

**TEMPLE BETH-EL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER**  
**The Marjorie and Mark Gershwind Campus of Living Judaism**  
**5 Old Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11023**



# **GROWING TOGETHER**

**Vicki Perler, Director**  
**March 12, 2021**

Dear Families,

In school, each class is experiencing the story and meaning of Passover in extraordinary ways. The next two weeks of celebrations will be the culmination of many days of excitement, preparation and learning. Each year, our celebrations and Seders have a special significance. Once again, I am ever so grateful to each of our dedicated and talented teachers for creating such beautiful school experiences for the children.

Passover is the holiday of our freedom, and there is something very special about this Chag - it is designed specifically for children. The most important commandment of the holiday involves our obligation to tell the Passover story to our children in ways that they understand. The Haggadah is the most popular book in the world. Why are there many more editions of Haggadot than bibles or other popular publications? The Haggadah focuses on the needs of our children and reminds us that there are different types of children who require a variety of approaches to reach them. The Haggadah's formula for teaching our children is always the same, but each edition is fine-tuned with elaboration and embellishment to make the telling meaningful in our generation, in our community, and for our children and young adults. Each one of us is obligated to find a way to ensure that all children understand the importance of becoming free and that freedom is everyone's G-d-given right. For adults, the message is

also that we each can make celebrating freedom and the Exodus from Egypt personal by striving to free ourselves from the physical, emotional or spiritual forces that enslave us.

Seders this year will probably be different for most families. For my family, I rented a tent for the backyard. Although it might feel like Pesach in the Sukkah, we will be telling the Passover story in words that each of my grandchildren will understand. I'm especially looking forward to the conversations at the Seder table this year. The experiences we've all had this past year during the pandemic have generated different ways of thinking and new realizations about freedom. In the Pirkei Avot, Ethics of our Fathers, it states: "Who is the wise person? The one who learns from every person." Listen to your children's voices this Passover. They have learned so much about courage, bravery, and resilience, and have helped us overcome our own fears. They are truly wise, and I am grateful for their wisdom.

*Shabbat Shalom*  
*Vicki*

## **HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER**

<b>Saturday Night, March 13</b>	<b>Comedy Night at Temple Beth-El</b>
<b>Sunday, March 14</b>	<b>Rosh Chodesh Nisan</b>
<b>Sunday, March 14</b>	<b>Daylight Savings Time Begins – Set Clocks Forward One Hour</b>
<b>Sunday, March 14</b>	<b>Mitzvah Day at Temple Beth-El</b>
<b>Saturday, March 20</b>	<b>First Day of Spring</b>
<b>Fri-Mon, March 26-April 5</b>	<b>Passover Recess – School Closed</b>
<b>Tuesday, April 6</b>	<b>School Re-Opens</b>
<b>Thursday, April 8</b>	<b>PTC Meeting – 9:30 AM</b>

## **CONNECTIONS**

**Parent Teacher Council** – Thank you to our very special Parent Teacher Council (PTC) for providing additional programming for the children. Yesterday's music experiences with Matt the Music Man were full of joyous laughter. We are looking forward to having more special music experiences with Matt this spring.

**The next meeting of the PTC will be held on Thursday, April 8.** Please join us! Now that the weather is getting warmer, we will be planning for new outdoor events for our school.

**Registration for the Summer Program** – Register Now! We are offering programs for children who are two, three, and four years old. We are excited to offer the opportunity for our students to continue their experiences at Temple Beth-El during the summer. Stress-free transitions are important for young children, and our Summer Program is a wonderful way to provide consistency and a seamless flow of the year. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or email. **We are very excited to announce that Karen Wasserman, our fabulous Pre-K teacher, will be our Summer Program Director this year. Morah Karen is an exemplary teacher and has taught in our ECEC for the past 15 years. She has much experience with children in school and in camp, and she is very eager and motivated to take on this new role. We are excited for you to get to know her.**

**Registration for 2021-2022** – Don't get closed out of a class! Registrations are still coming in for the 2021-2022 school year. If you have any questions about our program for your child for next year, please don't hesitate to call or email me.

