



“The last two weeks in Israel have truly changed my outlook and vision of *Eretz Yisra’el*. I have experienced tragedy, comedy, myth, reality, elation, and conflict in examining the issues in this country. The beauty of Israel has not escaped me even when looking at the hardships of migrant workers, refugees from Darfur, and impoverished communities. Now that I know about many of the conflicts and struggles in the State of Israel, my commitment to Israel and my ability to portray it accurately and powerfully to my students in New York City have both been strengthened. Because of these stories, I feel more prepared, not only as an educator, but also as a human being, to fight for change and create a future of coexistence and peace.”

—Yvonne Asher  
Visions and Voices of Israel  
seminar participant

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The Davidson School’s distance learning program, where participants take the majority of classes via the Internet, is featured in this issue of the *Davidson Newsletter*. Many of the students are able to hold part- or full-time positions in Jewish education while continuing their studies through this program. “Since I had a full-time job when I started at The Davidson School, the distance learning program has been invaluable to me,” said Noah Hartman, a distance learning student, who shares his experiences in this issue of the *Davidson Newsletter*.

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# Letter From Dean Brown

“My last twelve years at JTS have been some of the most rewarding and exhilarating of my career.”



Dear Friends:

By now, most of you have heard of my decision to leave JTS at the end of this academic year to assume the post of head of school at the Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy, a pluralistic community day school composed of grades six to twelve outside of Philadelphia, where I live. My last twelve years at JTS have been some of the most rewarding and exhilarating of my career. In addition to the privilege of meeting and working with incredible colleagues, students, and staff, I have had the luxury to contemplate new ideas and try out new approaches to teaching and learning in Jewish educational settings of all kinds and to evaluate them and learn from team efforts to innovate and bring change. These are rare and special privileges.

I have always been a school person. While I was still working on my doctorate at Teachers College at Columbia University, I began leading my first school, the Central Hebrew High School of Long Island, a supplementary Hebrew high school. I then returned to Philadelphia to start a new K-2 branch of the Solomon Schechter Day School, where I served as head teacher, teaching alef and bet classes in Jewish studies and leading the branch. I met and married my wife, Shelly, during that period (she was a first-grade general-studies teacher, and we invited all the students and their parents to our wedding). Then I went on to become director of religious education of a large Conservative synagogue school at Congregation Adath Jeshurun in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, where I served for five years. In 1980, I was invited back to Schechter (now the Perelman Jewish Day School) to serve as headmaster. In 1996, just as I was ordained as a rabbi from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, I was invited by Chancellor Ismar Schorsch and Dr. Aryeh Davidson, founding dean of the new William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education, to become director of the Melton Research Center for Jewish Education and the assistant dean of the newly opening William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education. Five years ago, I assumed the deanship of The Davidson School.

I give you this history so you might understand that my decision to return to the field is most natural for me. I have been energized and exhilarated by the leadership of two wonderful chancellors and would have gladly spent the rest of my career here at JTS. But the exciting developments in Philadelphia are too much to ignore. The Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy (founded in 1946 as the first community day school in North America and formerly known as the Akiba Hebrew Academy) was at the center of the Jewish community's reinvigorated commitment to Jewish day schools. The Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia purchased a magnificent thirty-five-acre campus for the school, which has been housed for many, many years in a small, insufficient facility. A \$5,000,000 gift to the school by Lynn and Leonard Barrack (the chair of the board of the Philadelphia Federation) was added impetus to consider returning to the field and trying to implement many of the programs and innovations I have helped develop here at The Davidson School. I am a Philadelphian and have commuted to New York City for the last twelve years, staying over a couple of nights a week. My wife, Shelly, is more than glad to have me home again seven nights a week and to have me reassume my spousal responsibility of taking out the trash on Tuesday nights.

Visit [www.jtsa.edu/davidson](http://www.jtsa.edu/davidson) for more information on The Davidson School.

The *Davidson Newsletter* welcomes your suggestions and ideas. Please send your name, contact information, and comments to [typerez@jtsa.edu](mailto:typerez@jtsa.edu).

