

# Kane Street Synagogue Hebrew School Parent's Handbook 2011-2012



Kane Street Synagogue  
236 Kane Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11231  
718-875-1550  
[www.kanestreet.org](http://www.kanestreet.org)

# Kane Street Synagogue Hebrew School

## Rabbi

Samuel Weintraub [rabbi@kanestreet.org](mailto:rabbi@kanestreet.org)

## Executive Director

Linda Kass-Mahler [office@kanestreet.org](mailto:office@kanestreet.org)

## Director of Education & Family Programs

Rabbi Valerie Lieber [vlieber@kanestreet.org](mailto:vlieber@kanestreet.org)

## Director of Kane Street Kids Preschool

Peggy Geller [kids@kanestreet.org](mailto:kids@kanestreet.org)

## Music Enrichment Director

Joey Weisenberg [joeyweisenberg@gmail.com](mailto:joeyweisenberg@gmail.com)

## Kane Street Synagogue President

Vicky Vossen [vvossen@nyct.net](mailto:vvossen@nyct.net)

## Hebrew School Board Co-Chairs

Rachael Burton [Rachael.Burton@yahoo.com](mailto:Rachael.Burton@yahoo.com)

Norman Cohen [normanccohen@gmail.com](mailto:normanccohen@gmail.com)

## Members of the Hebrew School Board

Jenny Breznay, past chair

Hedi Hruby

Ro Johnson

Susan Radin

Renee Rettig

Joanne Robinson

Jill Rose

## Class Parents

**Roshanim**  
**Gan** Aeri Pang

**Alef** Hilda Cohen [hildagirl70@yahoo.com](mailto:hildagirl70@yahoo.com) 917-604-4553

**Bet** Jackie Johnson [jgjohn@gmail.com](mailto:jgjohn@gmail.com) 917-915-0090

**Gimmel**

**Dalet...**

**Hey** Claudia Bedrick [enchantedlion@gmail.com](mailto:enchantedlion@gmail.com) 646-785-9272

**Vav** Barry Elkayam

**Mifan** Sarah Shriver

*If you are interested in volunteering, you can make a meaningful contribution to our Hebrew School. Please contact*

# Hebrew School Faculty

Come read everyone's bio and see photos on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bulletin board

Principal	Rabbi Valerie Lieber	(718) 875-1550x117	<a href="mailto:vlieber@kanestreet.org">vlieber@kanestreet.org</a>
Roshanim (pre-K)	Meryl Zimmerman	(917) 386-5445	<a href="mailto:meryl@merylzimmerman.com">meryl@merylzimmerman.com</a>
Gan (Kindergarten)	Meryl Zimmerman	(917) 386-5445	<a href="mailto:meryl@merylzimmerman.com">meryl@merylzimmerman.com</a>
	Shai Zurim	(718) 832-6865	<a href="mailto:shai@shaizurim.com">shai@shaizurim.com</a>
Alef (Grade 1)	Sonia Isard	(215) 589-8126	<a href="mailto:sonia.isard@gmail.com">sonia.isard@gmail.com</a>
	Shai Zurim	(718) 832-6865	<a href="mailto:shai@shaizurim.com">shai@shaizurim.com</a>
Bet (Grade 2)	Moran Ben Shaul	(718) 755-2747	<a href="mailto:ranibst2p@yahoo.com">ranibst2p@yahoo.com</a>
Gimmel (Grade 3)	Nurit Bar Shai Hadar Ahuvia	(718) 599-0804 (415) 314-0342	<a href="mailto:n@nuritbarshai.com">n@nuritbarshai.com</a> <a href="mailto:hahuvia@gmail.com">hahuvia@gmail.com</a>
Dalet (Grade 4)	Natalie Carmeli	(917) 224-2762	<a href="mailto:natalie.carmeli@gmail.com">natalie.carmeli@gmail.com</a>
Hey (Grade 5)	Elena Hecht	(917) 692-3979	<a href="mailto:elana.hecht@gmail.com">elana.hecht@gmail.com</a>
Vav (Grade 6)	Lauren Berger	(347) 403-0574	<a href="mailto:lauren.aliya.berger@me.com">lauren.aliya.berger@me.com</a>
Music/Tefilah	Yoshie Fruchter	(301) 351-8581	<a href="mailto:yoshie5@gmail.com">yoshie5@gmail.com</a>
<u>Hebrew Groups grades 3-7</u>			
Beersheva	Elena Hecht	(917) 692-3979	<a href="mailto:elana.hecht@gmail.com">elana.hecht@gmail.com</a>
Modi'in	Nurit Bar Shai	(718) 599-0804	<a href="mailto:n@nuritbarshai.com">n@nuritbarshai.com</a>
Yafo	Lauren Berger	(347) 403-0574	<a href="mailto:lauren.aliya.berger@me.com">lauren.aliya.berger@me.com</a>
Yerushalayim	Natalie Carmeli	(917) 224-2762	<a href="mailto:natalie.carmeli@gmail.com">natalie.carmeli@gmail.com</a>
Har Tzion	Hadar Ahuvia	(415) 314-0342	<a href="mailto:hahuvia@gmail.com">hahuvia@gmail.com</a>
Miftan (Grade 7)	Lauren Berger	(216) 870-4169	<a href="mailto:lauren.aliya.berger@me.com">lauren.aliya.berger@me.com</a>
Bogrim (Grades 8-12)	Elana Roth Suzanne Guttman	(646) 418-3161 (216) 534-3583	<a href="mailto:elana.roth@gmail.com">elana.roth@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:sg2558@barnard.edu">sg2558@barnard.edu</a>

