaviors (such as kindness, sharing, and empathy), improves student attitudes toward school, and reduces depression and stress among students. Effective social and emotional learning programming involves coordinated classroom, school-wide, family, and community practices that help students develop the skills necessary to be successful in school.

Under the direction of **Sara Berlin, NSHA's in-house social worker**, the SEL program features weekly lesson plans and curriculum guides for teachers to carry out with their students. We look forward to updating our parents periodically on the implementation of this meaningful program.

# THE GRATITUDE MOVEMENT

Many of us are wrestling with a wide range of emotions that may be hard to quantify or express. We wanted to find a way to help guide and unify our teachers, parents and students as we navigate these uncertain times. Experts believe that in moments like these, expressing gratitude can do wonders for our spirit.

In the words of our social worker **Mrs. Stephanie Genachowski LMSW:**

Gratitude is the light even in the darkest of times. Taking a moment to focus on what we are thankful for and for all that is positive in our lives, can ultimately improve both our emotional and physical self. This is an exercise that is beneficial for both us as parents and for our children.

**The PTA presents the Gratitude Movement.**



This past week, we boosted moods, thanked terrific teachers, worked to support each other and laughed together. If you haven't already done so, please join The Lion's Share WhatsApp chat where we'll post opportunities to help families and teachers in our school community. Keep your eyes out for additional Gratitude Movement programming in the coming weeks!

## SPOTLIGHT ON: KINDERGARTEN JUDAIC STUDIES

**Brought to you by our Kindergarten Judaic studies Faculty Team: Susan Frisch, Ziva Meraz, Connie Reichman, and Yaffa Shahverdi**



Our very first weeks of school have been a time for getting to know one another, for learning each other's names in both Hebrew and English, for finding our way around the classroom and for settling into the daily routines. As the children move around the room from center to center, they are becoming comfortable with the physical environment and with the flow of the classroom.

The start of this year is a unique one, but regardless, our goals are to foster love and excitement for Judaism, Jewish identity, and

the Hebrew language.



Tefilah is a very important part of our curriculum. We start off every day thanking Hashem in song, holding our precious siddurim. The children are beginning to follow along with the words of the Tefilot and are excited. Just as importantly, the children are exploring the meaning of the words they are saying. It was exciting for the children to discover how a Hebrew book opens from the opposite side of a book they are used to and that in Hebrew we read from right to left!

Our school year began right before the beginning of all the Jewish holidays. Rosh Hashanah, the Hebrew New Year, was the first we explored. We learned the significance of the chag, important mitzvot connected to the chag, sang songs, and learned to greet each other with שנה טובה. We also concentrated on Yom Kippur and the concept of doing Teshuvah. Next came Succot, the Harvest holiday, which



we studied and for which we made some beautiful crafts to help us celebrate this beautiful holiday at home.

We are so excited that we have begun to learn Hebrew letters, our Aleph Bet. Using our Migdalor curriculum books, we use picture cards to learn new vocabulary - nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions, and articles. In addition, just this week, we started learning from our Hebrew reading books which guide us through each Hebrew letter including their sounds, written formations, vocabulary, and use in context.

We are having such a good time in kindergarten. Zooming has been a unique way to start the year, but we look forward to seeing each other soon, in person, and filling our days with playing, learning, meeting new friends, and creating wonderful memories.

## SPOTLIGHT ON: FIRST GRADE GENERAL STUDIES

**Brought to you by the First Grade General Studies Team: Mrs. Bergman, Mrs. Levine & Mrs. Lubeck**

In general studies, our first grade students are learning and growing each day. Both in person and on Zoom, we learn together as a class, and in small, homogeneous groups. We are so fortunate to have our reading and math specialists in our classroom and on Zoom to make small groups happen, regardless of where we are learning. Our students find it fun and engaging to go into Zoom breakout rooms where they learn with and from different children and teachers.

This week we began guided reading! This dedicated reading period gives children an opportunity to read on their individual reading level, and to learn new comprehension strategies. In these groups, phonics are reinforced as well. We look forward to continuing these small groups when we return to the classroom.

Our First graders are also working hard at becoming authors! We are using a brand new writing curriculum this year, and first graders are writing personal narratives. They are currently working on how to write “small moment” stories. We call these stories seed stories because each story is a smaller story that focuses on one focused event or period of time, rather than on a day or a week. When writing a personal narrative, did you know the best way to bring your characters to life is to unfreeze them by making them move, talk, think, and feel? The first grade looks forward to the culmination of this unit within the next few weeks with a well-deserved publishing party!