On September 5, the day of Dr. Arnold Eisen's wonderful inauguration as chancellor of JTS, I turned sixty (sixty is the new forty, you know!). I looked up with awe and envy and thought to myself how wonderful it is to lead an institution, set its course, reignite its vision, and prioritize its next moves. I envied his new role. Several weeks later, the call came from the leadership at Barrack inviting me to consider taking on leadership of the school. Many of the school's leaders had been parents at Schechter when I was there and knew me well. You never know when your past will catch up with you. While there is still much to do at The Davidson School, and certainly no shortage of challenges and excitement, I needed to engage in one more challenge in my career, which has been blessed with opportunities to build Jewish educational institutions. I hope that an already excellent school will become a flagship institution. I hope that it will be a center for training future day school teachers and leaders, serving as an internship site. Amazingly, Barrack has a fifty-room hotel attached to it, since it was a business conference center that is being converted to day school use. We hope to use the facility as a national Jewish educational retreat center and as a place to house resident interns and informal/holistic educators learning how to design and execute exciting, innovative programs in a retreat setting.

I leave The Davidson School knowing that an excellent search committee co-chaired by Provost Alan Cooper and my dear friend and colleague Dr. Carol Ingall will find a candidate with different visions and skills to build upon the work that Dr. Aryeh Davidson and I have begun. I leave with incredible gratefulness, personally and professionally, to Mr. William Davidson for enabling me to implement my visions for the school and for supporting me and the school so fully and generously. I leave with deep and sincere lifelong devotion to colleagues, staff, students, and advisory board members past and present. I thank the Almighty for the honor bestowed on me in leading the William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education during these past years.

*Bivracha,*



Steven M. Brown  
Dean of William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education

## “Roast and Toast” Honoring Dean Steven M. Brown Wednesday, April 9, 2008

On Wednesday, April 9, The Davidson School Advisory Board will host a “roast and toast” honoring Dean Brown as we bid him farewell. In his honor, the board has seeded a special scholarship fund to create the Rabbi Steven M. Brown, EdD, Fellowship program, and has posed a pivotal challenge to the larger community: to build the fund and its critical impact.

Festivities are planned from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at The Jewish Theological Seminary. Please mark your calendar and RSVP now!

Contact Marion Dienstag at (212) 678-8849 or [madienstag@jtsa.edu](mailto:madienstag@jtsa.edu) to honor Dean Brown.

Distance learning students during summer session at JTS



# Experiencing Davidson's Distance Learning Program



**Noah Hartman** is in The Davidson School's distance learning program, where he is able to study while working as

director of Student Life at the Weber School, a day school for students in grades nine through twelve in Atlanta, Georgia. Since 2006, Noah has been overseeing Weber's cocurricular life, which includes school trips, Shabbatonim, the student council, a specialty minyan, the Rosh Hodesh barbecue, morning programs, and more than twenty clubs. He also teaches history classes at Weber. Noah anticipates receiving an MA in Jewish Education in 2008 from The Davidson School's distance learning program, with a concentration in Informal/Communal Education. He earned a BA in History from New York University in 1998 and an MA in Education from New York University in 1999. Here are Noah's comments on the program.

*The Davidson School has helped me incorporate more Jewish content, culture, and ritual into general school programming. It has also given me a stronger liturgical foundation that allows me to make connections to Jewish history and peoplehood that I had not been able to do previously. As a [secular] history teacher, I believe strongly in connections between the past and the present, and it's important to me to make those connections real for the students, particularly when it comes to Jewish life. The Davidson School has made it more real for me, and it has helped me make it more real for the student body at Weber.*

*Since I had a full-time job when I started at The Davidson School, the distance learning program has been invaluable to me. Not only have I been able to work more or less on my own time, but I have met others in similar situations and have really enjoyed the intellec-*



**"Throughout my master's degree I have learned innovative methods in a profound way, in order to be able to bring enduring changes to the Jewish day schools in Mexico City."**

**—Karina Rabner, distance learning student from Mexico City**

*tual discourse we engage in each week. The variety of classes and instructors has been great, and I have felt welcomed as a full member of the JTS community. I now even have a JTS student ID to prove it!*

*To that end, spending a summer session on campus was a phenomenal experience even though the campus was relatively quiet. My next-door neighbor was away for the summer, but I can only imagine what it's like to live next door to a cantorial student during the year!*

*Another incredible benefit to The Davidson School's distance learning program is the consortium opportunities with Columbia University's Teachers College. I took a Teachers College class online last spring and benefited from the more diverse backgrounds of my classmates, and I really enjoyed the class, to boot.*

*Finally, the distance learning program has also introduced me to an online system and new way of learning that I find efficient, effective, and cutting edge. It certainly takes an element of discipline to get as much out of the online program as possible, but the return on the investment is staggeringly positive.*

For more information, contact Dr. Ofra Backenroth at [ofbackenroth@jtsa.edu](mailto:ofbackenroth@jtsa.edu). Log on to <http://my.jtsa.edu/ics/courses> for up-to-date course listings.