## WEEKDAY AFTERNOON SCHEDULE

**Roshanim (pre-k) Wednesdays 4PM – 5:15PM**

**Gan (Kindergarten) Mondays 4PM – 6PM**

**Alef and Bet (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grades) Wednesdays 4PM – 6PM**

**Gimmel, Dalet, Hey, Vav (Grades 3-6)**

**Mondays and Wednesdays 4PM – 6PM**

**Miftan (Grade 7) Tuesdays 4:15 – 7PM**

**Bogrim (8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade) Tuesdays 6PM – 8PM**

# Kane Street Synagogue Hebrew School

## Mission Statement

The Mission of Kane Street Synagogue Hebrew School is to engage children and families in Jewish life and learning.

### Values Statement

Kane Street Synagogue Hebrew School creates a stimulating and welcoming atmosphere that makes Judaism come alive for children from all types of Jewish backgrounds. We encourage open questioning and strive to help students and their families find their own personal meaning in our rich Jewish traditions and will build community through acts of kindness and social justice.

## Parental Brit (Covenant)

In order for your children to get the full benefit of their education, we ask for your help in several areas:

**Please make a commitment to get your children to class on time and with regularity.** *When the children arrive late, they disrupt the whole class and miss important projects. When children miss class often, they lose momentum, and have trouble keeping up, especially in Hebrew learning.*

**Please read handouts and emails we send you. We know you are swamped with news, so we try to keep our updates pertinent and meaningful.** *Please check your child's Hebrew School bookbag for flyers and letters about up-coming activities, dinners, special services and other programs. We also send a weekly email **Mah Chadash** updating you on activities. Please read it so you can fully participate and get the most out of the community.*

**Please accompany your child to Shabbat services, holiday celebrations and other temple events.** *Your involvement in synagogue life is critical in modeling to your child(ren) that Jewish activity is not just for kids but is a lifelong and worthwhile endeavor. Please read about family services on page 7 and the awards your child can earn with high service attendance on page 8.*

**4) If you have any problems or concerns, please speak to your child's teacher before or after class or speak to Rabbi Lieber.** *Your concerns are our concerns and your child's education and development are very important us. We want to address your needs but can't if we don't know what they are.*

## Student's Brit (Covenant)

**Hebrew School and our synagogue is a place where all children deserve to feel safe to learn, express their opinions, ask questions and receive respect from everyone. Therefore we have very high expectations about behavior from every student.**

We ask all students to commit to the following:

