

Hi all,

It is hard to believe this is the last annual report I am writing for Shalom Yeladim.

First, I would like to say that it has been a wonderful experience to work in this synagogue for the last 18 years.

Wow! 18 years of multiple roles in a place I have been calling my second home. For those of you who don't know it all started 22 years ago when I started coming to "mommy and me" with my own kids. One day, back in 2004 Nancy Gordon-Michaels asked me to teach. From then on, I taught "mommy and me", the New two's, the two's, 5th grade in the Religious School I was co director of the Religious School for 5 years and, for the last 7 years, I have been the Director of Shalom Yeladim.

It has been an amazing journey and I want to thank all of you for the support you have given me all these years. I could go on and on about how bittersweet this moment is and about all the people and friendships I have formed here but I think I should focus on the Shalom Yeladim report:

First, I want to thank all the people who helped me this year. Thanks to Fern Spitzer for always being there for me and for her dedication not only to SY but to the entire synagogue. Without her love and support to the school SY would not be the same. Thank you to all the teachers, parents and children - It is an amazing team and I love the relationships I have formed with all of them through the years.

I want to thank Isaiah, Marco, Michael, Amy and Rockey for helping me whenever I need them. Thank you to Miriam for sharing ideas and collaborating with me and I also want to thank Rabbi Nesson and Cantor Shana for attending all of our events and for leading our shabbat mornings.

We had a wonderful year at Shalom Yeladim. We are growing and we finished the year with 43 students. Even though we had these numbers in the past, this is the biggest the school has been since I started as the SY Director. Witnessing the children's growth in a year is an amazing experience. Looking back at the pictures of the beginning of the year and seeing them now is heartwarming. The smiles and the joy we see in them every day is something I will truly miss.

Our summer fun program is also growing again. We have many children signed up and some days we will have to divide the children in two groups to be able to accommodate them.

Our “Mommy and me” class started with Rebecca Lory. Halfway through the year, Rebecca went back to work full time and Sam Ecker took it over. It is open to the community and we have a great turnout every week. The parents enjoy meeting other parents and participating in songs and crafts with their little ones. We will continue offering this class in July.

We continue to offer before and after care as well as enrichments such as art, reading, math, science, soccer, and yoga.

Every year we teach our preschoolers not only to be kind with one another, but to also help our community at large. We collect tzedakkah on Fridays and we organize different collections during the year. This year we organized two main collections. Back in December, we collected more than 1200 diapers/pull ups and her 40 packs of wipes to be distributed by the Community Food Bank of NJ to those in need. In March, we collected items such as shampoo, conditioner, hand sanitizer, body wash, hand towels, toilet paper, water bottles and protein bars to put together Pack Kits for Nourish NJ. During these collections, the children help us put the items in the collection bins as well as counting and sorting them. They take part in the whole process and we explain to them where the items are going and who are we helping. We are now collecting toys to help Eli Diringer bring toys to the cancer patients at the Valerie Center in Morristown.

At the end of every year we like to get all the families together for a picnic. This year we are happy to go back to Alstede Farms for a hayride and to pick strawberries.

Our 4’s graduation will be on Tuesday, June 6th. It will be a big celebration! We have 13 graduates which has been the biggest graduating class since I started here. The children will tell us a little bit about themselves, they will sing songs, will get diplomas and awards and we will all enjoy some desserts together.

Our Bridges program will start the day after school ends and will run until the start of our summer program on June 19th.

Thank you all for your continued support,

Michelle Nulman