

# What's Happening מה בשמע Ma Nishma



Congratulations to the Class of 2009 (96 seniors), for their acceptances to 111 different colleges and universities across the country including Brown, Carnegie Mellon, Oberlin College, Princeton, Stanford, and record numbers to UC Berkeley, UCLA, and University of Southern California. (See more college news and complete listing on page 7).

## THIS IS A RECORD YEAR



By Celeste Morgan,  
Director of College  
Guidance and  
Dean of Academic  
Advisement

“Click here to submit your application.....” a moment of mixed emotions for many high school seniors, and one that sometimes occurs while in the college

guidance office at NCJHS. A final review of each carefully worded essay, list of extracurricular

activities, academic achievements, short answer questions and it's time for the final mouse click. Intense! Our students work so hard to represent as much of themselves as possible within a very limited space, and then when the twelfth essay draft strikes the right note and the application deadline approaches...“click.” And you've submitted.

The moments immediately following application submission are glorious! With the advent of the common application, a central online resource that allows students to apply to many colleges using centralized forms and information, many students are able to assemble necessary documents, craft personal statements, and submit multiple applications within a relatively short, if hectic, time span. A unique freedom is

felt when one realizes it is no longer necessary to balance the demands of school, homework, sports, clubs AND college applications. Yet this reclaimed “down time” also gives each student time for something new: anticipation.

February and March represent a time of year when the frenetic pace of the Fall semester has passed, yet the demands of the college application cycle places on the psyche of high school seniors is far from relaxed. After the rush of meeting all deadlines and submitting all documents has passed—the waiting begins. In the college guidance office, our primary job shifts from essay editing, interview preparation and application

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## KIDS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We can all learn a thing or two about making a difference from NCJHS students. Start by perusing the NCJHS Daily Bulletin. On this particular Thursday in April, the Bulletin announced community outreach projects including a “Coffee Bean” fundraiser sponsored by Club ACOH (the Hispanic Community Outreach Club); the Cinderella Project seeking donations of formal dresses, shoes and purses for inner-city girls who can't afford to purchase clothing to attend high school proms; Club Invisible Children's Book Drive to raise funds for children in war-affected African communities; *Chevrei Tzedek's* dance marathon at the *Shabbaton* to raise funds to purchase a mobile playroom for hospitalized children;



L-R. Film Club leaders shown with Mr. Joel Blasberg (3rd from left), Ms. Amy Slater-Ovadia of Beit Issie Shapiro, Mr. Gregg Keer (Faculty Advisor), and Mr. Roger Blonder (Media Arts).

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# Passing Our Final Exam

By Dr. Bruce Powell, Head of School and Harold Masor, President, Board of Trustees



Dr. Bruce Powell



Harold Masor

Some of the greatest tests to our character, our values, our souls, often arrive as grand surprises. A year ago at this time, there were some indications that an economic slowdown was occurring, but upheaval in the banking and finance system, stock market and basic industries was certainly not anticipated.

The current economic downturn for us has been the ultimate pop quiz, the real unannounced test, the surprise measure of our school's core mission: To raise up a generation of Jewish leaders for whom Judaism guides and shapes their vision and values.


As it turns out, the unannounced test for New Community Jewish High School has come in the form of how our professional team and Board of Trustees have made decisions about next year's budget. When we look at our budget, it is not simply a listing of revenues and expenditures that are

detached from the reality of providing a rigorous curriculum in a warm and nurturing environment. The budget process is, at its core, a valuing process. Our Board finance committee and our professionals asked several "simple" questions: What is essential to the education of our students? How do we keep and continue to attract top faculty and support staff? How do we maintain a robust tuition assistance program while continuing to offer attractive salaries and benefits to our teachers and professional staff? And, what can we do without for the coming year as our nation weathers the current economic challenges? Perhaps these questions are really akin to a final exam.


The exam actually began last September, 2008, when our professionals met to plan for the 2009-10 school year, and our Board of Trustees asked us to review the current year budget for savings in 2008-09 given the then developing economic downturn. Tough questions were asked; priorities established; and programs shaped given the expected economic realities. In every case, our first priorities were to ensure adherence to our core values and culture, ample tuition assistance, maintain highly competitive teacher salaries and benefits, and ensure the core quality of our academic, athletic, arts, and extra-curricular offerings. Staff recommendations then went to the Board's finance committee which met for hours

on a regular basis ensuring that we maintained our core values while taking steps to secure a solid financial foundation for our school now, and for years to come. Our lay leaders and professional staff worked in partnership, and after nine months of intense analysis and valuing, the Board of Trustees passed a balanced revenue and spending plan that fully comports with our educational goals and core values. Frankly, participating in this process was a sacred moment in our school's history.

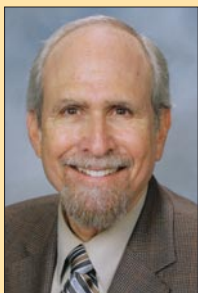
Even prior to our budgeting process, our board leadership understood that special measures needed to be taken to ensure the future of our school and to ensure that we may continue to make strong values-based choices. To this end, we have launched the first phase of our endowment campaign with several major gifts from our board leadership totaling over \$650,000! Our Board's goal is to raise \$4 million in endowment funds over the next several years, but our ultimate goal is to raise enough endowment funds to completely sub-vent tuition assistance for our school families.

Clearly, at New Community Jewish High School, we strive to fulfill our mission within all facets of our NCJHS family. Indeed, our "final exam" is a group effort, and we believe that we all passed. 

## SCHOOL NEWS

- **ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT** is being enhanced for the 2009-2010 school year. In addition to their continuing roles in college guidance, our Director and Associate Director of College Guidance, Celeste Morgan and Stephan Golas, will also begin a new role as Deans of Academic Advisement. Ms. Morgan and Mr. Golas are now providing academic advising to incoming ninth graders. They are available to meet with students and families in all grade levels as questions about appropriate academic course selection and overall curriculum arise. The goal of this addition to our advisement structure is to ensure that all NCJHS students reach their senior year with a strong foundation that will serve them best as they pursue higher education opportunities after graduation. Ms. Morgan and Mr. Golas are available during the school year as well as over the summer for individual meetings by request.
- Our new **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CUP)** was unanimously granted by the LA City Zoning Commission allowing us to maintain a student population of 450 students. Thanks to a strong partnership between school leaders, Shomrei Torah Synagogue leaders, neighbors, West Hills Neighborhood Council, LA City Councilmember Dennis Zine, NCJHS students, faculty and parents, we have set a positive example of various stakeholders in the community working together to accomplish common goals.
- In 2006, the **WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES** granted a six-year accreditation to NCJHS, with a planned mid-term visit after three years. The mid-term visit took place on March 23. The visitors praised the progress that we have made over the last three years in delivering an academic program of ever-increasing quality. They also noted, with palpable emotion, the richness of the Jewish values that our students are internalizing on a daily basis. Shortly after the visit, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges confirmed NCJHS's accreditation through 2012. We thank all of the students, faculty, staff, members of the Board of Trustees, and parents who participated in the various meetings with our WASC visitors.
- **NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY (NHS)** will debut next fall, thanks to the leadership of tenth and eleventh grade students (Daniel Hirsch, Ariel Prince, Emily Schenkel, Harrison Tasoff, Shayna Turk, Kayla Willis) and faculty advisor Dr. Howard Mendelson (Math Chair). NHS recognizes students for academic achievement, the very reason that the organization was first formed in 1921. NCJHS students in tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades whose cumulative grade point average exceed a specific threshold will be invited to apply for membership in NHS. Membership will be determined by a faculty council and will be based on leadership, service, and character as well as academic achievement. An induction ceremony for new members will be planned for early fall. Once inducted, student members of NHS will take on a community service project for the year.
- NCJHS offers a wide variety of **BUS TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**. Morning, afternoon and late bus routes cover territories ranging from Los Angeles, East Valley (from Studio City to Woodland Hills) and the North Valley (Granada Hills to Chatsworth). We are now offering a morning bus shuttle from the 101 freeway and Valley Circle Boulevard to service any students and/or parents who exit at this intersection; this will enable you to avoid traffic on Valley Circle and save the eight mile round-trip to and from the freeway. "Taking the bus reduces traffic, opens parking spaces, and is ecologically sound," states Gabriel Lynn, NCJHS Transportation Coordinator. She urges students to sign up for the bus program.
- NCJHS set a school record and a national standard for participation in our **LA-TEL AVIV ISRAEL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS** sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater L.A., our school, and our parents. Eighty tenth grade students participated in either our Short Israel Exchange Programs with Israeli High Schools Ironi Tet and Gymnasia Herzliya or our Extended Israel Exchange Program with Tichon Hadash. NCJHS is the only full-day high school in America that offers a direct family to family exchange program at the high school level. 