Listen patiently to classmates  
Show honor to teachers, teen assistants and all staff members  
Treat the building and its furnishings with care  
Exhibit *Derech Eretz* (courtesy) in the synagogue

The following behaviors are not acceptable in our Hebrew School and synagogue environment:

Teasing or insulting other children  
Using verbal aggression or physical violence  
Repeatedly interrupting classmates or teachers  
Defacing the building, books or furnishings

# Our Hebrew School Afternoons and Shabbat

## Curriculum By Grade Level

### ROSHANIM

Children at age 3 and 4 build a sense of community and identify with Judaism. They learn songs, hear stories, role-play, and do holiday, Shabbat and Torah crafts. They learn some basic Hebrew phrases and encounter Hebrew letters to build familiarity to the Alef-Bet.

### GAN

Kindergartners learn Torah stories, Hebrew letters and vowels, encounter Israel as a place special to and beloved by Jews. Students begin to explore the nature of God and learn a vocabulary to ask questions about God. Crafts, play-acting, Hebrew games, singing and stories are a major component of the class

### ALEF

First graders strengthen their Hebrew letter and vowel recognition, learn a 25-word Hebrew vocabulary, and begin to write in Hebrew (script). Students explore the calendar of holidays associating each holiday with its major symbols and stories. Students learn core Jewish values and apply them to their own lives and traditional Jewish stories. Students learn Shabbat and holiday music.

### BET

Second graders master Hebrew letters and vowels and become more fluent readers and practice writing in script. They recognize a vocabulary of 40 Hebrew words and are able to understand simple Hebrew sentences. They explore Israeli people, places and culture, and they continue to build their understanding and application of Jewish ethics. The Bet class explores questions about God through stories, activities and discussion. Students learn Shabbat and holiday music.

### GIMMEL

Third graders master Hebrew script writing, expand their Hebrew vocabulary recognizing 60 words, and can form simple sentences matching masculine and feminine nouns and adjectives, and matching singular and plural pronouns and nouns. They can read and translate brief stories with the help of a dictionary. They become more confident in speaking Hebrew. They learn about the yearly cycle of holidays and explore the book of Genesis (Breishit) in depth through art, drama, dance, discussion and writing. Students learn Shabbat and holiday music.

### DALET

Fourth graders read Hebrew stories and continue to expand their vocabulary to verbs and have a vocabulary of about 80 words. They begin to ask each other simple questions and respond in Hebrew with simple replies. Fourth graders learn about the rites and rituals of a Jewish life cycle including Jewish traditions at the time of birth, starting a Jewish education, wedding, and mourning. They learn how to bring holiness into their everyday life and build a vocabulary to talk about God using stories and multiple answers to common questions about God. They explore the book of Exodus (Shemot). Students learn Shabbat and holiday music.

### HEY

Fifth graders continue to build their Hebrew speaking, reading and comprehension skills using more sophisticated stories. They improve their grammar and know 100 Hebrew words. They learn about the creation of the state of Israel, its major heroes, its obstacles and triumphs. They consider the current stalemate between Jews and Palestinians. They encounter Jewish heroes from history and contemporary leaders and newsmakers focusing on the values that have driven these leaders. Students will learn liturgical music and holiday songs. Students actively participate in Shabbat prayer and begin to take leadership roles.

### VAV

Sixth graders polish their Hebrew speaking, reading and comprehension. They learn how to decline verbs of several *binyanim* (categories), and begin to work with past and future tenses. They improve their grammar and know 200-300 Hebrew words. Students learn how to chant Haftarah Trope. They

have units on prophets of the Bible, Torah commentary and interpretation, and history and legacies of the Holocaust.

#### MIFTAN

The seventh graders are in a special program called Miftan, meaning Threshold. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade program combines in-class learning with family social action days which bring Hebrew School and Day School families together. There are three major areas of focus in classroom learning: Exploring the meaning and themes of the Torah service and Shabbat Musaf Service – learning how to daven these prayers and also finding real meaning in them; Learning about American Jewish history and experience; God and spirituality. The Miftan program also includes a trip to Philadelphia to explore early American Jewish history and visit the new National Museum of American Jewish History. On Several Sundays during the year, the students and parents gather to do volunteer projects together, including feeding the hungry at Masbia Soup Kitchen, cleaning and planting with the Gowanus Canal Conservatory, visiting the aged and joining walk-a-thons to benefit medical research. These sessions will be preceded and followed by discussions on the experiences and on the Jewish values those needs call upon us to draw on. Each Miftan session also includes dinner and schmoozing.