## About Davidson's Distance Learning Program

Participants in The Davidson School's distance learning program come from all over the United States and South America. Many of them are able to hold part- or full-time positions in Jewish education while continuing their studies through the distance learning program. Others who are unable to relocate to New York City also enroll in the program to continue their professional development. Additionally, in order to continue their coursework, Davidson students studying in Israel enroll in distance learning classes.

Davidson's distance learning program enables students to work online toward a master's degree in Jewish Education. Participants cover the same comprehensive curriculum as their colleagues who study at JTS's New York campus, but they take the majority of their courses via the Internet. The online work "affords students an opportunity to do their studies and learning at times and places of their convenience—they can log on at any time of day or night



from virtually anywhere," commented Alvan Kaunfer, adjunct assistant professor at The Davidson School.

"Online education has the ability to determine the future of Jewish education in remote places," observed Dr. Ofra Backenroth, assistant dean of The Davidson School. "People from small communities who lack resources can still receive quality education by participating in this program and studying with great professors at JTS," she said.

## Focus on Alumna Nancy Parkes

Nancy Parkes is the educational director at Temple Israel Center (TIC) in White Plains, New York, where she oversees Havurat Torah, TIC's middle school and high school. Her key responsibilities include setting curriculum, hiring and supervising faculty, and planning staff development.

Parkes was introduced to diverse Jewish educational settings while at The Davidson School, which motivated her to spend a summer teaching at Ramah Day Camp in Nyack, New York. "As a result, much of what I'm doing this year at Temple Israel Center is trying to bring many of the things that worked in the informal setting, such as Ramah, into the congregational school," she said.

Parkes considers staff development—teaching the faculty new skills in order to "bring Jewish education alive for the students"—to be a critical part of her job. This school year, she introduced the faculty to the importance of cooperative learning in the classroom, as well as to set induction, a technique used to introduce new topics to students "to get them immediately engaged." She followed the teachers as they put the technique into practice and identified its benefits. Two classes at The Davidson School that interested Parkes in the importance of staff development were Skills for Teaching and Visions of Jewish Education.

One segment of her job at TIC that Parkes finds especially exciting is the temple's Reimagine program, an eighteen-month project in which the clergy, educators, congregants, parents, and children are developing a vision of what the congregational school should be like. The project will give Parkes the opportunity to "take so much of what I've learned at The Davidson School and put it into practice," she said. "The overall vision is to create an atmosphere that is engaging and interactive, where students want to be here, and our goal is to take whatever they are learning and translate that into action," she said.

Parkes attributes her interest in Jewish education to her children, who went to Solomon Schechter schools. "They became, in many ways, my first Jewish educators, in that, when they brought things home from school, I studied with them. Gradually, I fell deeply and passionately in love with Jewish learning," she said, which led her to apply to and study at The Davidson School. Prior to TIC, Parkes taught religious school at the Orangetown Jewish Center in Orangeburg, New York.

Davidson graduates "have a passion for Jewish education, and that passion overflows into the classroom," Parkes said. She recently hired several graduates of The Davidson School and has four JTS students on staff. Parkes tapped the Davidson graduates, she said, because "you know the quality and the knowledge that they're going to have" and that "they're going to be able to engage the students."

Eliza Zipper, one of the Davidson graduates hired by Parkes to teach in the religious school and the high school, and who also started as youth director at TIC in July 2007, commented:

Now that I am implementing some of the skills and theories I learned at The Davidson School into a full-time job, I see the positive effects it has on me and my [students]. They like the different kinds of formal and informal activities we do in the classes and understand the material so well that they can usually predict where it is going. This is in part due to the skills about curriculum and lesson planning that I learned at The Davidson School.

"I can't say enough about The Davidson School program," Parkes said. The Davidson School has "given me a gift, and it's something that I want to be able to give to my students and to other Davidson grads."

Davidson graduates "have a passion for Jewish education, and that passion overflows into the classroom."

—Nancy Parkes, Educational Director, Temple Israel Center, White Plains, New York



**Nancy Parkes**

- MA, The Davidson School, Synagogue Education and Administration concentration, 2005
- MA, University of Connecticut, Exercise Physiology, 1985
- BA, State University of New York at Albany, Biology and Psychology majors, 1983

The "Judisches Ceremonial" was painted by Paul Christian Kirchner. The book, written in Nuremberg in 1734 by a Jewish convert to Christianity, portrays the various customs and ceremonies of Jews.



