

The Synagogue Journal

1856-2006

September 8, 2006

historicaljournal@kanestreet.org

Shabbat Ki Tavo

View the Contents of Issue 36 at www.kanestreet.org/historical_journal.html

Issue 36 Children

In this issue ...

Our focus is the congregation's dedication to teaching our children Torah and Jewish traditions. Five verses of Ki Tavo (Deuteronomy 26:5-9) overflow with a sense of gratitude, humility and dedication - values which Jewish parents and teachers labor to instill in the next generation. The journal highlights educational programs of the prior one hundred years, beginning in 1905 when Baith Israel moved from the Boerum Place Synagogue site to its present location and hired Rabbi Israel Goldfarb as cantor and Sunday school principal. By November of that year, Rabbi Goldfarb had established the Talmud Torah for the study of Hebrew. (Issue 5, "Brooklyn's First Jewish School" features schooling in the nineteenth century. Issue 20 discusses Confirmation, and Bar and Bat Mitzvah celebrations)

The journal presents articles in chronological order, starting with education during the Goldfarb years: a 1929 ad for the Talmud Torah; a 1935 annual report by School Board Chairman, Isaac A. Goldberg; a history of the schools written by Rabbi Goldfarb in 1956 for the Centennial. We are fortunate to supplement the school archives with personal accounts given recently by graduates who attended the schools during the Depression years.

Graduations, Confirmations, Bar Mitzvahs and youth programs all halted for two decades when the sole members were the devoted old stalwarts of the congregation. There were no children to teach. In the 1970s young families began to join the congregation once again, and new leaders reorganized the school. Rabbi Elliott Rosen recalled in his eulogy for Arthur Lichtman, the momentous decision to start a Nursery School. Rabbi Rosen's eulogy recaptures the energy of those times. The Nursery School boosted membership and led to the establishment of the Prozdor, a Sunday and afternoon school. Prozdor means "gateway" or "corridor" in Hebrew. As its name implies, Prozdor's mission was to give students a strong introduction to Jewish learning. The following congregants have guided the Prozdor school since its beginning in 1975: Arnold Badner, Isaac Druker, Howard Schneider, Miryam Wasserman, Carol Levin, Rena Schklowsky, Penny Owen, Dean Ringel, Ellen Bowin, Arthur Mahler, Rene Stoller, Louise Lukowsky, Michael Stoller, Leslie Wilshire and Tracy Mackow. In 2005 the school's name changed to the Kane Street Hebrew School. Currently, the Hebrew School Committee chair is Andrea Glick. The school's mission continues to provide a gateway towards higher learning.

Today, the Children's Programming Committee, chaired by Ann Powell and Anne Maureen Sarfati, coordinates all matters concerning children at the synagogue. The journal explores the many youth programs: Pre-School Director Joyce Heller contributes a piece on the "twos" and "threes" now enjoying classes at the Goldman Educational Center; Jennifer Newfeld, our Director of Education and Family Programming, writes about the Hebrew School; Youth group advisor Dina Garfinkle writes on the Brownstone Brooklyn USY and Kadima programs for teens. High school senior Julia Mayer's account of her experiences in Israel as a scholarship recipient wraps up the issue about Kane Street opportunities for children.

Special thanks to: Rabbi Sam Weintraub, Vivien Shelanski, Susan Rifkin and Jack Levin for editorial guidance, Robert Martinez for his continued technical support; authors Jennifer Newfeld, Joyce Heller and Dina Garfinkle; students from the 1930s: Joseph Goldfarb, Belle Goldfarb Lehrman and Albert Socolov.

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Student Life at the Synagogue: 1920s - 1930s

BIAE graduates Joseph Goldfarb, Belle Goldfarb Lehrman and Albert Socolov recall their student days at the synagogue during the Goldfarb years.
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The Kane Street Nursery – 1971

This loving account by Rabbi Elliott Rosen about past-president Arthur Lichtman and the shul’s first nursery school was read at a memorial service for Arthur in 2003
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The Hebrew School Today

Kane Street’s Director of Education Jennifer Newfeld shares highlights of the last year’s school program.
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Kadima & BBUSY

Dina Garfinkle, advisor to Brownstone Brooklyn USY, writes on how Kane Street Synagogue and Park Slope Jewish Center came together in 2001 to form a new local chapter of the national organization of United Synagogue Youth and why the group has flourished.
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Teen Scholarship

Through the Ben and Martha Friedman Scholarship Fund, Kane Street Synagogue encourages teens to learn more about their Jewish heritage. We include the essay that clinched the 2006 award for Julia Mayer and the email she sent from Israel.
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CONGREGATION BAITH ISRAEL ANSHEI EMES

OUR TALMUD TORAH

(Organized 1905)

WITH the conclusion of the present school term, our Talmud Torah will have rounded out 24 years of effort in the field of Jewish education of which it can well be proud.