#### BOGRIM

Students in eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades study major Jewish concepts of God, contemporary issues, ethics, and human relationships using traditional Jewish texts, music, electronic media and other sources. The topics vary widely. Some themes that have been explored in recent years include, self-image and clothing; serving in the Israeli army; how to make donations after a catastrophe, first amendment rights in schools, current Israeli music, tattoos and Jewish tradition, checkpoints for Palestinians, vegetarian, meat and kashrut, spending money on holiday gifts, “reality tv” and personal boundaries. The students engage with major Jewish texts alongside current popular cultural sources. The class discussions help students formulate their own personal definitions of self, of Jewish self, theology and value systems. The class ultimately prepares Jewish teens to be knowledgeable, active Jewish adults living as progressive Jews in the contemporary world. The eighth through twelfth graders begin their sessions with a communal dinner. Bogrim includes students who have attended Hebrew School and who have attended day school. Students spend five sessions with teens from other Conservative, Reform and progressive synagogues in the Brownstone Brooklyn community in a program called BUJH (Brooklyn United Jewish Highschool). Each year, the twelfth graders share their journey at their graduation ceremony.

### **Hebrew Groups for Gimmel-Dalet, Hey and Vav-Zayin**

By 3<sup>rd</sup> grade children will have developed a basic mastery of Hebrew letters, vowels, reading and writing. By this time some children will begin to accelerate if language acquisition is a strength. Other children may need more attention and will learn better at a slower pace. For this reason, we place children in a Hebrew Group that we believe will be most compatible with their level of ability, interest and motivation. Children are placed based on written and oral evaluations and consultations between the Director and the Hebrew teachers. Placements are not permanent and may be adjusted over the course of the year at any time if it becomes apparent that the student would be better suited to a different Hebrew group. The Hebrew groups are named for 4 cities in Israel and the Mountain in the center of Jerusalem: Beersheva, Modi'in, Yafo, Yerushalayim and Har Tzion.



Bogrim students

## Shabbat and Weekly Hebrew School

**Our Hebrew School education includes two main components: weekly classes and Shabbat services.**

Shabbat is an integral part of the Hebrew School curriculum. Students in Gan and older must attend a minimum number of services in order to graduate to the next grade. See below for the requirements.

The optimal services for learning are our Saturday family services which complement the learning students get during weekday classes. However, other services can count toward fulfilling the attendance requirement: Friday services, Holiday Services, Saturday adult services in our main sanctuary, and services at other synagogues (Havdallah services, while very meaningful, do not count toward this requirement, as they lack the major prayers of a Shabbat service.)

### Shabbat Services and Programs for Every Age

**Camp Shabbat for kids age 4 to 12: from 10:00AM - 11:15AM and after family services**

*An informal game and casual hangout space held in 2 rooms on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Goldman Educational Building each week family services are held. Camp Shabbat is staffed by Meryl Zimmerman who brings games, puzzles and more to occupy kids before and after Family Services.*

**Mini Minyan for ages 2 - 5 and their parents, 11:15AM - 12:15PM**

*Our youngest children join in an energetic, educational, enjoyable celebration of Shabbat. The program includes Shabbat songs, simple Hebrew exercises, movement, basic prayers, puppets, stories and a Kiddush. Parents or caretakers should be present to enjoy this Shabbat service and enrich the experience for the children. This service is led most often by Meryl Zimmerman.*

**Junior Congregation for Kindergarten - Grade 2 and their parents, 11:15AM - 12:30PM**

*This service is designed for those beginning to read in English and starting to learn a bit of Hebrew. The service is lively, participatory, and warm. This program includes singing, prayers, stories, and learning about the Torah portion of the week. Parents participate in discussions and prayer along with their children. This group joins KC Minyan at 12noon for a Torah service or Torah skit. This service will be led by Paul Wolf and parents.*