A modern artistic commentary on the Holocaust and the Passover, each through the lens of the other, created by David Wander in memory of the Holocaust (1985, Haifa, Israel)

## Passover Through Archaeology and Rare Documents Website

A Passover website dedicated to helping people learn about the holiday through some of the most important and beautiful Passover images of all time is available to the public. It provides images of ancient documents, traditional teachings, medieval illuminated Haggadot, and modern artistic elaborations of Passover and the Exodus.

This educational website, a collaborative project between The Davidson School and The Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary, along with the Center for Online Judaic Studies, includes a section directed

at teachers and other Jewish educators. George Blumenthal, who conceptualized the project, is its funder, with additional support provided by Floy and Amos Kaminski.

Targeted for adult learners and teachers, the Passover website is accessible to the general public by visiting [www.passover-site.org](http://www.passover-site.org). For more information on the educational website project, read "New Educational Website Dedicated to the High Holidays," *Davidson Newsletter*, fall 2007, page 8.

## Recent Davidson Graduate Talks About Her Work at JESNA and The Davidson Experience

*Katherine (Kate) O'Brien, a 2007 graduate of The Davidson School and The Graduate School, is working at the Berman Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education at JESNA (Jewish Education Service of North America) in New York City. Here she talks about the work she does at JESNA and her Davidson education.*

**Q: What is your title and job description?**

**A:** My title is senior research writer. It is a brand-new position. We are developing an infrastructure that will allow the senior research writer to work closely with other senior staff in the Berman Center to write and edit materials for publication and presentation to JESNA's primary audiences, including funders and program providers in the Jewish communal sector. I began working part-time for the Berman Center in February 2007 and moved to full-time status in May 2007.

**Q: What is exciting to you about your position?**

**A:** The work is challenging, and I am constantly learning new things about the field of Jewish and general education as well as the business of running a major Jewish nonprofit organization. I am continually impressed by

the caliber and generosity of my colleagues.

**Q: How do you think that the education you received at The Davidson School helps you implement your job?**

**A:** The education I received at The Davidson School prepared me for both the academic and administrative demands of this position. I am able to speak the language of Jewish education fluently and contribute knowledge of both the broader field and specific aspects of the field (for example, educational research and evaluation, curriculum development, fundamentals of learning, professional development for educators, and so on) to the research and evaluation work of the Berman Center. I also have access to my faculty and mentors at The Davidson School, who are invaluable resources. My education also encouraged and deepened my passion and my sense of responsibility for improving the state of Jewish education on global and local levels.



**Katherine O'Brien**

- MA, The Davidson School, Informal/Communal Education concentration, 2007
- MA, The Graduate School, Bible, 2007
- BFA, Long Island University-C.W. Post Campus, Communications major, 1995

## JTS Hosted a Conference in Memory of Dr. Seymour Fox, z"l, Noted Jewish Educator

"Pedagogy and Curriculum in Contemporary Jewish Education," an academic conference in memory of Dr. Seymour Fox, sponsored by The Davidson School, took place in November 2007 at JTS. Conference speakers included leading educators and scholars in both Jewish and general education.

At JTS, Dr. Fox was dean of the Teachers Institute (the forerunner of The Davidson School) and helped to establish its Melton Research Center for Jewish Education. He was a major force in the development of Camp Ramah's educational philosophy and approach.

Dr. Fox's legacy in North America includes the generations of scholars of Jewish education who teach in American academic institutions, the focus on curriculum studies and

research that he encouraged and helped establish, and the close ties between scholars of Judaica and practitioners of Jewish education that characterized his approach. Dr. Fox received his doctorate in Education from the University of Chicago and was ordained at JTS. Most recently, he was coauthor of a major volume, *Visions of Jewish Education*, published by Cambridge University Press four years ago.

The keynote address was delivered by Professor Lee Shulman, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Chancellor Arnold Eisen made introductory remarks. The program included reflections on Dr. Seymour Fox's life and career by friends and colleagues. Conference sessions were chaired by the faculty of The Davidson School.



The keynote address was delivered by Professor Lee Shulman, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, with introductory remarks by Chancellor Arnold Eisen.