## The Melody Lingers On



Rabbi David Vorspan  
Rabbi-in-Residence

My friend's daughter recently told me she only has a few more pages until she finishes reading "1984." I can't wait until she finishes so she can tell me the ending.... I read this book in 1962, when we were all wondering what the future would bring. I spent much of my Junior and Senior High School years reading science fiction—Heinlein, Asimov, Bradbury. If everything we read and watched on T.V. (Lost in Space, the Jetsons) came true, we would all be traveling by personal helicopters and Big Brother would know everything we are doing right now.

The science fiction writers were predicting that by now there was to have been a major World

War, that big government meant global government, that we would be colonizing the moon and time travel would allow us to visit distant stars as well as our past without growing older. Our food would be dispensed in tablet form and our educational system would be through osmosis during our sleeping hours. There were dire warnings—we would be overpopulated, disease would overrun our cities and towns, our personal liberties and freedoms would be curtailed by megalomaniacs with destructive armaments.

So how much came true? Our houses don't look much different. Nor does our dress. It's true, science has advanced geometrically, we're living longer, and our world has shrunk as we internet with each other. But the military advancements that were to have brought the world to its knees has not done so. Threats to world peace come not from Communists, but from terrorists. And the car continues to be our major form of transportation, albeit with

GPSs that help guide us effortlessly to our destination (hopefully!).

The line from the poem tells us "Seasons change, the years come and go, but the melody lingers on." And so it does. The more things change, the more they stay the same. "1984" has not come true. We have made it into the next Millennium and laugh at the absurdities of the futurists.

And who knows better than we, members of the New Community Jewish High School family, how much can change around us, but how that melody within us can keep us in unison. The notes are found in the chanting marks of the Torah and in the refrains of ancient prayers.

And it is found in our classrooms where teachers and students bring ancient texts to life and in the timeless rhythms of lives led in service to others. ♪



## CULTURE QUEST

Armed with clipboards, questions, and cameras, thirty-one of our inquisitive tenth graders set off on this year's Culture Quest. Their mission was to observe, encounter, document and even "taste" life in the Los Angeles Jewish neighborhood of Pico-Robertson. Now in its third year, the Culture Quest program is evolving into a truly parallel experience to the one their classmates are having in Israel: eye-opening, inspiring and an experience which bonds the group.

Directed by Shari Davis, Coordinator of Interdisciplinary and Service Learning, and Beverley Kamenir, Tenth Grade Dean who taught the program in Jewish Studies classes, this year the program grew to encompass English and History classes as well. Students first looked within themselves to explore their own identity; they then looked outward to understand the experience of others. They explored the experience of Jewish immigrants to New York in the early 1900's, the forced placement of Japanese Americans in internment camps during World War II, and the transformative Ethiopian Jewish journey to Israel. By teaching across the curriculum, our faculty from diverse disciplines presented a wealth of films, short stories, interactive curricula and joint projects which opened students' eyes to the complex journeys immigrants take as they create home in a new land.

At the heart of the program were two field trips which challenged students to understand how culture, community and history affect the lives of the people living in diverse L.A. neighborhoods. On Pico-Robertson, students interviewed shop keepers about the neighborhood's history and changing demographics and talked to people about the places that mattered to them. In Little Tokyo, students explored the changing neighborhood, and visited the Japanese American National Museum. During a panel interview with elderly Japanese-Americans interned in the camps during World War II, students and teachers were able to ask many of the questions that came up in the classroom. In the final session students reflected on the insights gained during this two week journey. One student summed it up, "Through this program I was able to experience the life and feelings of real people I would ordinarily not meet... and to apply their understandings to my own life." ♪

## THE (WEST) HILLS ARE ALIVE WITH THE SOUND OF MUSIC



Jazz Ensemble at Jam Fest 2009 at the Knitting Factory in Hollywood.



A highlight of the year was the recent visit of former teacher and accomplished musician, Todd Herzog (3rd from left). While in town for his own concert at Shomrei Torah Synagogue, he stopped by NCJHS to write lyrics for a new song with our Songwriting and Technology class and to teach the bands one of his pieces. Mr. Herzog performed at the Shabbaton along with the bands and sang the new song.

The New Community Jewish High School Jazz Ensemble was a proud participant in JamFest 2009, put on by Bridges Academy with proceeds benefiting the non-profit MusiCares at the Knitting Factory in Hollywood. Students from NCJHS, Harvard-Westlake, Campbell Hall, Oakwood, and Bridges Academy not only performed with their respective bands, but jammed with each other! This was our ensemble's first big "road" performance of the year. The purposeful medley that was their set began with a tone-setting, traditional rendition of "Miserlou," exclaiming our Jewish heritage, but musically roping-in the audience. Then, with the tap of Natan Wythe's distortion pedal and a chorus of "heys" from the band, we were off on a journey through the world of musical and cultural fusion, playing Dick Dale's "surfer" version of "Miserlou" which spiraled into a driving performance of the new James Bond theme song, "Another Way to Die." Josh Robin and Natan Wythe held down the vocal melodies while Yuval Gnessin kept the group in tempo with the bass. All throughout the set, trumpet players, Noah Dach and Adam Askenaizer were united as one, a trumpet section to be reckoned with. For the finale, musicians from all the schools got on stage to "mega-jam" on Bobby McFerrin's "Don't Worry, Be Happy," with Yuval Gnessin, Natan Wythe, and Josh Robin, all taking solos and "pumping up the jam." Concertgoers were quite impressed with NCJHS's quality of musicianship.

The NCJHS music program catapulted to a new level this year, under the direction of teacher, Mr. Jared Stein. He teaches the Jazz Band and the Instrumental Ensemble classes, the ninth grade music rotation, and the Songwriting and Technology class. "Our classes explore the range of music and music theory, incorporating this year's theme of our Visual and Performing Arts Department, which is the cities of Tsfat and Tel Aviv in Israel. We take traditional songs and put our take on them. Students learn how to play music together; their high point is performing their work in front of live audiences," says Mr. Stein. This year both bands played at numerous school events, including the annual Arts Fest, *Shabbaton*, and holiday celebrations for Hanukkah, Yom Hashoah, and Yom HaAtzma'ut. Students even organized an evening Rock Fest featuring the school bands as well as other students' bands.

Senior Yuval Gnessin has played music at NCJHS since his freshman year. He follows in the footsteps of his predecessors whose passion for performance in the school's earlier years, laid the foundation for today's student musicians. "Just as I had the opportunity to play in bands with students older than me, I think it's great to welcome new talent into our bands. All grade levels work together as a creative team. Lots of musical innovation comes from students when we jam on our own. Today it's great that we have more opportunities to perform live in the community." Senior Joshua Robin adds that he "appreciates the opportunity to experience both jazz and Jewish music and to experiment with performing in different places." ♡

## CSI Meets Biotech & Forensics Classes



The popular television series "CSI" came to life for NCJHS Biotechnology students and Science Academy Forensic Science students pictured in front of the Hertzberg-Davis Forensic Science Institute at California State University, Los Angeles.