**KC Minyan for Grade 3 - Grade 6 and their parents, 11:15AM - 12:30PM**

*Kavannah and Competence Minyan is a chance for kids to learn new ideas, lead prayers and master them while exploring the great themes of Jewish living. Students volunteer to accept honors and to act out the Torah portion of the week. They sing traditional and contemporary melodies for prayers engaging in both simple and complex rhythms and tunes. Torah is often read or chanted, and students get a chance to take honors. This service is led by Joey Weisenberg, Rabbi Valerie Lieber or lay-leaders.*

**Grade 7 Students are expected to attend the sanctuary service most weeks** arriving at least in time for the Torah service and Musaf. 7<sup>th</sup> graders are also required to lead parts of the KC Minyan service 3-5 times per year.

### Shabbat Attendance Credit

Students are required to attend the following number of services during the course of the school year (Sept. – May)

- Gan and Alef – 8 services yearly
- Bet and Gimmel – 12 services yearly
- Dalet, Hey and Vav – 18 services yearly
- Miffan – 22 services yearly

All parents will be alerted by email from the Director in late fall and mid-winter about their children's attendance tally so that parents can remain aware of their child's status in fulfilling this requirement.

### Attendance Cards

To keep track of service attendance, every student will have an attendance card which is kept in a large tri-fold display on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor hallway of the Goldman Education Building. Whenever a student comes to a service at Kane Street Synagogue s/he should find his/her card and turn it in to the Family Service Leader, or place it in one of the memo pockets on Valerie's office door to get credit. If a student attends a service at a different synagogue, the parents should send an email to Valerie to get credit. Each time a child attends a service, their card will get a sticker so the children can follow their progress as well.

## Minyanaires

Students who attend 20 Shabbat or holiday services or more are named "Minyanaires." Through their dedication they enrich the community of Kane Street Synagogue, and their energy and enthusiasm helps raise the level of Shabbat services. All students who become Minyanaires receive a movie pass at the end of the year redeemable at Cobble Hill Cinema.

## Yom Siddur for 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders

Each year our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are given their very own travel copy of our prayerbook, *Siddur Sim Shalom*. They are presented with their inscribed siddur during services in the sanctuary on Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup>.

## Celebration Shabbat

One Friday each month families gather at Kane Street Synagogue to relax, pray, learn, schmooze and eat. Those who arrive before the 6pm service to enjoy snacks, drinks and schmoozing. Partway into the service, Rabbi Val and Meryl bring the children across the hall from the chapel to participate in a kid's oriented service and series of interactive stories. We all meet up again at the Kiddush where kids and adults who are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries that month receive a blessing from Rabbi Val. Kiddush is followed by 7:15pm dinner. Dinner is inexpensive so that as many families can attend as want to. It is easy to attend. You will be billed after the dinner, so you need not worry about using money on Shabbat. Please put these dates in your calendar and try to attend: September 16 (August and September birthday blessings), November 11 (October and November birthday blessings), December 23 (4<sup>th</sup> night of Chanukah), January 13, February 17, March 16, April 20, May 18 (May, June and July birthday blessings).

## Class Celebration Shabbat Evenings

Families are encouraged to attend Shabbat services when it is convenient. However, we also have scheduled Friday services when we particularly urge certain classes to attend. One class each month will be presenting a skit, story, or song to the other kids during the children's program; another class will be learning about the Jewish value of *hidur mitzvah*, beautifying a mitzvah by "hosting" dinner, that is helping to set up and serve Shabbat dinner.