In math, our students are learning the basic properties of addition. They are learning the commutative property. When you add 2 numbers together, you can change the order of your addends and still get the same sum! Our students are visually coloring in cubes to learn and help them visualize fact families while solidifying the commutative property in math. Students are also learning to become math detectives and solve the mysteries in each addition word problem by deciphering what the word problem is asking them to solve. It’s been fun identifying all the different elements in a word problem and creating our own word problems too!

We look forward to welcoming back our first grade students to our classrooms next week!

## D'VAR TORAH: PARSHAT BERESHIT

**Morah Aviva Smus**

As I often tell my students, Hebrew is a clever language; however, Parashat Bereshit teaches us that the Hebrew language is more than just beautiful and clever, it is our lashon hakodesh (our holy tongue) and every word is definitive.

This week’s parasha describes the creation of mankind. Hashem formed man from the dust of the earth and then blew a soul into his nostril. If Hashem breathed life into man, and if man was created be’tzelem elokim (in the image of G-d), then why is man called adam (earth) from the word adama and not neshama (soul)?

Perhaps this is because Adam’s name indicates his mission. If man’s goal is to realize his potential, then he must first recognize his strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, the word adam implies weakness because man is formed from the adama and no matter how spiritual he may be, he is nevertheless grounded in the adama - in the physical and material world. The fact that he comes from adama can make him vulnerable because



temptations surround him and in a moment he can lose his spirituality. Therefore, he must be vigilant and protect the divine spark with which Hashem created him. On the other hand, the word adam implies strength because adama is where we can plant trees and yield fruit, thereby producing new life. Man's connection to the ground actually hints of his greatest potential. The name Adam is a reminder that precisely because our soul is the breath of G-d, we have to be careful not to sully it. Even though we are adam and made from earth, we must be constantly alert and think of ways to safeguard our neshamot (souls) by living moral Torah lives.

Shabbat Shalom.

## TASHLICH AT CHERRY LANE



In our preparations for Rosh Hashana during Elul, our students learned the importance of self reflection as part of the process for self improvement. Our fourth and fifth grade students participated in a special tashlich program led by **Rachel Spinner, Director of Programming and Community Engagement**. Mrs. Spinner asked our students to think about whether there was anything this past year that they regret doing or not doing. Students considered if there was a friend that they wish they had been there for or situations where they could have made better choices. We learned that an important part of the process of forgiveness is recognizing your mistakes and making a plan on how to fix them or prevent them from happening again.

Next, our students were provided with a piece of water soluble paper. They had a private moment when they wrote down any regrets and scrunched the paper into a small ball.

We took a short walk together down Wildwood Road to an overpass by Mitchell's Creek. Before throwing their pieces of paper into the water, students were encouraged to take a moment and think about what they wrote down.

We asked the students how the process of tashlich made them feel. Some students said they felt lighter afterwards. Although Elul is a particularly special time for teshuva, we hope this process of self reflection is one that our students will engage in throughout the year to continue to strengthen their relationships with each other, themselves and HaShem.

## DAYS OF LEARNING AT NSHA

We are proud to announce that a Day of Learning on **Tuesday, September 15th** took place across all of our campuses sponsored by Bart and Emma Baum, in memory of Shlomo Bishen z'l, beloved father and father-in-law of our parents Yifat and Zachary Mittleman, and beloved grandparent of Chloe(9th), Michael, (6th), Cooper (3) & Sasha (3).

We are proud to announce that a Day of Learning on **Thursday, October 1st** at our Cherry Lane and Old Mill Campuses was sponsored by Eliot Heisler & Erica Zucker Heisler, in honor of the administration, faculty and staff for their tireless work to create and provide a wonderful and safe learning environment for their daughter and all of the students at NSHA.

**By sponsoring a Day of Learning you can help our students experience the mitzvah of studying in the merit of another person, a mitzvah that we hope they will continue to practice throughout their lives. Funds raised through this special program go directly to provide additional educational programs for the benefit of our children.**

**If you would like to sponsor a Day of Learning please visit <https://www.nsha.org/dayoflearning>. If you have any questions, please contact Arnie Flatow at [aflatow@nsha.org](mailto:aflatow@nsha.org) or 516-487-8687 ext. 133.**



### NSHA PICTURE DAY 2020

**Cherry Lane-November 3**  
**Old Mill & Young Israel- November 4**

All order forms **MUST** be submitted by Oct 27th

Please make checks payable to:  
Irvin Simon Photographers

Your child's picture will be taken as per the schedule above.  
Please complete the payment envelope (distributed in school) according to instructions. If paying by check, each child must have their own check. If paying online, you must still send back a complete order form with your online order confirmation number clearly written in the appropriate slot.

*"Due to COVID19, no class pictures will be taken this year"*  
All orders **MUST** be prepaid.

Questions? Contact  
Vivian Kron (516)244-6330 or Odella Namdar (516)770-5969