This facility collects and processes evidence from crime scenes in the city of Los Angeles. Students were privileged to see an entire floor of DNA analysis labs, a gun library, an indoor shooting range, gun firing tanks, a freezer for holding sensitive materials yet to be processed, a cataloging room for bringing in evidence and systematically tagging it for later analysis, and countless other labs used in forensic science. Taught by Ms. Jennifer Wallace, Biotech students learn and discuss applications, advancements, limitations, legalities, and ethical dilemmas surrounding DNA science. Forensic Science is the application of science, such as biology, chemistry, physics, and computer science to the legal system. ♡

## Biology Classes Tour Tapia Water Reclamation Facility/Malibu Creek State Park



All honors and regular biology students visited our local water reclamation facility, Tapia. They received a tour of the facility to understand how human wastewater from our showers, sinks, toilets, etc. is treated then used as recycled

water to irrigate public lands—golf courses, schools, parks. The tour included a visit to the compost facility where human solid waste is turned into natural fertilizer that can be used for landscaping. This compost is free and quite good for our lawn! Next, students performed community service at the nearby Malibu Creek State Park. With the help of Heal the Bay, students removed some invasive plants which are detrimental to the native species in the park. They also tested the water in the creek to see if the levels of nutrients in the lake were considered healthy by state standards. The hypothesis was tested to see how humans affect the natural ecosystems by what we put in our natural water sources like Malibu Creek. The goal was to determine to what extent the excess water leaving Tapia affects the water of Malibu Creek. ♡

# CAMPUS GUEST SPEAKERS



Just before Hanukkah, **RABBIS** from synagogues in the San Fernando and Conejo Valleys spent a morning at New Community Jewish High School in West Hills. Following a tour of the campus and visit to numerous classrooms, each rabbi met with a group comprised of ninth and twelfth grade students to present their interpretation of the concept of miracles. The mixed grade groups gave the younger students the opportunity to engage in thoughtful conversation with their older peers and seniors the chance to serve as role models. Participating rabbis were (L-R) Rabbi Gershon Weissman (Temple Beth Haverim), Rabbi Jerry Brown (Ahavat Shalom), Rabbi Stewart Vogel (Temple Aliyah), Rabbi Elianna Yolkut (Adat Ari El), Rabbi Paul Kipnes (Or Ami), Rabbi Benjamin Resnick (NCJHS Jewish Studies teacher), Rabbi Richard Camras (Shomrei Torah Synagogue), Rabbi Ed Feinstein (Valley Beth Shalom), Rabbi David Vorspan (NCJHS Rabbi-in-Residence), Rabbi Tsafreer Lev (NCJHS Director of Jewish Studies), Ellen Howard (NCJHS Principal), Dr. Bruce Powell (NCJHS Head of School), and Rabbi Jonathan Bernhard (Adat Ari El). Rabbi Don Goor of Temple Judea was also a guest.



**SIDONIA LAX's** (left) life story could be the plot of a captivating movie. She visited our Town Meeting in February and gave her firsthand historical lesson about the Holocaust, how she survived Poland and Germany, and eventually came to America to begin a different life. She told students, "Knowledge is the only thing people can't take away from you." When asked if she had any life lessons, she replied, "Save time, food, and money. Don't waste any of it." After her presentation, she talked with groups of students about the tattoos Jews received in the concentration camps.



**LORI GETZ** (middle), Cyber Education Specialist, spoke to parents about internet safety, cyber-bullying, and Web 2.0. She gave parents tips on how to navigate the web the ways kids do, as well as tips to keep kids safe online. She is pictured (from left) with parent Dr. Barbara Dalton-Taylor, Marcia Weingarten (Parent Organization President), Dr. Bruce Powell (Head of School), and Dr. Marc Lindner (Dean of Academic Affairs). On separate occasions, she also spoke to ninth-tenth graders and eleventh-twelfth graders.



**RABBI BENTZION KRAVITZ**, (3rd from left) founder of Jews for Judaism, spoke to eleventh and twelfth graders about The Power of Persuasion. This is the first lecture of a series that has been created to honor the memory of our former student and friend, Arieh Diamond z"l (Class of '07).



**RABBI ELLIOT DORFF**, Rector and Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at American Jewish University, spoke to students in the Biotechnology and Biomedical Ethics classes. He compared and contrasted the ways medicine is viewed from American and Jewish perspectives. The American story is, "I'm an individual with rights," while the Jewish story is, "I'm a member of a community with responsibilities." (L-R) Ms. Keren Romm, Director of Jewish Life, Rabbi Dorff, Ms. Jenn Wallace Turek, Biotechnology teacher, Rabbi Tsafreer Lev, Director of Jewish Studies.

## SCIENCE ACADEMY COLLOQUIUM GUEST LECTURERS FOR SPRING TRIMESTER

**Paul Milberg, M.D.**  
Assistant Professor of Plastic Surgery  
USC School of Medicine  
**KALEIDOSCOPIIC VIEW OF PLASTIC SURGERY**

**Peter Lowenthal, D.V.M.**  
Blue Cross Pet Hospital, North Hollywood  
**VETERINARY MEDICINE**

**Sheila Fleming, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Researcher, Department of Neurology  
Reed Neurological Research Center  
David Geffen School of Medicine, UCLA  
**NEURODEGENERATIVE DISORDERS: PARKINSON'S,  
HUNTINGTON'S AND ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE**

**Dennis L. Kelly, M.S.**  
Director, Coastal Dolphin Survey Project  
Dept. Chair & Professor, Marine Science Dept.  
Orange Coast College  
**WHY ARE DOLPHINS ENTERING OUR HARBORS  
FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER!**

**Yibin Wang Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor, Department of Neurology  
Reed Neurological Research Center  
David Geffen School of Medicine, UCLA  
**FUNCTIONAL GENOMICS TO STUDY  
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE**

**Gal Aharonov, M.D.**  
Professor, USC  
Beverly Hills Facial Plastic and Cosmetic Surgeon  
**FACIAL PLASTIC AND COSMETIC SURGERY**

## NEW PURIM TRADITION



NCJHS students and their Hebrew teachers started a new tradition this Purim. To fulfill the *mitzvot* of Purim, one gives *mishloach manot* (baskets or bags filled with different types of food) to friends, family, and other people in your community. During the days leading up to Purim, students and their Hebrew teachers baked more than 800 *hamantaschen*. Students read and interpreted recipes in Hebrew and conversed in Hebrew. Then, on the day of Purim, students and department chair, Ms. Iris Cohen, delivered the *mishlochei manot* (dozens of baskets of *hamantaschen*) to residents at The Los Angeles Jewish Home in Reseda. The faces of the elderly men and women as they received the *hamantaschen* loudly proclaimed that they appreciated both the baskets and the students' visit. Students enjoyed being in their company, especially when one of the women sang a Purim song in Yiddish, and some of the residents spoke Hebrew. Due to the positive experience, the Hebrew Department will make the baking an annual department project and the delivery an annual NCJHS tradition. ♡



## MOOT BEIT DIN

NCJHS was one of 16 high schools from across the country that competed in the 2009 Moot Beit Din in Denver sponsored by RAVSAK, The Jewish Community Day School Network. Moot Beit Din is a unique program that enables students from Jewish high schools to delve into issues of Jewish law through creative engagement with contemporary situations. It provides students with an opportunity to explore the relevance of *Halakhah* and to stretch their imagination in applying Jewish traditional resources to their lives and to the modern world. After intensive study of *halakhic* sources, students prepare written decisions to a case given to them. They then present and defend their decisions before judges during oral arguments at the competition.

Our Talmud team, Aaron Schwartz, Natan Wythe, Eitan Gerson, Ilan Gerson, and Jacob Rooks, did very well. They were given a very complicated and relevant case in medical ethics which sent them delving into Biblical and rabbinical texts over many months. Faculty Advisors were Rabbi Benjamin Resnick and Mr. Ra'anana Mallek. Rabbi David Vorspan and Rabbi Tsafreer Lev also contributed to the team's success. ♡

## WILDERNESS SHABBATON



*This year, Jewish Life programming included two optional weekend retreats for students and faculty chaperones.*

How appropriate it was that our Wilderness Shabbaton took us into the desert of Joshua Tree during the weekly portion of *Terumot* at the end of February. We learned about what it meant to create an environment around us that would be conducive for a holy and meaningful experience. *Terumot* discusses how we need to build the Tabernacle in the wilderness of Sinai (which looks very much like the landscape of Joshua Tree), in order to utilize all of our senses to make sense of reality. From learning how pirates use night vision by covering one of their eyes, to "fox ears," we experienced firsthand how to relate to a desert most of us thought looked more dead than alive. We saw blossoming flowers, tracks of wild animals and even an endangered desert turtle!