Friday, November 11 – 6<sup>th</sup> grade presents at services; 3<sup>rd</sup> grade hosts the dinner

Friday, December 23 – 4<sup>th</sup> grade presents at services; 2<sup>nd</sup> grade hosts the dinner

Friday, January 13 – 5<sup>th</sup> grade presents at services; 1<sup>st</sup> grade hosts the dinner

Friday, February 17 – no classes present or host this month

Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade presents at services; Gan hosts the dinner

Friday, April 20 – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade presents at services; 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades host the dinner

Friday, May 18 – 1<sup>st</sup> grade presents at services; 4<sup>th</sup> grade hosts the dinner



**Alef celebrates Tu B'Shvat with an art project**

# Parental Involvement

## Parent Orientation and Parent-Teacher Conferences

We welcome parent's involvement and interest in the school. We encourage parents to come to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors before and after class to get to know your child's teacher. We host an orientation for parents Sunday, September 11 from 10 – 11am. Parents will have a chance to ask questions, meet their children's teachers and hear about the school procedures and new initiatives. Additionally, you will be invited to make an appointment on the days of parent-teacher conferences in late January/early February to discuss your child's progress and challenges.

### Orientation for Parents (kids are welcome too!)

- **Sunday, September 11, 10am – 11am.**

### Parent Teacher Conferences.

- **Monday, January 30:** Gan, Grade 3- 6. No classes will be held.
- **Wednesday, February 2:** Roshanim, Alef and Bet (Grade 3 – 6 will have classes as usual.)

## Awards Day

**Awards Day:** Awards will be given out in class (on the previous week for Roshanim, Alef and Bet) and we will assemble as a school to honor our teachers and teen assistants and give out awards to students for the Hebrew Scholars of each grade, the Mensch of each grade, and those who have attended services enough to be Minyanaires. Following awards we gather for make-your-own ice cream sundaes. Parents are encouraged to join us **Monday, June 4, 5-6pm**

## Community Building

Judaism is a culture of community as well as family. At Kane Street Synagogue we nurture the bonds of friendship that make being part of a congregation deeply rewarding spiritually, socially, culturally and educationally. We arrange social events for parents [without children] and for families to help foster community ties.

**Class Pot-Luck Dinners and Brunches:** During the year each class (parents, students and siblings) will gather once for a Shabbat potluck dinner or a Sunday brunch at the home of one of the families or in a park. This is a chance for everyone to have a chance to meet and spent a spirited couple hours playing and meeting one another in a relaxed atmosphere over food.

**Adult Cocktail Parties:** Sometimes it is great to chat with other parents without kids present so you can have an adult conversation. These events are yet-to-be scheduled.



The Yerushalayim Hebrew Class mugs for the camera.

## Volunteering

We look to parent volunteers for many tasks during the year. Your hours working to improve the children's learning opportunities, to lead fundraisers and to help build community are very important. Here are some of the ways parents can volunteer:

- Class Parents help arrange special events and projects. (Contact: Rachael Burton)
- Hosts of potlucks provide a homey atmosphere for the class to gather once a year. (Contact: your class parent)
- Shabbat Family Service Leaders help nurture the spiritual lives of the kids. (Contact: Valerie Lieber)
- Special Event participants help with Chanukah programs, award day and other programs (Contact: Valerie)
- Shabbat Dinner Volunteers help set up and serve at our monthly family dinners (Contact: Susan Radin)
- Auction Committee Volunteers help put on the party and solicit donations (Hedi Hruby)
- Fundraising Volunteers help with the honey sale, the Passover candy sale and more. (Contact: Norman Cohen)
- Mommy/Daddy Ducks help guide walking groups from school to Hebrew School. (Contact: Ro Johnson)

**If you are interested in volunteering, you can make a meaningful contribution to our Hebrew School. Please contact Rachael Burton, Parent Coordinator [rachael\\_burton@yahoo.com](mailto:rachael_burton@yahoo.com) Or Valerie [vlieber@kanestreet.org](mailto:vlieber@kanestreet.org)**

## Other Things to Keep In Mind

### Snow Cancellation

Hebrew School will be cancelled due to snow any time the public schools are cancelled. If it snows during the day or overnight and the public schools are not cancelled, it is your responsibility to call the temple office to inquire about cancellation. The decision whether or not to cancel will not be made before 2:00 PM. Call after 2:00 PM. We will make every effort to send out a blast email in a timely fashion as well.

