

A BOLD NEW INITIATIVE FOR OUR PRESCHOOL

Everything in life is part of a process. We dream about the possibility of creating something; we diligently work to maintain the product; we continually imagine the next iteration of the project. Our lives fall into these categories, and certainly our synagogue follows the pattern.

We were blessed with the opportunity to introduce a Preschool to our community shortly after we formed Anshai Torah. With Debbie Romick leading the way, we aggressively began the process of serving our youngest families to the best of our ability. Soon to follow would be Faith Retsky and then Alyse Eisenberg. Each of these talented women raised our Preschool to the next level and we are extremely grateful for their contributions. Each director brought tremendous energy and dedication to our shul; and without doubt, we all have been the beneficiary of their wisdom and unbridled effort to impact young Jewish lives.

Six months ago, Rachel Nicholas became our current director of the Anshai Torah Preschool. We knew Rachel had never directed a preschool; we soon realized that would not deter us. . .she had all the talent and all the requisite experience in supportive roles to be fully qualified to accept the responsibility-- she simply needed an opportunity. Everyone who has had the opportunity to work with Rachel thus far knows she is an outstanding fit for us. Her passion, professionalism, vision, and dedication all combine to remind us how fortunate we are to have her on our staff.

One of Rachel's greatest talents is her ability to listen to parents and integrate needs into our program. She thrives on strategic planning. She recognizes challenges and strives to address them.

As we anticipate the 2014-15 academic school year, we do so with a bold new vision for the Preschool. With Rachel's leadership and the full support of the leadership team at the shul, we will extend the number of days of our Preschool calendar by opening our program on Yom Tov to

enhance the Yom Tov experience for children and parents alike.

These Yom Tov days will begin with a special service for parents and children and will end after the children have lunch. Packaged in between will be an exciting programmatic experience designed to instill in our children a love and appreciation for the depth of our Jewish tradition. All activities will be "halakhically" appropriate (according to Jewish law) for Yom Tov and will inspire our staff to be creative as they introduce activities that will be both educational and fun for our children.

We always receive rave reviews for our yearly Pancake Breakfast and service in the Sukkah (on the second day of Sukkot). We will extend these breakfasts throughout Yom Tov. . .on Sukkot, Passover and Shavuot.

We strive to continually maximize the blessing we call Preschool. It is our goal to reach out to our families by inviting them into our preschool space on Yom Tov and to help provide their children with memories to last a lifetime while giving them another reason to call Anshai Torah their home.

Anshai Torah has never been reticent to address important concerns. I need not remind anyone of the avalanche of information addressing the demographic challenges facing our Jewish world today. We need innovation. We need an ever-increasing commitment to traditional values. We need vision; we need courage; and we need leadership. Rachel Nicholas is working to provide that for us in our Preschool, and I am exceedingly excited about working with her to explore this avenue of reaching out to our youngest families at Anshai Torah. I hope you too will join us as we identify new and opportune means to welcome more Preschool families into the fabric of a meaningful and inspired relationship with our precious Jewish community.

Rabbi Stefan J. Weinberg