Our guides in nature were more than experienced, treating us to such delicacies as fire roasted salmon and scrumptious Mexican food. Josh, the head of the team, taught us how to 'walk' our morning prayers and make them more meaningful than staying stationary in one place with a book. The flora and fauna became our prayers as we hiked up a mountain resembling Mt. Sinai itself. On the top we talked about why Moses received the Torah on the top of the mountain and meditated in the beauty of silence. All said it was a very valuable and spiritual experience which was truly enjoyed by all. ♡

## SHARING WORDS OF TORAH

New Community Jewish High School culture is rich with unique traditions. One of these traditions is our *Drishot Shalom* project—words of peace, or, strivings for wholeness. At the beginning of their senior year, each student is paired with a faculty mentor with whom he or she discusses his or her assigned Torah portion. Faculty mentors knowledge of the Torah varies, which leads to wonderfully deep discussions with our rabbis and other Jewish Studies faculty. NCJHS values depth over memorization, and with that in mind we ask each student to extrapolate one theme from within each *parasha* instead of merely giving us an artful summary of its contents. This gives the students the license to make critical, intelligent, and powerfully personal connections to the text. Students take turns presenting their *drisha* throughout the year in front of the entire student body during *tefillah*, in smaller groups, or at the annual *Shabbaton*. Parents are invited to hear their child's personal connection to the assigned Torah portion. At the end of the year, the *Drishot* are compiled into a book which makes an emotionally provocative read. At the completed recitation of a book of the Torah we say "*Hazak, Hazak, V'nit chazek,*" strength, to strength, we will be strengthened. The same sentiment feels true with the establishment of this precedent. Knowing that these future leaders are well launched, it does seem that we are moving from strength to strength. ♡

# COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES FOR THE CLASS OF 2009


Allegheny College	Drexel University	Ohio Wesleyan University	San Diego
American Jewish University	Eckerd College	Oregon State University	Santa Barbara
American University	Emory University	Pace University	Santa Cruz
Arizona State University	Eugene Lang College	Pennsylvania State University	University of Colorado - Boulder
Bard College	Evergreen State College	Pitzer College	University of Denver
Bates College	George Washington University	Princeton University	University of Maryland
Belmont College	Goucher College	Purdue University	University of Massachusetts
Boise State University	Guilford College	Reed College	University of Miami
Boston University	Hampshire College	Saint Olaf College	University of Michigan
Brown University	Haverford College	San Diego State University	University of Oregon
California Polytechnic State University, Pomona	Indiana University - Bloomington	Sarah Lawrence College	University of the Pacific
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo	Ithaca College	School of Visual Arts (NY)	University of Pittsburgh
California State University: Channel Islands	Jewish Theological Seminary/List College	Simmons College	University of Puget Sound
Chico	JTS/Columbia University Dual Degree Program	Smith College	University of Redlands
Humboldt	Juniata College	Sonoma State University	University of Southern California
Long Beach	Lake Forest College	Southwestern University	University of Southern California: BA/MD Program
Northridge	Lawrence University	Stanford University	University of Texas at Austin
San Francisco	Lewis and Clark College	Suffolk University	University of Washington
Carleton College	Loyola Marymount University	Syracuse University	University of Wisconsin - Madison
Carnegie Mellon University	Maconochie College	Texas State University	Vanderbilt University
Chapman University	Manhattanville College	Trinity College	Warren Wilson College
Claremont McKenna College	McDaniel College	Tufts University	Washington State University
Clark University	Montana State University	Tulane University	Wentworth College
Colorado State University	New York University	University of Arizona	Whitman College
Columbia College Chicago	Northeastern University	University of California: Berkeley	
Davidson College	Northern Arizona University	Davis	Israel Programs
Dickinson College	Oberlin College	Irvine	Israel Defense Forces
Drew University	Occidental College	Los Angeles	US Army
	Ohio State University	Merced	
		Riverside	

## COLLEGE NEWS - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

review to helping students become good at waiting. This is a time to refocus on all the other areas in life that are so worthy of our thanks and appreciation. To realize that college, though important, does not have the power to become an all consuming force that overshadows all the excitement and accomplishment of senior year. It is our goal to help each senior use this "down time" in the college application cycle to refocus on what is truly important in life, and to prepare to make both exciting and difficult decisions between the offers of admission they are about to receive.

The last week of March interrupts this time of relative tranquility with a resounding force. One college releases decisions. Word spreads like wildfire through the senior class. Another releases, and another! Sometimes three or four in one day. Students suddenly become close with their mail carriers. They know what time their local post office typically releases priority mail packages, and are sure to be the first ones home to check the mailbox. Is it a big envelope or a small one? Or what if I have to check my admission decision online? In the college guidance office, we sit with students as they log in to a university's online application status website. A user name, password... and... "Congratulations! We are pleased to welcome you to the class of 2013..." Jubilation. And sometimes..., "We regret to inform you that..." but even then, a sense of gratitude that the decision has been made, and a refocusing on the opportunities at hand. As quickly as the process begins, it's over. April 1st has come and with it the reality of the coming month: decision time. In three short months, these seniors have transitioned from clicking "submit" on a six page application, to booking airline tickets and planning road trips to visit colleges throughout California and across the country. What was once a fear that they may have NO college options has turned into a concern that it may be difficult to choose between

them. Decisions that seemed easy become confusing as new "pro and con" lists emerge regarding what every college has to offer. This crisis of choice is in some ways the most difficult part of the application process. Comparing financial aid awards, merit scholarships, academic programs, sports teams, dorm conditions and even cafeteria food can become complicated. The May 1st "reply by" date comes faster and faster. Do I want the energy and opportunities at Berkeley, or the small, liberal arts environment at Haverford? Do I want to study business at the University of Arizona, or economics at University of California, Davis? Am I ready to try something new and move to Emory, or will I be more comfortable at NYU?

"Team College Guidance" as we are known among our students, remains available to help sort out the admission offers, sift through paperwork and suggest points of comparison to consider. However, as we sit in our office and work with each student, we often pause for a moment to consider how far each and every senior has come over the past eight months. In a year that was described as "THE year" when college admissions would become impossible, when economic turmoil, population increases and overall selectivity would meet in a perfect storm, we find ourselves surrounded by many students who are having difficulty choosing between the multiple options they have. There is such truth in the mantra used by so many college guidance professionals: "There are over three thousand colleges and universities in this country. And most of them want YOU." And we are happy to see the results in action. Mazel Tov to the class of 2009. The opportunities that lie before you are many, and the impact you have left on NCJHS is profound. Thank you for letting "Team CG" share this process with you. 



## An Evening of Celebration, Excitation, and GOOD VIBRATIONS

On Sunday May 10, 2009 over 1,000 supporters of New Community Jewish High School gathered together for our annual gala benefit honoring our board members and community leaders Dave Aberson and Scott Zimmerman and featuring the Beach Boys. By popular demand, this year's event took place once again at the historic Orpheum Theater, a perfect setting for hailing the accomplishments of our honorees, for celebrating the success of our school, and for recognizing our inspirational supporters....and for treating Mom to a really special Mother's Day.

Many thanks go to our honorary gala chairs Faith & Jonathan Cookler, Maria & Dov Seidman and Orna & Keenan Wolens. We are grateful for the hard work and leadership of our event co-chairs, Lauren & Anthony Raissen and Felice & Doug Williams, whose creativity and tireless efforts helped to make this event truly extraordinary. Special thanks go to our hard-working event committee, who spent countless hours on the phones and in meetings to ensure that the evening was a huge hit!

As our guests entered the lobby of the beautifully restored Orpheum, they caught a first glimpse of our environmentally friendly virtual journal playing on large screens. We were very excited to unveil this new technology which is both green and cost-effective. We kicked off the evening with a bountiful buffet reception artfully prepared by Steve Cohen and Starlite Caterers. Once everyone was seated in the theater, the program began with a heartfelt tribute to Dave Aberson and Scott Zimmerman. The whole crowd cheered both men's commitment to NCJHS and their outstanding work on behalf of our entire community. We were energized by Dr. Powell's talk, as well as by the fabulous video created and produced by Jesse Aron. Every guest took home a DVD of the video plus custom-designed NCJHS chocolates to munch while viewing it again and again.

Next the Beach Boys took the stage and took the Orpheum by storm. Mike Love, Bruce Johnston, and their fellows were joined by guest drummer and guitarist, John Stamos, who just finished his long-time run on TV's ER. The whole crowd sang, danced, and remembered the good old days. We were enthralled by our own ASL students, trained in the NCJHS American Sign Language program initially established by Shirley Kotler; they simultaneously interpreted the lyrics of several Beach Boys favorites with skill and grace.