**Dr. Barry Holtz**



**Dr. Marjorie Lehman**



**Dr. Howard Ditcher**

Allison Oakes, a current DSLTI fellow and a new head of school, stated, "DSLTI is giving me the knowledge and tools I need to be successful. The expertise of the mentors and the knowledge of my colleagues has created an immeasurable support system."

## DSLTI Mentors Win Prestigious Covenant Award

The Covenant Foundation gives awards to three exceptional Jewish educators annually. Three Day School Leadership Training Institute mentors have been the recipients of the prestigious Covenant Award, designed to honor, thank, and celebrate outstanding educators.



**Dr. Bruce Powell**, founding head of school of New Community Jewish High School in West Hills, California, is the 2007 Covenant Award winner. He has mentored three cohorts of DSLTI fellows and is one of the preeminent visionary leaders in the Movement to develop Jewish high schools throughout America. He was also instrumental in founding both Yeshiva University high schools of Los Angeles and Milken Community High School. Dr. Powell serves as a Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE) coach, enabling the wisdom of his work to benefit schools throughout the United States and Canada. He also serves on the faculty of the Fingerhut School of Education at the American Jewish University, as well as having taught in the Ziegler School for Rabbinic Studies. Dr. Powell founded Jewish School Management (JSM), a national consulting firm dedicated to developing and training skilled professional and lay day school leadership.



Previous award winners: **Jane Taubenfeld Cohen**, founding head of school of the South Area Solomon Schechter Day School in Norwood, Massachusetts, was the 2006 Covenant Award winner, and DSLTI senior mentor **Cheryl R. Finkel**, senior consultant at PEJE and formerly head of school at the Epstein School, Solomon Schechter School of Atlanta, Georgia, was the 1999 recipient.



# DSLTI Trains and Supports Jewish Day School Leaders

The Day School Leadership Training Institute (DSLTI) is a professional development program committed to training and supporting passionate leaders for Jewish day schools across North America. The institute provides a cutting-edge curriculum, dynamic experiences in authentic contexts, collaborative cohort groupings, and ongoing mentoring and support. One current DSLTI fellow, Allison Oakes, a new head of school, stated that "DSLTI is giving me the knowledge and tools I need to be successful. The expertise of the mentors and the knowledge of my colleagues have created an immeasurable support system." The institute is designed to offer a rich understanding of day school headship through the following foci: Judaism, education, and leadership.

The fifth cohort of DSLTI is currently underway. Participants include:

- Rabbi Matthew Bellas**, School Rabbi at the Brandeis School of Lawrence, New York
- Uriel Cohen**, Director of Development at Solomon Schechter School of New York, New York
- Andrew Frank**, Lower School Assistant Principal at the Davis Academy of Atlanta, Georgia
- Michal Gill**, Associate Principal at the United Synagogue Day School of Toronto
- Seth Goldsweig**, Jewish Studies Coordinator at the Downtown Jewish Day School of Toronto
- Rabbi Andrew Hechtman**, Rabbi in Residence of the Ezra Academy of Woodbridge, Connecticut
- Rabbi Andrew Katz**, Assistant Head of School at Jewish Community High School of the Bay of San Francisco, California
- Michael Kay**, Judaic Studies Director at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School of Rockville, Maryland
- Sharon Knafo**, Judaic Studies Principal at the Bornblum Solomon Schechter School of Memphis, Tennessee
- Rabbi Mitchell Levine**, Director of Judaic Studies at Jewish Community Day School of Rhode Island, Providence, Rhode Island
- Rachel Lewin**, Middle School Principal at Ronald Wornick Jewish Day School of Foster City, California
- Allison Oakes**, Head of School at Solomon Schechter Day School of Palm Beach County, Boca Raton, Florida
- Barbie Prince**, Head of School at Shoshana Cardin School of Baltimore, Maryland
- Lori Schor**, Director of School at Solomon Schechter Day School of Essex and Union, West Orange, New Jersey
- Adam Shapiro**, Experiential Educator at Solomon Schechter Day School of Essex and Union, West Orange, New Jersey

The theme of the DSLTI Alumni Retreat, held February 8-11 in Boca Raton, Florida, was school governance.

For more information on DSLTI, visit [www.jtsa.edu/davidson](http://www.jtsa.edu/davidson) or contact Frances M. Urman, project director, at [frurman@jtsa.edu](mailto:frurman@jtsa.edu).