### Snacks

Each afternoon the children receive a small snack to maintain their energy level and give them an opportunity to connect socially with their peers. Children enjoy this opportunity to "refuel" and to get to know one another and the teachers. One of our aims at Hebrew School is to create a real community: this means fostering a commitment to other Jews and helping build social bonds among the students as well as to teach them. Snacktime helps to achieve this. We offer a variety of snacks and try not to spoil a child's appetite before dinner. We strive always to have a fresh fruit option and include dried fruits, yogurt, hummus, carrots and celery, pretzels and from time to time we have a special holiday snack, and other favorites. If your child has an allergy, please indicate that on their registration form or discuss it directly with Valerie. For younger students, teachers will assist them in choosing an appropriate snack. Older students usually can discern for themselves, but we have adults available if there are any questions about ingredients.

### Tzedaka

"Tzedaka" literally means righteousness. We teach our students that it is incumbent upon all righteous Jews to give money to those less fortunate than ourselves. Therefore, at the beginning of each session of religious school the teachers pass around a tzedaka box so students may contribute some money.

Last year we distributed the collections to the Israeli Guide Dog Center for the Blind, The Leukemia/Lymphoma Society, Save the Children's Japan assistance to orphans of the tsunami, and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class gave Clif Bars directly to the hungry people they encountered in the neighborhood. During the 2009-2010 year we gave donations to American Jewish World Service for their Haiti earthquake recovery projects and to the North American Committee on Ethiopian Jewry to help Ethiopian Jews in Israel. During the 2008-2009 school year, our students voted in the fall to send their

tzedaka to the following 4 organizations: Israeli Guide Dog Center For the Blind; World Wildlife Foundation; City Harvest; The Thorn Tree Project.

Rabbi Hillel said, "The more tzedaka, the more peace." Please try to give your children some money each week or ask them to use their allowance or savings so that they can get into the tzedaka habit. Our tradition teaches: "if you have much, give much. If you have little, be not afraid to give according to that little."

We also integrate some hands-on community service projects into our classrooms and activities to teach the value of *gemilut chasadim*, acts of loving kindness. Please see the Mitzvah of the Month (MOM) projects on page 10 for an idea of the kind of projects the synagogue does and in which we participate.

## Kippot/Yarmulkas

The Kane Street Synagogue policy holds that all males must wear a kippah in the building. Our Hebrew School policy strongly encourages wearing a Jewish headcovering by females as well. Parents are urged to get a special kippah for each child that the students keep in their Hebrew School bookbag. Wearing a kippah in Hebrew School helps children transition into a sacred mindset, and it reminds students that learning about Judaism is special. It is also fun to wear a beautiful kippah or a cool yarmulke with a favorite sports team logo, superhero or musical notes. You can buy all kinds of kippot at Judaica shops or online, and it can be a great way for you and your kids to get ready for the Hebrew School year together.

### **Brick and Mortar Stores**

**Hecht's Judaica** – 1265 Coney Island Avenue, Brooklyn – an old fashioned Judaica shop which is warm and welcoming of non-orthodox Jews.

**J. Levine Judaica** – 5 West 30<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan – a beautiful store with a wide selection. Very helpful staff.

**Manhattan Judaica** – 62 West 45<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan.

### **Online Stores**

**Kidskipot.com** – made to order, reversible kippot with cool cotton patterned fabrics.

**Judaica.com** – a huge range of kippot in a variety of fabrics. Everything from Thomas the Tank Engine to Family Guy.

**Mayaworks.com** – a terrific social justice project employing poor Guatemalan villagewomen to make Judaica for fair trade wages. Beautiful multicolor kippot.

## Student Evaluations

Students will receive one written evaluation in late January. This mid-year progress report will help parents, students and teachers assess a child's successes and challenges. Students are evaluated on class participation, completion of assignments, attitude toward learning, understanding of content, Hebrew progress, and behavior and ability to get along with others. If you have any concerns during the year, you are encouraged to call your child's teacher or Rabbi Lieber.