One of our lucky guests won the post-concert raffle drawing for a 12-day Mediterranean Cruise for 2 on Crystal Serenity! Our evening of Celebration, Excitation, and GOOD VIBRATIONS ended with a delicious dessert reception, lots of hugging and congratulations to Dave Aberson and Scott Zimmerman. 🍷



Members of the Board of Trustees with the Honorees. L-R. Melinda Feldman, Judy Levin, Marcia Weingarten (Parent Organization President), Earl Greinetz, Honorees Scott Zimmerman & Dave Aberson, Michael Greenfeld (Executive VP), Harold Masor (President), Elana Rimmon Zimmerman (Immediate Past President), Scott Liebert (Finance V.P.), Joni Greenberg, Susan Hirsch Goldfarb (Advancement VP).



L-R. Felice & Douglas Williams, Gala Co-Chairs, Dr. Bruce Powell, Head of School, Dave Aberson, Honoree, Doreen Aberson, Elana Rimmon Zimmerman, Immediate Past President, Scott Zimmerman, Honoree, Susan Hirsch Goldfarb, Advancement V.P., Anthony & Lauren Raissen, Gala Co-Chairs.



Gala Committee L-R. Stacey Sherman, Karen Young, Debbie Miller, Joni Greenberg, Stuart Lipsett, Susan Hirsch Goldfarb, Marcie Lipsett, Melinda Feldman, Lisa Geismar, Jodi Perlman. Not shown: Esther Benveniste, Elana & Marty Coren, Judy & Neil Einbund, Leslie Eisner, Linda Fishman, Harriet Kattan, Judy & Bud Levin, Debbie & Scott Liebert, Ilene Reinfield, Deborah & Simon Soriano, Robin Stupp, Lynn & Peter Tiger.

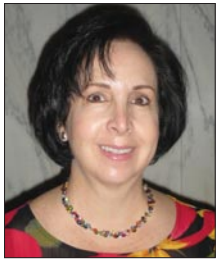


John Stamos on guitar with the Beach Boys!

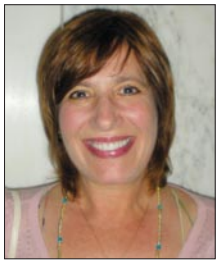


NCJHS American Sign Language students.

## ADVANCEMENT NEWS



NCJHS bids a fond farewell to **Suzy Jones Bookbinder**, our Director of Advancement for 6 years. Her visionary leadership has built and shaped the NCJHS advancement program. She sets an example and a tone that encourages everyone to go that extra step in making sure that NCJHS remains an important focus in the world of L.A. Jewish education. Susan Hirsch Goldfarb, Advancement V.P., says, "Suzy has been an incredible mentor to me, and my fellow Board of Trustee members. She has inspired me to go further in my role as Advancement V.P. than I ever thought I was capable of." Dr. Powell adds, "I extend a special 'thank you' to Suzy for establishing the deep roots and solid advancement infrastructure upon which our school can now launch its strategic fund-raising plans. When the history of NCJHS is written, the name of Suzy Jones Bookbinder will be one of honor and integrity." We wish her continued success in her new role with Jewish Family Service, and thank her immensely for her time and service to NCJHS. ♡



We announce the appointment of **Betsy Berger** to the position of Director of Advancement. Ms. Berger brings to NCJHS over 15 years of experience working in development within LA's Jewish community. For the past 8 years she served as Assistant Director of Development for American Society for Technion-Israel Institute of Technology. She also conducted major gifts fundraising for Hadassah Southern California. As Director of Advancement, Ms. Berger will be responsible for leading the school's advancement program as adopted by the Board of Trustees, and for maintaining productive relationships with board members and donors. A strong proponent of Jewish education, Ms. Berger resides in the West Valley with her husband Franklin. They have two young-adult daughters. ♡

## Parent Partnership Campaign Breaks Record

Many thanks to the parents, grandparents, board members, faculty and staff who participated in the record-breaking 2008-2009 Parent Partnership campaign! The Campaign was led by co-chairs Melinda Feldman, Garry Fishman, and Ellie Sambol, Marcia Weingarten as Parent Organization President and Susan Hirsch Goldfarb as Board of Trustees Advancement Vice President. The Campaign exceeded our goal by raising nearly \$300,000 to support **Today's Promise and Tomorrow's Sustainability**.

The Campaign was enhanced by an extraordinary Match Challenge Grant from a generous NCJHS family. In addition to making an initial gift of \$5,000 Parent Partnership Campaign, this family also made a dollar-for-dollar match challenge that resulted in their total commitment of \$25,000 to support our school. With this challenge we were able to match all first-time gifts to the Campaign from 10th, 11th, and 12th grade families, as well as match increased donations from previous Campaign donors. The challenge inspired many families to make new and larger commitments to New Community Jewish High School—and helped make the campaign the largest in our school's history.

A campaign highlight was the Sushi and Martinis Parent Partnership Thank You Event at the home of Ellie and David Sambol. All of us appreciate their hospitality as well as the efforts of the hard-working Parent Partnership Campaign committee members, including Jeri and Ira Cohen, Judy and Dr. Neil Einbund, Molly and Mark Goldberg, Karen and Danny Howard, Marcie and Stuart Lipsett, Jodi and Greg Perlman, Cynthia and David Roberts, Allison and Mark Ross, Michael Rubin, Phyllis and Mark Shinbane, Robin and Henry Stupp, Ellen and Ron Tinero, Mary and Ira Tochner, Rita and Jeff Weiss, Elana and Scott Zimmerman, Sandra and Harry Zimmerman, and Judith and Daniel Zuckerman. ♡

## We gratefully acknowledge the following foundations for grants received between *December 2008 and May 2009*:

**S. Mark Taper Foundation:** \$10,000 for general operations, to provide need-based scholarships for qualified students who want to attend New Community Jewish High School. *The S. Mark Taper Foundation, founded in 1989, is a private family foundation dedicated to enhancing the quality of people's lives by supporting nonprofit organizations and their work in our communities.*

**Jim Joseph Foundation:** \$5,000 for general operating expenses. *The Foundation is devoted exclusively to supporting education of Jewish youth; Jim Joseph believed that focusing on young people was the best way to preserve a strong Jewish faith and proud heritage, thereby ensuring success of the Jewish people for the future.*

**AVI CHAI Foundation:** \$18,000 to underwrite 30% of our Shabbaton expenses. For the past four years AVI CHAI has joined with NJCHS to provide transformative Shabbat experiences for all of our students.

NCJHS is one of five Los Angeles Jewish day high schools that will receive tuition subvention funds from the **Jim Joseph Foundation's** \$12,700,000 demonstration challenge grant to the Jewish Federation. NCJHS will be responsible for raising over \$3 million to meet this funding requirement. **We are pleased to announce that New Community Jewish High School has already raised \$712,000** in pledge commitments and cash for this endowment fund, and is well on its way to meet the requirements of the challenge grant. This grant will enable scores of families who might, in the current economic climate, have "given up" on the possibility of accessing day school education to consider enrollment for the 2009-2010 school year and beyond. It will also begin the long-term process of endowment development for future generations of students. ♡

## Sustain the Promise Fund

After World War II a sacred obligation fell upon the American Jewish community to rebuild Jewish life, to reclaim the vast learning and values and legacy of Jewish civilization within the safe context of the great American experiment. Fulfilling this obligation means that we must not turn away any students or families because of financial need. This year NCJHS established the **Sustain the Promise Fund**, a tuition assistance program to support our students and their families. The following foundations are founding supporters of the **Sustain the Promise Fund**, and are recognized as mainstays of our community: **Robert Gore Rifkind Foundation** (\$10,000), **Samuel and Helen Soref Foundation** (\$5,000), **Wallis Foundation** (\$5,000).

# STUDENT NEWS



**DAVID GREENFELD** (senior) is the recipient of the Westside Athletic Conference “Athlete of the Year” award. In addition, David and **BEN FREEMAN** (senior) were each awarded a “Certificate of Excellence” by the U.S. Army for outstanding leadership and athletic achievements.