Cohort 5 participants at the Clinton Inn, Tenafly, New Jersey



Cohort 5 participants at orientation retreat at the Clinton Inn, Tenafly, New Jersey



Cohort 5 during Minnah time in the JTS Courtyard

# MaToK: The Bible Curriculum for Solomon Schechter Day Schools

Two new MaToK student books have been published by MaToK, featuring beautiful artwork, sophisticated learning opportunities, and an approach to Torah that is both open and deep. These new editions are for *Parashat Va-yetzei* and *Parashat Va-yishlah*, bringing the total number of full-color student booklets to six, with two more to be printed by the end of the 2008 school year. Plans are already in place for the book of *Sh'mot* (Exodus). The MaToK curriculum is used in more than forty Solomon Schechter and community day schools in the United States and Canada.

With MaToK, children study Torah in the original Hebrew from the beginning, making personal meaning from the questions that emerge from in-depth study, articulating their views in writing and in art, and rooting their understanding in the Torah's own language. Students bring to bear their growing moral, social, and emotional intelligence in their confrontation with biblical dilemmas. MaToK involves parents at key junctures.

Teachers and school leaders who are interested in MaToK participate in professional development before beginning their use of the materials. Groups of Torah educators came to JTS in August and September 2007. A MaToK workshop was held in January 2007 at the Solomon Schechter Day School of Nevada, in Las Vegas.

MaToK is cosponsored by the Education Department of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and by the Melton Research Center for Jewish Education, part of The Davidson School. MaToK's project director is Dr. Deborah Miller.

For more information on MaToK, visit the MaToK website at [www.ssdas.org/?page=matok](http://www.ssdas.org/?page=matok), or contact Dr. Deborah Miller, associate director of the Melton Research Center for Jewish Education, The Davidson School, at [demiller@jtsa.edu](mailto:demiller@jtsa.edu).



Above: *Parashat Va-yishlah* cover;  
left: *Parashat Va-yetzei* cover and  
interior



"The idea of leadership that seems to be emerging calls for rethinking the source of leadership. It will no longer be thought of as something initiated by the leaders (or by followers) but understood to be in the reciprocal connections of people working together."  
—William McGrath

## Teacher Leadership in Congregational Schools (TLCs)

A teacher leadership initiative is now being piloted in two Conservative and three Reform congregational schools. Five principals who are graduates of the Leadership Institute for Congregational Schools (TLCs) are working with groups of four teachers to develop teams that will share leadership in their schools. The principals are: Melissa Cohavi, Temple Sinai, Stamford, Connecticut; Deborah Meyer, Temple Beth Elohim, Old Bethpage, New York; Pamela Barkley, Temple Beth Abraham, Tarrytown, New York; Ron Koas, Park Avenue Synagogue, New York City; and Bess Adler, Rebecca and Israel Ivry Prozdor High School (JTS), New York City.

The teams have come together for symposia to learn the theory and practice of shared leadership and to learn from each other. The most recent symposium, held in October 2007, was co-led by mentors Sheila Adler, Yonni Wattenmaker, and lead mentor Dr. Susan Ruskin-Mayher of Bank Street College.

The goal of TLCs is to change the culture of schools so that adult learning permeates the school, thus raising the level of knowledge and practice. TLCs is a joint project of the New York School of Education at Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, directed by Jo Kay, and The Davidson School, directed by Dr. Steven M. Brown. Dr. Deborah Miller is TLC's project director.

For more information on TLCs, contact Dr. Deborah Miller, associate director of the Melton Research Center for Jewish Education, The Davidson School, at [demiller@jtsa.edu](mailto:demiller@jtsa.edu).

## Faculty Notes



**Dr. Ofra A. Backenroth**, assistant dean, presented a session titled "Artworks in the Classroom" at the Schmooze Culture Conference at UJA-Federation of New York in October in which she shared minicase studies describing how classroom educators are using arts-based strategies to teach Jewish subject matter, such as history, Bible, and ethics, among other subjects. Dr. Backenroth had an article titled "Arts as Midrash" in *Kolot* published by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism 1:2 (Winter 2007).



**Dean Steven M. Brown** served as scholar-in-residence in October 2007 at Adas Israel Congregation in Washington DC, and in February at Temple Beth David in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. In April, he will serve as scholar-in-residence at the Jacksonville Jewish Center in Jacksonville, Florida. His article, coauthored with Davidson graduate Dr. Mitchel Malkus, titled "Hevruta as a Form of Cooperative Learning," appears in the current edition of the *Journal of Jewish Education*, and his article titled "'I Make Jews': The Role and Influence of Rabbi David Mogilner, z"l, on Ramah" appears in the spring issue of the *Ramah 60 Journal*.