## Fundraising

Hebrew School tuition covers only about half of the cost of running the school and family programming each year. The Hebrew School is otherwise supported by money raised through fundraisers, dues from all members, and other donations. The fundraisers allow us to provide high quality teachers, excellent textbooks, a full-time Director of Education & Family Programs and maintain a clean and comfortable space for the children to learn. Our dedicated Hebrew School Committee members and many other devoted parents plan and run these fundraisers critical to the success of our school.

We urge you to participate with your pocketbooks, your volunteer time and by reaching out to friends and family (grandparents are often delighted to help ensure their grandchildren's strong education!) to make our fundraisers work for the sake of our kids.

Please save the following date for our biggest fundraiser of the year, the annual **Goods & Services Auction: Sunday, February 12, 5-8m**. Other fundraisers to expect are the Passover Candy sale, the Purim

Mishloach Manot and the Rosh Hashanah Honey sale. Plus the congregation at large raises vital funds over the High Holy Days at the Kol Nidre (Yom Kippur Eve) Appeal and the Spring Journal.

## **B'nai Mitzvah**

Bar and Bat Mitzvah is a moving family occasion, a milestone for a child and cause for celebration for the entire community. Bar and Bat Mitzvah is a key life cycle for every Jew, and at Kane Street Synagogue we try to make it a meaningful moment to celebrate a child and his or her commitment to Jewish life. Bar and Bat Mitzvah is not the focus or goal of Hebrew School; it is one step along a lifetime of occasions and part of a lifelong process of education. The larger goal of Hebrew School is to inspire and educate children to become informed, passionate Jews who find enrichment and meaning in their Jewish practice and identity. In 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades students learn Haftarah chanting, the prayers of the Torah service and Shabbat Musaf and engage in Torah interpretation and commentary. These skills prepare them not just for leading a Bar or Bat Mitzvah service but also for full participation in this and other synagogues in the future. Families of 7<sup>th</sup> graders volunteer as a community in the neighborhood to actualize the values of tikkun olam that the Hebrew School teaches.

Families meet with the rabbis in the winter of 5<sup>th</sup> grade to learn more about B'nai Mitzvah in our synagogue. Between that time and a fall meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> grade families each family chooses a date with Rabbi Weintraub. They then begin to learn more about the process of education and the familial obligations.

Students study individually with Rabbi Sam Weintraub to prepare a D'var Torah and with a tutor to learn Haftarah and often Torah and part of the Musaf service beginning about 10 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.

## **Our Teachers**

Our teachers are recruited for their passion about Jewish living and learning, rapport with children and creativity. Some of our teachers have many years of teaching experience while some are newer to teaching, but each has enthusiastically embraced this calling. Every teacher is actively working to make the learning experience of the children of Kane Street Synagogue Hebrew School rewarding, fun and meaningful. Our teachers come from a variety of backgrounds: some are Israeli born, some American or Canadian born. Some are Ashkenazic while others are Sephardic or Mizrahi (from Middle Eastern countries). Our teachers represent a spectrum of religious belief and practice: many are life-long Conservative Jews; others are Reform Jews and still others are Modern Orthodox. Some resist obvious categorization. It is with deliberate intention that a diverse group of teachers is chosen. As a faculty team they represent a variety of paths to living a good Jewish life. They stand as role models for the children, and with each new teacher, children get to see a different model of authentic Jewish practice and belief.

Each Chanukah and again at the end of the year the parents collect money to give a small gift of appreciation to each of our teachers and the support staff to thank them for their hard work. Such kavod (honor), hospitality and warmth help to recognize the important role of teachers in the lives of the children, embody Jewish values and in the long run make our school a place where the best and brightest teachers seek employment.

## **Hebrew School Committee Governance**

Both professional staff and volunteer parents collaborate to insure the success of the Hebrew School. The Hebrew School Committee meets monthly to address curricula, programming, events, fundraising and new projects. The Committee considers nominees for new Members in the spring. Generally candidates for the Committee have demonstrated interest in event planning, fundraising or other Hebrew School community activities. The Committee has between 5 and 10 members and reports directly to the Kane Street Synagogue Board