**DAVID WEINGARTEN** (junior) received the “Youth of the Year” award from Shomrei Torah Synagogue. While excelling in his role as USY President, David created the USY-Uganda Partnership to help the Abayudaya community create a youth movement like the American United Synagogue Youth. Through his actions that included fundraising, 3 Abayudayan teens traveled from Uganda to Los Angeles to attend the regional USY conference.

Students in Ms. Raquel Safdie’s **Honors Spanish 2** class studied Hispanic food. For a recent assignment, they selected three food recipes, wrote the directions in Spanish, then worked in groups of three to create recipe books and videos showing them preparing the recipes by giving directions in Spanish.

Our 2008-09 **MEDIA ARTS SHOWCASE** reel screened at Laemmle’s Town Center as part of the Los Angeles Jewish Film Festival’s Student Film Showcase featuring Jewish student films from day/high schools throughout Los Angeles. “We presented a diverse and exciting range of student work that represents the burgeoning talent of our future generation of filmmakers,” said Mr. Roger Blonder our Media Arts teacher. The event included a Q & A session with filmmakers and teachers.

*Participating students and their projects included:*

**Betzelem Elohim: Creators in the Image**

Sarah Bergenfeld, Ben Feldman, Stephanie Haver, Brandon Jackson, Jennifer Karp, Rachel Kipnes, Nicholas Litinsky, Hannah Macias, Adir Vered

**Motion and Change: Explorations on the Daughters of Zelophehad in Motion Graphics**

Sarah Bergenfeld, Zach Cohen, Adam Dahan, Eric Deming, Eric Eisner, Ben Feldman, Nicole Kentor, Shari Kulberg, Max Levin, Daniel Rassiner, Robert Sambol, Jennifer Solomon, Adam Soriano, David Weingarten, Jacqueline Zelener

*Projects Based on the Kabbalistic Mystics of Tzfat:*

**The Inverted Tree**

Sarah Bergenfeld, Robert Capps, Adam Freund, Nicole Kentor, Rachel Kipnes, Shari Kulberg, Hannah Macias, Harrison Rappoport

**Kinestasis on the Four Kabbalistic Worlds from the Tu B’Shevat Seder**

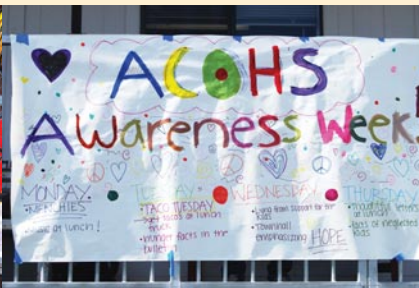
Stephen Bachner, Andrew Ballin, Hallie Bereny, Eric Eisner, Adam Freund, Brandon Jackson, Hannah Macias, Macias, Breanna Moldovan, Harrison Rappoport, Daniel Rassiner, Adam Soriano, Herschel Weintraub, David Weingarten, Simon Vivier-Greenberger

**MUSIC**

“**Klezmyr**” by Chase Rossner and the Songwriting and Technology Class  
 “**Four Worlds Untitled**” by Jordan Perlman and Robert Sambol



Cancer Awareness Club



Club ACOH Event



Kehillah Institute club leaders



Heart & Soul singers

**KIDS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

and meeting announcements for four other clubs at lunch. And speaking of lunch, during the daily 30-minute time block, students organize, plan, create, motivate, promote, fundraise, research, and tackle solutions to some of our world’s most pressing problems like genocide in Africa, fatal diseases, environmental responsibility, and conflict in the Middle East. Some say that clubs are the heart of the school. Students from all four grades work together to change lives, theirs included.

At a recent Town Meeting, an all-school forum where guest speakers address our student body and club leaders make presentations, eleventh grader, Anita Hoffman, made an emotional presentation about Operation Smile’s surgical work in South America to repair cleft lips/palates in young impoverished children. She brought with her, Audra Platz, Regional Associate for the Operation Smile organization. After publicly commending Anita for bringing this new club to the school this year (Anita’s first year here), Ms. Platz told the audience that “NCJHS students are our light. I’d like to get the blueprint from your parents so that I can nurture my own 2½ year old daughter to hold the same values as NCJHS students.”

Dr. Marc Lindner, Dean of Academic Affairs, asserts that, “Current students have not only followed in the footsteps of their predecessors to create clubs, but they’ve also taken their work to a whole new professional level. Many of our senior club leaders have developed succession plans and are passing along all that they have learned to their younger peers, the next generation of club leaders at NCJHS. Students are coming up with creative ways to have an impact on the world. They are making a difference, serving as agents of positive change.”

Take the recent Film Club presentation of Joel Blasberg’s “Withdrawal from Gaza,” a film documenting Israel’s emotional movement out of the Gaza Strip in 2005. The community event would have been enough –*dayenu*–with the screening followed by the question-answer session led by Mr. Blasberg (the film’s director/producer and father of a NCJHS senior). However, under the leadership of club president Andrew Cohen, students partnered with the Israel-based Beit Issie Shapiro organization whose representatives were also in attendance and donated 100% of the ticket proceeds to this organization that serves children with special needs. *Dayenu* indeed.

# BEAUTY & THE BEAST MUSICAL THEATRE



Our spring musical, Disney's "Beauty and the Beast," was a sold-out success. Under the direction of W. Ellen Fleischmann, our students delighted audiences with their spectacular renditions of Belle (Rebecca Bella Powell), the Beast (Daniel Toker), Gaston (Daniel Imberman), Maurice (Daniel Navama), Cogsworth the clock (Matthew Perlman), Lumiere the candlestick (Benjamin Selski), Babette (Gabi Fougner), Mrs. Potts the teapot (Becca Small), Chip the teacup (Josh Miller), the Wardrobe (Rachel Karp), Young Price (Elijah Kneeland), Fish Seller (Kyle Keymaram), Egg Seller (Evan Zimmerman), Baker (Mr. Eric Johnson), Lady with Babies (Ms. Rachel Williams), Lefou (David Abramovici), Silly Girls (Elisa Bermann, Amanda Fein, Caitlin Fein), Gaston's Crony (Jeremiah Kneeland), and all the villagers and dancers: Bahar Basseri, Megan Feldman, Ann Fogler, Hannah Macias, Rachel Pressman, Osher Rambod, Shoshana Strom, Hannah Taylor, David Berlin, Jeremy Lunzer and Veronica Zukovski. ♡



## ORCHESTRA

L-R. Yuval Gnessin (electric bass), Natan Wythe (electric guitar), Mr. David A. Crane (piano), Daniel Pasternak (1st Violin/Concertmaster), Mr. Sterling Smith (Conductor/Keyboard/Synthesizer), Alisha Rosenwein (2nd violin), Mr. Jared Stein (1st violin), Jory Glick (drums/percussion), Noah Dach (trumpet).



## CREW

Top L-R. Jeremiah Kneeland, Ms. Dawn Kincade (Choreographer), Ms. Kendra Drapkin ('07), Shelly Oren, Ms. Gabriel Lynn (Stage Manager), Mr. Mick Berg (Sound Engineer), Ms. Tracy Monaghan (Make-Up), Kyle Keymaram, Daniel Navama. Front L-R. Gabriela Melgar, Ms. Katherine Karapetian (Make-Up), Elisa Bermann, Danielle Ofengart, W. Ellen Fleischmann (Producer/Director), Sari Serber, Jordy Epstein, Rachel Kipnes.  
Not shown: Ms. Linda Landau

# BUREAU OF JEWISH EDUCATION

Did you know that this year we are receiving \$121,073 in Jewish Federation funds through the Bureau of Jewish Education, our teachers participate in BJE professional development programs, and the BJE accredits Jewish schools? The BJE, with the support of the Jewish Federation, has served as a hub of Jewish educational activity in Los Angeles since 1937. Its mission is to ensure the future of the Jewish community by encouraging participation in Jewish education and by helping schools and youth

organizations enhance quality and increase access to Jewish education. The BJE provides financial aid to schools and students, professional development for educators, consultation, and accreditation; sponsors programs such as the annual "March of the Living" and Sulam: Jewish Service Learning; and offers concierges for linking families with educational resources. Learn more about the BJE at [www.bjela.org](http://www.bjela.org). ♡