**PTC Challah Fundraising Program** - We are offering an opportunity for you to order dough for your weekly challah to take home on Thursdays. This is a fun and educational way to enhance your Shabbat experiences with your children by making a fresh challah at home every week. **The Challah Program began this week. You can still sign up!** A huge thank you, to Marianna Costa and our extraordinary PTC, for initiating this wonderful experience for our children and families.

**Challah Dough Details if Your Child is Absent from School** – The school will put your dough in the freezer, and we will give it to you when you return. Once you receive the dough, it will need to be completely defrosted. It takes 6-7 hours to completely defrost, and then needs to be brought to room temperature before you prepare it and braid.

**Travel Requirements** – **Please continue to be safe. We have been blessed with continuous in-person education for our children, and we want to continue that way until June!** It is highly recommended that you do not travel unless it is absolutely necessary. If you must travel, it is imperative that you follow all travel-related quarantine protocols set by New York State. Any traveler coming into NYS (who traveled outside NY, PA, NJ, CT, MA or VT for more than 24 hours must quarantine for 14 days UNLESS they receive a negative Covid test before departure and then again on day four of their return. A 14-day quarantine is mandatory for a return to school unless two negative tests results are provided to the school in writing.

For more information on the quarantine requirements and other procedures for travelers, please see the NYS Department of Health guidance found at the following link [https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/11/interm\\_guidance\\_travel\\_advisory.pdf](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/11/interm_guidance_travel_advisory.pdf)

**Dressing for the Outdoors** – **Thank you for being so attentive to the weather every day to ensure that your child is appropriately dressed for outdoor play. We have had extraordinary experiences in the school this year! Thank you for investing in snow pants for your child – it has made all the difference in our outdoor play!** Our goal in all weather is to keep the children warm, dry and comfortable. If they are not dressed properly, the class is unable to take advantage of the open air and the many interesting outdoor spaces around the temple building. Boots, raincoats, snow pants, an extra pair of sneakers, two complete changes of clothing (to be left in school), sweaters, hats, mittens, and a warm jacket are necessary. We are outdoors when the temperature is above 30 degrees. Please label all children's clothing! Thank you.

**Health and Safety Precautions During the Pandemic** - The health and safety procedures in the ECEC are very specific this year. Please wear your mask, stay physically distant from each other, and never bring your child to school if s/he appears ill. We will need to send your child home if s/he exhibits symptoms. **All children in the school MUST be symptom free.** Your cooperation is essential and very much appreciated.

**Parent Teacher Council** – The PTC is comprised of parents, teachers and lay leaders from the Temple and school community who work together to make decisions and provide ongoing support for the school. Our PTC Co-Chairs for the 2020-2021 school year are Dalia Hagooli, Marianna Costa, and Samantha Talasazain. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to our school. If you would like to be a part of our exciting Parent Teacher Council, please feel free to contact Dalia ([dharoooni@aol.com](mailto:dharoooni@aol.com)), Marianna ([mari.mostovaya@yahoo.com](mailto:mari.mostovaya@yahoo.com)) or Sam ([stalis625@gmail.com](mailto:stalis625@gmail.com)) at any time. We are grateful to all of you for your participation.

**Inclement Weather Arrival and Dismissal Procedures** – Please arrive on time and sit in your car until the teacher notifies you. Your child’s teacher will text you to inform you that it is your turn for arrival. **By intentionally following this staggered procedure, we have created an organized and efficient arrival and pick-up.** Thank you, parents, for your help and cooperation. Please note that during these extreme inclement weather days, the designated outdoor drop-off and pick-up location for the Rabbi’s Garden Play Area is outside the Temple’s main entrance. The designated outdoor drop-off and pick-up location for the two-year-old classes is the Rudin Garden entrance.