**Dr. Shira D. Epstein**, assistant professor of Jewish Education, presented a session titled "Thinking Beyond Curriculum" with Davidson alumna Naomi Less at "Strong Voices, Critical Choices: A Training Institute for Jewish Youth Professionals" in October 2007, which was sponsored by Ma'yan. In this session, they presented their in-development training methodology on educational Jewish moments, which is designed to help Jewish educators identify and respond to challenging moments that may arise around gender and sexuality in a Jewish setting. Dr. Epstein had an article titled "From 'Queen' to 'Nobody': A Language for Discussing Healthy Relationships" published in the Union for Reform Judaism's *Torah at the Center* 11:1 (Fall 2007), a special issue on gender and Jewish education.



**Dr. Carol K. Ingall**, Dr. Bernard Heller Professor of Jewish Education, organized a panel that presented at the December 2007 meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies (AJS) in Toronto on women's contributions to the development of American Jewish education. In addition to Dr. Ingall, the panelists included Lisa Grant, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion; Jonathan Krasner, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion; Dr. Shuly Rubin Schwartz, List College, The Jewish Theological Seminary; and Dr. Rebecca Boim Wolf, New York University.



**Dr. Jeffrey S. Kress**, chair of the Department of Jewish Education and assistant professor of Jewish Education, served as a conference co-chair of the "Ramah @ 60 Conference and Celebration" in October 2007 and presented research at that event. Dr. Kress convened and served as a moderator for a symposium titled "Researching Sense of Meaning and Purpose in Jewish Youth" in October 2007. This symposium, part of the ongoing Happiness/Quality of Life Outcomes of Jewish Education project, brings together noted Jewish thinkers and social/behavioral scientists for dialogue. He co-authored, with Dr. Irving Sigel, z"l, and Dr. Maurice Elias, the article titled "Beyond Questioning: Inquiry Strategies and Cognitive and Affective Elements of Jewish Education," which was published in the *Journal of Jewish Education*, 73:1. He also started a new project funded by the AVI CHAI Foundation on the bridging of formal and informal education in day schools, with a focus on Shabbatonim.



**Cheryl Magen**, director of Alumni Engagement, coordinated a *tefillah* curriculum for all the Ramah camps, which was published by the National Ramah Commission (NRC). It consists of resource material for children ages nine to sixteen and two CDs of *nusah* (chanting of prayers) and music.

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## JTS Employee Excellence Award



**Rosemary Raymond**, executive assistant to the dean of The Davidson School, was the first recipient of the JTS Employee Excellence Award. In his nomination letter, Dean Brown stated, "Rosemary Raymond is the glue that holds the Davidson School together. She has the ideal qualities in an employee . . . intelligence, humility, good humor, grace, and style. She is a superb administrator. She keeps the offices well run while dealing with an amazing variety of school- and field-based needs that arise because of the complicated nature of The Davidson School's many grant-funded projects taking place all over North America."

## Alumni Notes

**Rena Apelbaum** (MA 2006) is the assistant director of the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue Religious School in New York City under the direction of Evita Sokol (MA 2003).

**Beth (Garfinkle) Hancock** (MA 2003) is proud to announce the birth of Chase Matthew Hancock on October 15, 2007.

**Bara Sapir** (MA 2005) is the art editor of *Zeek: A Jewish Journal of Thought and Culture* and a freelance artist.

**Fran Sharpe** (MA 1996) is teaching at Cohen-Hillel Academy in Marblehead, Massachusetts, and has been named a Day School Leadership Through Training mentor.

**Hava Shirazi** (MA 2004) got engaged in July and is getting married this coming August in Virginia Beach, Virginia, to Jonathan Anderson.

**Sara Stave** (MA 2004) is in the process of starting her own siddur-publishing company called Sababa Books. She will soon be publishing a weekday siddur called *Siddur Sababa*, a workbook/siddur for use in middle school *iyun tefillah* (learning about prayer), which can be adapted for older grades and adult education. She also plans to release a Shabbat version and a teachers' guide soon.

**Adrian Strizhak** (MA 2006) is the hospice chaplain at Continuum Hospice Care in New York City, doing home and skilled nursing home visits to Jewish patients on the west side of Manhattan.