During the 24 years of its existence, our Hebrew School has raised a generation of Jews, conscious of their Jewishness, proud of their ancestry, loyal and faithful to the Jewish cause. A number of our former pupils have, after leaving our portals, embarked upon the higher studies of Hebrew Lore; one has become a rabbi of prominence, others are preparing themselves to become authorities in Jewish education, while the rest have carried away from our classrooms an appreciation of Judaism which will remain with them for the remainder of their lives.

Our Talmud Torah is not a Hebrew School in the ordinary sense of the word. It is more than that. It is a reservoir of Jewish inspiration. In our School the pupils do not only learn to "daven." They come to sing Jewish songs, to hear Jewish stories, to familiarize themselves with Jewish current events and Jewish problems the world over. Our pupils became impregnated with a sense of Jewish responsibility, a feeling of sympathy for suffering Israel and a deep love for our ancestral homeland—Palestine. At the same time we seek to implant into the hearts of our boys and girls the spirit of American idealism and patriotism, a love for the principles upon which this great country was founded and a deep respect for its traditions and laws.

If you could but see and hear our pupils at our Sabbath services; if you could but witness their Sabbath afternoon gatherings at which the responsive reading of "Thillim," the "Minchah" services, the "Sholosh S'udos," or Sabbath meal, are participated in by happy boys, singing "z'miroth" and discussing among themselves Jewish problems, you too would be proud of our Talmud Torah.

If you want YOUR children to remain Jewish and to bring you immeasurable happiness by their future conduct, send them to our Talmud Torah and we will do the rest.

**Our School Is Yours.
Come and Enjoy Its Facilities.
Send Us Your Boys and Girls.**

The officers of the Talmud Torah: Harris Kohen, Chairman; Jacob Kronman, Treasurer; Rabbi Israel Goldfarb, Principal. Teachers: Abraham Lieberman, William Martin, Samuel Leibowitz. Assistant, Max Martin. Secretary, Beatrice Schwartz.

1935 Report by School Board Chairman Isaac A. Goldberg

This four-page report on the Sunday School and Talmud Torah concludes with a recommendation to charge non-members a ten dollar per annum fee for children attending the Sunday School and to retain free tuition for member's' children. The congregation had supported a free Sunday School open to all Jewish children from 1862 to 1935.

SCHOOL BOARD B. I. A. E.
Annual Report, Dec., 1935

The School Board acts as the administrative body of the Talmud Torah and Sunday School. It meets at regular intervals and decides all matters relating to the Schools.

The Talmud Torah at present has forty pupils. Classes range from beginners' Hebrew through Rashi.

The Hebrew School has two teachers, Mr. Meyer Straus and Miss Miriam Kobilansky.

The average monthly income of the Hebrew School is about \$130. There are three free pupils and a few who pay less than the required fee, being permitted to do so, after proper investigation, by the School Board.

The Talmud Torah has weekly assemblies and celebrates all Jewish holidays. Attendance at Sabbath services is compulsory and the older children act as monitors for the younger ones.

The promotion exercises were held on Thursday afternoon, June 27th, in the presence of the parents of the pupils. Prizes were awarded, a program was presented, and refreshments were served by the Sisterhood.

The Sunday School charges no tuition fee and has a voluntary staff of teachers, most of them trained in the Sunday School proper. The Course covers the Bible, Jewish History, Current Events and Customs and Ceremonies. Several changes have been made in the curriculum this year so that the course in history continues right on and covers the history of the Jew in present day America. A High School course, covering two years, has also been inaugurated so that the Sunday School graduates can cover the field of Jewish life in a more advanced and mature manner. After completing the High School course, the students then enter the two year Post-Graduate course, and upon graduating therefrom, are

eligible to serve as teachers in the Sunday School.

The School's annual Chanukah entertainment will be presented this year on Sunday afternoon, December 22nd.

The Religious initiation of the Graduates took place on the first day of Shovmoth, Friday, June 7th. After affirming their loyalty to Judaism, the graduates were presented with Bibles by the Superintendent on behalf of the School. Graduation and closing exercises were held on Sunday afternoon, June 9th. Twelve pupils were graduated from the Sunday School and seven from the post-graduate class.