# WINTER ATHLETICS

## Basketball



The winter athletic season may be summed up by our teams' high achievement in the areas of sportsmanship and athletic prowess. For the first time ever, Mr. Sina Monjabez, Athletic Director, reported league sportsmanship titles in the same sport for boys and girls: Boys and Girls Varsity Basketball were selected by Westside League coaches as demonstrating the highest values of sportsmanship. In addition, the boys team finished third in the Westside League basketball and was selected for the CIF playoffs. Selected by the Westside League coaches to All League (athletic honor society) boys first team were Ben Freeman and David Greenfeld. Second team members were Yonatan Blasberg and Jordan Perlman. The girls selected by the coaches were Shelly Oren first team and Jordyn Kieffer second team. ♡

## Soccer



Our Boys and Girls Varsity Soccer teams both qualified for the CIF playoffs by finishing second in the Harbor League. Selected by the boys coaches as the league's best offensive player, was Jonathan Miller. First team members were Garrett Pemstein, Kyle Keymaram, and Oren Paley. Second team members were Ben Feldman, Max Lipsett, and Zach Cohen. Selected by the girl coaches as the best offensive player, was Carmel Diamant. First team members were Shira Kreitenberg, Hayley Sherer, Laura Miller. Selected to the second team were Sari Serber, Olivia Einbund, Heather Frankel. ♡

## Swimming



Congratulations to the pioneering Boys and Girls Swim Teams: Benjamin Basseri, Nicholas Benjamin, Ben Bernshtein, Dylan Coren, Ashkan Delrahim, David Feldman, Eitan Gerson, Ilan Gerson, Eric Grossman, Danielle Hay, Samantha Hay, Adi Kempfer, Liana Lis, Adam Mashiach, Michael Sambol, Elana Spetner, Emma Taylor, Danielle Yehuda. They worked hard this season, pushing themselves in practice and learning the ropes at meets, ultimately, riding the wave to victory! Though we did not place in our division, some first-time swimmers learned to dive and flip-turn, and did so under the pressure of competition. By our last meet, both our individual swimmers and relay teams beat their own personal bests! In true NCJHS fashion, the students worked together, cheered on the opponents and did their best; the school has another team to be proud of. Swim Team coaches were Ms. Keren Romm and Mr. Ra'an Mallek. ♡

## COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND THE ABILITY TO CONCENTRATE

BY SAM GLIKSMAN



Sam Glikzman

*Sam Glikzman is the Director of Educational Technology at New Community Jewish High School and is a frequent technology blogger for the Jewish Journal. This article is reprinted with permission from the Jewish Journal. It appeared in the April 10, 2009 issue.*

Newsweek recently ran an article describing President Obama as our nation's first "Blackberry President". The article relates how we have all become dependant on communications technology and confirms what most of us already knew – this flood of new technology is having a huge impact on the way people think and interact. From texting and instant messaging to email alerts and telephone ring tones, a constant barrage of technology based "interruptions" is eroding our ability to concentrate.

As a result, our performance on tasks that require steady focus and attention deteriorates. In its most severe form, interruption generated errors have been thought to be a major cause of several plane and train accidents. On a more everyday level, our children and students find it increasingly difficult to read their required chapter for homework or complete that five paragraph essay they were assigned this morning. They can often stay on task only by interacting with their friends via computer video chat, instant messaging or the newest fad, Blackberry Based Messaging (BBM). Instant communication with your community requires just a few simple clicks. Silent, uninterrupted contemplation is fast becoming a lost art.

Interruptions have become so commonplace that we also don't think twice about interrupting each other either. One study stated that the average worker only spends around 11 minutes on any given project before being interrupted. We've even become conditioned to welcoming the interruptions. What's the first thing most people do when they get a new cell phone? They customize their seductive call to action – the ring tone. When we're not being interrupted we're still so conditioned to thinking in short bursts that it's difficult to maintain concentration for any length of time. How many of us check for messages and email every few minutes even when there isn't any indication that one has arrived?

What can we do and what can we suggest for our children and students? Some simple recommendations include:

1. Know when to turn off your ring tone. If you have a meeting or need to read something that requires attention, start by turning off the ring tone on your phone. If your child has homework, suggest that they either turn off their cell phone altogether or at least place it somewhere where they won't be tempted to use it.
2. Turn off automatic audible alerts and pop ups for emails and instant messages. Check them when it's convenient for you rather than allowing them to constantly divert your attention.
3. Establish a pattern of using your technology at "coarse breakpoints". These are defined as natural breaks in concentration – the completion of a task, the end of a paragraph, etc. Interruptions that fall right in the middle of a thought or task make it difficult to return and continue that process. Research shows that it's far easier to return to your task if your interruption falls in a more natural breakpoint.

Asking kids to just "turn everything off" may yield results ... if it can be accomplished. Speaking as someone that uses technology at every turn, going "cold turkey" certainly can make you feel like Odysseus tied to the mast. A solid recommendation is simply to take control. Manage your use of technology. Use it at times that are convenient for you and don't allow the technology to constantly redirect your attention. Turn off alerts and decide when you will check your messages. Technology will make us more productive and improve our quality of life if only it is used appropriately. ♡

We announce the appointment of **CAROLYN HAPEMAN, CPA** as our new Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Ms. Hapeman brings to NCJHS, over 16 years of public and private accounting experience in various sectors. As CFO, she is responsible for the financial management and overall fiscal health of the school. "I am excited about this position which enables me to blend both my technical and people skills. I am especially pleased to be able to work with very dedicated and financially sophisticated Board members, as well as very capable colleagues," says Ms. Hapeman. She is originally from Pennsylvania, where she received her B.S. degree in Accounting from Messiah College. She recently moved to Calabasas with her husband and seven-year-old daughter after living in Madison, Wisconsin for 14 years.

**GREGG KEER** (11th Grade Dean, English) will be a guest parenting expert on KCET's "A Place of Our Own," a PBS talk show about child care airing in June.

**DR. NEIL KRAMER** (Dean of Faculty, History Chair) has been selected to participate in "The Global Cold War" at the University of Cambridge this coming summer. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History will teach the seminar which seeks to integrate the latest scholarly research on Cold War history and the ways in which that subject is presented in the classroom. Recently, Dr. Kramer, the "Founder of NCJHS Lacrosse," was one of the referees for the inaugural Division 2 championship of the Southwest Lacrosse Conference in Coronado, CA.

**DAVID MARCUS** (Business Manager) was recently appointed as one of 13 members of TIAA-CREF's Direct Client Advisory Council. The council represents over 9,000 schools and colleges to the largest company that handles teachers' retirement funds and advises the company on nationwide client needs. TIAA-CREF is the nation's leading retirement company for educational institutions and 2nd largest next to the Social Security Administration. They administer all of our employee's school retirement policies.

**CHERI MAYMAN** (Director of Marketing) and her husband Bill recently completed the LA City Fire Department's CERT training (Community Emergency Response Team). The 17.5 hour course teaches participants how to prepare for and respond to large-scale disasters such as earthquakes and fires. The free training is open to anyone in the community. See [www.cert-la.com](http://www.cert-la.com).

**DR. BRUCE POWELL** (Head of School) spoke about "How to Guide Your Teen toward Good Decision-making" at Congregation Or Ami's Center for Jewish Parenting event co-sponsored with Heschel West Day School.

**KEREN ROMM'S** (Director of Jewish Life, Jewish Studies teacher) article, "The Grounding of Jewish Identity in Biblical literacy" was published in the winter 2009 issue of Jewish Educational Leadership, a professional journal for Jewish educators published by The Lookstein Center for Jewish Education of the School of Education at Bar-Ilan University in Israel.

**MATTHEW VACCA** (History) will participate in the *Centropa Summer Seminar: Frankfurt and the Rhineland*. The purpose of his trip will be to meet with teachers from Jewish and non-Jewish schools in Germany, Prague, Budapest, Vienna, and the United States. He will also explore Jewish life in Frankfurt and the Rhineland, increase his knowledge base in Jewish history and Holocaust education, and learn best-practices for using Centropa resources in his classroom. ♡

# Parent Organization



Marcia Weingarten,  
President


How fortunate we are as parents and guardians to have our children enrolled as students at New Community Jewish High School! How blessed that our families have grown up in the time frame when this incredible new school exists. And that we have found the means and ability to be here.....to watch as our students bloom and grow, mature and become, is a blessing we can cherish for years to come.