**Josh Troderman** (MA 2005) is the director of Esher, a new community afternoon school in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

## Save the Date

### Lunch with Debbie Weissman Israel @ 60, Achievements and Challenges.

Tuesday, February 12, 12:15–1:15 p.m.  
Please RSVP by February 5 to Tyree Perez at [typerez@jtsa.edu](mailto:typerez@jtsa.edu).  
Location: Mendelson Convocation Center

### Jewish Women's Archive Workshop

Tuesday, February 26, 6:00–9:00 p.m.  
Join the educational staff of the Jewish Women's Archive for an intensive, collaborative workshop on creative ways to integrate Jewish women's history into a wide range of formal and informal educational programs.  
Please RSVP by February 20 to Tyree Perez at [typerez@jtsa.edu](mailto:typerez@jtsa.edu).  
Location: Kripke 506 A and B

## JTS Launches Alumni Affairs Office



JTS is creating an Alumni Affairs office to work with graduates of the five JTS component schools. The new program will be coordinated by a 2007 alumna of The Graduate School, **Rochelle Rudnick**, who brings a wealth of experience gained from developing and managing Jewish adult education programs. Rochelle is interested in hearing from staff and faculty who are in touch with alumni. "I would like people to submit ideas," Rochelle says. "We want to be able to ask JTS alumni, 'How can JTS support you? What do you want from JTS?'"

Contact Rochelle at (212) 678-8909 or [rorudnick@jtsa.edu](mailto:rorudnick@jtsa.edu).

**ALUMNI: We want to keep you connected to The Davidson School. Please visit our recently improved website to check out what is new and fill out the alumni update form. This way we will be able to make sure you receive email updates and important news about professional development and exciting upcoming events. Visit [www.jtsa.edu](http://www.jtsa.edu), click on William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education, and then click on alumni.**



**For more information on The Davidson School's alumni program, contact Cheryl Magen, director of Alumni Engagement, at [chmagen@jtsa.edu](mailto:chmagen@jtsa.edu).**

**William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education Faculty List**

**Rabbi Steven M. Brown, EdD**  
Dean,  
Assistant Professor of Jewish Education,  
Director, Melton Research Center for Jewish Education

**Dr. Ofra A. Backenroth**  
Assistant Dean,  
Adjunct Assistant Professor of Jewish Education

**Charlotte Katz Abramson,**  
Adjunct Lecturer

**Dr. Aryeh Davidson**  
Assistant Professor of Jewish Education

**Dr. Shira D. Epstein**  
Assistant Professor of Jewish Education

**Dr. Michael B. Greenbaum**  
Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer of JTS,  
Assistant Professor of Jewish Education

**Dr. Barry W. Holtz**  
Theodore and Florence Baumritter Professor of Jewish Education

**Dr. Carol K. Ingall**  
Dr. Bernard Heller Professor of Jewish Education

**Dr. Jeffrey S. Kress**  
Assistant Professor of Jewish Education Chair, Department of Jewish Education

**Dr. Deborah U. Miller**  
Associate Director, Melton Research Center for Jewish Education,  
Adjunct Assistant Professor of Jewish Education

**Dr. Michelle Lynn-Sachs**  
Assistant Professor of Jewish Education

# Visions and Voices of Israel



The fourth Davidson School Visions and Voices of Israel seminar was led by **Dr. Alex Sinclair**. The seminar took place from December 2007 through January 2008 and was based in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and northern Israel.



“This trip removed my sunglasses and gave me the opportunity to see the soul of Israel—her people. They come in every size and shape; from deep within her soil and places afar. I am no longer a *ger*—a stranger. I am a member of the tribe even more than before, one who has a responsibility to learn and get involved.”

“Only through exposure, conversation, and thought can we truly experience Israel. I sincerely hope that I will gain enough insight into the essence of Israel to be able to inspire my students to remove their sunglasses and bask in the sun of Israel and Judaism.”

*L'hitraot* and shalom!  
—Barbara deNormandie



“One of the highlights of this trip has been the opportunity to spend five days with students from Oranim College, a Jewish education school in the north of Israel. Prior to this trip, I had believed some of the stereotypes about Israelis: that they were macho and had difficulty connecting to their emotions. After five intense days of *mifgash* (meeting) with the Israeli students, I have been able to humanize my notion of Israelis. They are caring people who, like me, are striving to make a difference in how people relate to Israel. I am extremely grateful for this opportunity to have personally connected with them.”

—Ben Herman



Davidson School students during *mifgash* with students from Oranim College



Davidson School Students praying near Robinson's Arch

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