**Shabbat Sing** – On Friday, we join together to experience a beautiful sing-along with me. It is the highlight of my week - every week. I feel very blessed to be able to teach your children beautiful Shabbat melodies. Our Shabbat Sing experiences will be different this year as they will be outdoors and physically distant. We look forward to creating joyous Shabbat celebrations every week.

**Hot Lunch Program** - The foods children eat and lifestyle habits they learn have a lasting effect on their health. Due to the overwhelming interest of our families to provide nutritious meals for lunch, we offer meat and dairy lunches for all students. As you know, one of the values of our school is to maintain the highest quality of care whenever possible. This value should also be reflected in the foods we eat.

**Lunch Menu:**

**Monday** – Pasta, meat sauce, vegetables

**Tuesday** – Baked chicken fingers and vegetables

**Wednesday** Pizza and Israeli salad

**Thursday**- Grilled cheese and vegetables - NEW

**Friday** – Baked fish, rice, vegetables

This year, the lunch is provided in individual packages for each child. We also have whole wheat bread and soy butter available to children who have not yet acquired the taste for these new foods. We hope that over time, children will discover and enjoy a variety of foods.

**Important ECEC Telephone Information** – If you have an important message and cannot reach me or Nancy on the telephone during the day, please ask someone in the main office to find us and relay the message. We hope this system will help you if you are unable to talk to us in person.

**Contact Information** - Please call, email or see me if you have anything you would like to discuss. My email address is [vperler@tbegreatneck.org](mailto:vperler@tbegreatneck.org). This is usually the best way to reach me.

**Links to Remember** – I invite you to visit the websites connected to the links below. The links relate to information about early childhood education, Jewish life and learning, and helpful hints for parents.

<https://pjlibrary.org/beyond-books/pjblog/february-2017/the-passover-story-for-kids>

[https://d2gesac5hma2c2.cloudfront.net/uploads/attachment/file/1690/Winter Thrive Guide 2021.pdf](https://d2gesac5hma2c2.cloudfront.net/uploads/attachment/file/1690/Winter_Thrive_Guide_2021.pdf) (Ideas for Family Fun During Winter Months)

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/explore-great-outdoors>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/joyful-parenting/201705/not-naughty-10-ways-kids-appear-be-acting-bad-arent>

<https://www.jnf.org> (Plant a tree in Israel for Tu B'Shevat)

[https://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/09/04/teaching-children-empathy/?\\_php=true&type=blogs&\\_php=true&type=blogs&smid=fb-share&r=5](https://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/09/04/teaching-children-empathy/?_php=true&type=blogs&_php=true&type=blogs&smid=fb-share&r=5)

*Harvard Psychologists Say: Parents Who Raise ‘Good’ Kids, Do These 5 Things!*  
<https://tinyurl.com/y97pbd6p>

*35 Children's Books That Teach Empathy and Kindness* <https://tinyurl.com/y5aczd6p>

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/helping-kids-navigate-scary-news-stories>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/early-development>

<https://www.mommyshorts.com/2015/03/5-ways-kids-learn-at-a-reggio-emilia-preschool.html>

<https://pjlibrary.org/home>

<https://pjlibrary.org/getmedia/c63e85f1-58d9-44fd-ae8a-696825e88d25/Jewish-values-ECE.pdf>

<https://childhood101.com/an-image-of-the-child-understanding-emergent-curriculum/>

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/if-we-dont-let-our-children\\_b\\_1017485?guccounter=1](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/if-we-dont-let-our-children_b_1017485?guccounter=1)

<https://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2016/04/08/children-play-nature-john-lee>

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/mar2018/promoting-social-and-emotional-health>

[www.tbe-ecec.org](http://www.tbe-ecec.org)

<http://www.naeyc.org/>

<http://families.naeyc.org/>

<http://www.reggioalliance.org/>

<http://www.brainy-child.com/article/reggioemilia.shtml>