This school is a miracle.....a dream that became a shared vision, and with teamwork and Herculean effort, became a reality! The school is but seven years old....an infant in the world of Jewish private schools.....and a giant in what it has become. Our children have the opportunities to gain the highest levels of academic excellence, at the same time receiving the message and lessons of ethics and values that stand the test of time. They have the opportunities for one-on-one relationships with teachers, and the chance to encounter teachers of our traditions, thousands of years old, with lessons relevant and valuable to their lives today. They compete in athletics of all variety, and are champions on the field, and greater champions in the manner in which they treat their teammates and opponents. They have the opportunities to gain entrance into the finest universities, and the guidance to find the school or program that is the best fit for them.

There are many schools in our community...private and public, secular and religious. We have many choices. WE have found the best fit for OUR students at NCJHS. We are privileged and we are blessed.

As parents and guardians, we are all part of the Parent Organization of this school. We stand ready to support our administration and faculty in any way they deem necessary, with our time, our financial resources and personal commitment. We raise funds through our Parent Partnership each year to enhance our programs, enrich our students, and make our school more accessible to all. We support the planning and execution of our yearly Gala, an evening to honor, enjoy and raise the funds necessary to keep us growing. We enhance the learning environment by providing the means for supplementary materials and activities that benefit and enhance. We joyously treat our staff to the occasional "thank you" lunch, welcome new families, and provide a forum for parent education and connection. We are planning additional opportunities for community building among our growing and diverse parent population in this next year..

This past year has been a success for us in redefining our Parent Organization and in looking to the future. In the year ahead, our new leadership will be reaching out to you, asking for your participation and involvement in many different areas. We hope that one of those avenues will be right for you.

As parents, we are blessed to have our children at NCJHS. We are committed to enhancing our school and enriching the lives of all our students. With appreciation to our staff and administration, and with the support of our parent body, old and new, we look forward with enthusiasm to the years ahead. 



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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## MISSION

The mission of New Community Jewish High School is to raise up a new generation of Jewish leaders for whom Jewish values and tradition shape and guide their vision, and for whom knowledge creates possibilities for moral action, good character and shalom.



## CLASS OF 2006

**KATIE FREEMAN** just finished 2½ years of service in the Israel Defense Forces. She served as a combat soldier in the Special Forces canine unit called Oketz. Her dog from the military was also released and he's back in L.A. with her for the summer. She plans to return to Israel to study. **MICHAEL GOLDRICH** is a Molecular and Cell Biology and Public Health major at UC Berkeley. He just took the MCAT and intends to apply to medical school. Since freshman year, Michael has been conducting undergraduate research in the field of developmental genetics. He (and his research project, "Targeted Genome Modification Using Zinc Finger Nucleases") was recently selected as one of 20 Haas Scholars chosen from all disciplines and departments across the university. The Haas Scholars Program funds academically talented undergraduates to engage in sustained research in the summer before and during their senior year at Berkeley. This past year, Michael has also served as president of the Cal Undergraduate Public Health Coalition. **HARRY HOWARD** is finishing his junior year at University of California, Santa Barbara. He's been interning for various production companies throughout Los Angeles since his freshman year and is striving to become producer. **TAMI KESSLER** is an assistant preschool teacher and is living in Denver. **DAVID MAYMAN** is the pioneering Producer for Prowl TV at the University of the Pacific where he is a Graphic Design major. He is setting precedents, creating branding identity, and managing content for the school's new informational TV network broadcast on flat screens all over the new University Center. He also supervises 3 student graphic designers who produce print and video advertisements for the school. Beginning this summer, David will assume the position of Art Director for Associated Students and will oversee a staff of 8 student graphic designers. He spends his free time playing drums and recording with his bands, Avon Union, Sick Boy, and a third new band. **SHIRA SHANE**, a Stanford University junior, will be returning to Tanzania, Africa, this summer with one of her sorority sisters to teach students in rural villages with extremely limited resources how to conduct AIDS and HIV campaigns through art, such as dancing, singing, and acting. **ADAM TEITELBAUM** says the close relationship he had with teachers at NCJHS has

facilitated his easy access to professors at UC San Diego where he is an International Studies / Political Science and Economics major in the Eleanor Roosevelt College. He was president of the AEPi fraternity, is involved in politics on campus, and likes to play intramural sports. **TALYA VOGEL** is currently studying in Rome for the spring semester and is absolutely loving it! She is traveling all around Europe and after the program ends will be going to Greece and Israel. She is a Psychology major at UC Santa Barbara.

## CLASS OF 2007

**NOAH AMRANI** has been interning at Film Roman working on The Simpsons television show. He's been learning 3D animation this semester at California State University, Northridge, and recently completed a short minute-long acting object 3D animated film. **RACHEL FELDMAN** is pre-med, majoring in anthropology with a health studies minor at Brandeis University. She is still VP of the comic book club, is in B'yachad, Brandeis' semi-professional Israeli dance troupe, and is a lead makeup artist for Hold Thy Peace, the Shakespearian theatre company. **ALEX FELKAI** is studying computer science and engineering / networking and security at UC Merced. He is the Founder and President of the new campus' Hillel. He aspires to work in the defense industry after graduation. **MIA-NURIT HIRSH** is a psychology major at UCLA working as a research assistant in a lab that focuses on addiction therapy. She is involved in an organization through her honors society (ALDPES) called Reading to Kids. She did Dance Marathon and Relay for Life and absolutely loved both experiences. She also works as an administrative assistant for the School of Electrical Engineering's Industrial Affiliates program. **JEREMY IR** is studying electrical engineering at UCLA. This summer he is pursuing an internship in a lab. His current career goal is to specialize in computers. **SARAH KAMENIR** is a sophomore at UC Berkeley. She just declared Social Welfare as her major. She can hardly wait for next spring when she will be studying at Hebrew University in Israel! Sarah recently hosted several NCJHS seniors when they visited Berkeley as admitted students. **NICOLE ORAN PAMPANIN** will be returning to Ghana, West Africa for three months to volunteer and continue the work she started there last summer. After her stay in Ghana, she will fly across the African continent to participate in a semester long study abroad trip in Kenya and Tanzania. She is a sophomore at Lewis and Clark College.



## CLASS OF 2008

**CAITLYN BEVANS** is a new member of Gamma Alpha Theta, the new Jewish sorority at California State University, Northridge. **DANIELLE BURSTEIN** is pursuing a BA/M.A.Ed. degree at American Jewish University. She always knew that she wanted a career in Jewish education. Danielle was awarded AJU's President's Scholarship for her academic standing, and the Leadership and Ethics Award for her work with AIPAC and Israeli advocacy. She is the Advocacy Chair for the Israel Action Club and creates workshops for the club on education, advocacy and lobbying. She also teaches Hebrew school on Sundays. She is interested in pursuing a Ph.D. in either Jewish Studies or Middle Eastern Studies and will return to New Community Jewish High School, but this time as a teacher. **MAYA EFRATI** is in her second semester at IDC Herzliya in Israel. She was happy to see the fall edition of "Ma Nishma" which her mom brought to her during Passover. Maya wants everyone to know that she's in touch with all of the New Jew alumni who are currently in Israel. **JAMIE GREENBERG** is a new member of Sigma Delta Tau sorority at Indiana University in Bloomington. She is a communications major, has lots of new friends from all over the country and was recently seen volunteering at the NCJHS Gala Beach Boys Concert. **GLENNA HOROWITZ** has been working as a freelance make-up artist. She has worked on celebrities such as: T.I., Jamie Foxx, Ne-yo, Justin Timberlake, Estelle, and Eve. **ALYSSA LANDAU** is studying Psychology at Chapman University. She's an active member of Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority and participates in their philanthropic endeavors to raise money to assist abused children. **ALEX MASSMAN** is majoring in Psychology at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He has been maintaining a 4.0 GPA for freshman year and is thoroughly enjoying college life. ♡

**Alumni in Israel either serving in the IDF or attending school:**

**BEN ROTHSTEIN, ETEL COHEN, ATTAR DAGAN, MAYA EFRATI, ADAM EVENHAIM, KATIE FREEMAN, KAREN HEN, KRISTINE, LUPOFF, MAYA RON, YONI SCHARF, JONATHAN SOBOL, DEBBIE WEISER.**

# ALUMNI NEWS