All Jewish holidays were celebrated during the year. Especial attention was paid to the Maimonides Octo-centennial. Prizes, awarded for the best essays on Maimonides, were won by three graduates.

A meeting of parents of the pupils was held in February, and, although the attendance was disappointing, the plan of organizing a Parents' Association is still being held.

On Sunday, May 14th, our Sunday School participated in the annual Lag B'Omer Field Day conducted by the United Synagogue, Brooklyn Council.

On Wednesday evening, June 26th, the Sunday School teachers held their final meeting where they were presented with gifts by the School in recognition of their services. Talks were delivered by Mr. Moss and Mr. Sumner and by the officers of the School and School Board, Rabbi Goldfarb, Mr. Goldberg, chairman, Mr. Leibowitz, supt.

One of the most important innovations this year is the Sunday School library. Funds, raised by donations and contributions from the School treasury, are used to purchase books suitable as supplementary reading for the children of the Religious Schools.

Because of the lack of classrooms, temporary partitions have been erected, and by easing the congestion on the auditorium floor, have been very helpful.

A drive is at present being undertaken to have all Sunday School and Talud Torah pupils come to Synagogue services and participate intelligently in them.

Another drive is being conducted to increase the enrollment of the Sunday

School, which is at present about 100. For this purpose the principals of the public schools in the neighborhood are being circularized by the School with the view of getting the names of all Jewish boys and girls in the neighborhood. The parents of these children will then be approached and urged personally to register their children in our schools.

The officers of the Schools, in addition to Rabbi Goldfarb, principal, and Mr. Goldberg, chairman, are Dr. Joseph Scholsky, treasurer of the Talud Torah, Mr. Samuel Leibowitz, superintendent of the Sunday School, Mr. Arthur Moscovitz and Mr. Sol Brown, associate-superintendents, and Mr. Al Weinstein, treasurer of the Sunday School.

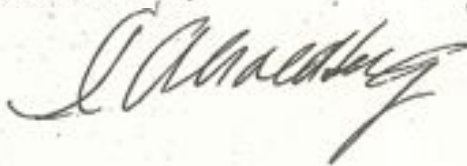
In conclusion, the following recommendation is made regarding the Sunday School. For many years we have noticed that numerous people in our neighborhood send their children to our Sunday School but do not contribute in any way to the upkeep of our institution. After consulting with our Rabbi, the conclusion has been reached that we ought to charge a fee to all children attending our Sunday School but whose parents are not members of the Congregation.

A reasonable fee would be ten dollars per annum for each child or, in case where more than one child of the family attends, the fee should be ten dollars for the first child and five dollars for any additional child in the same family.

This is the practice in most Sunday Schools in the borough, with the exception that all other Sunday Schools charge a fee which is a great deal more than the one proposed for our Sunday School.

This plan is submitted to you with the hope that you will give this matter the careful consideration it deserves.

Respectfully submitted,



December 8, 1935

Supplements

Supplement I
Members of the School Board

Mr. I. A. Goldberg, chairman

Rabbi Israel Goldfarb, principal

Mr. Jacob Friedman

Mr. William Friedman

Dr. Joseph Scholsky

Mr. Bernard Eisenberg

Mr. Julius I. Kahn

Mr. Harris Kohen

Mr. Benjamin Berriman

Mr. Samuel Leibowitz

Mr. Arthur Moscowitz

Mr. Sol Brown

Mr. Al Weinstein

Mr. Nathan Hoffman, sec.

School History at the Centennial

Rabbi Israel Goldfarb wrote numerous histories of the congregation. The following text appeared in the Centennial Banquet Journal, 1956.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

The first thought of the congregation on taking possession in 1862 of their own home in which they felt such pride, was the establishment of a Sunday School; for then, as now, the religious training of the young was considered among the paramount duties. The Sunday School which has since been in existence without interruption, has ever been the particular pride of Baith Israel. It would be quite impossible to overestimate the good it has accomplished. Many of our prominent Jewish citizens who have occupied eminent positions in every walk of life received their first and only religious training in the class rooms of the Baith Israel Sunday School. It was there where the foundation of their future success was laid, and where their character which brought them distinction and honor was first built and developed. The roll of scholars of Brooklyn's first Jewish Sunday School reads like a roll of honor because of the prominent names it contains.

The School has always been most fortunate in obtaining the services of superintendents whose zeal and earnestness made it a real power for good. For the first twenty-five years of its existence the Sunday School was under the superintendency of Julius Corn, under whose able administration it prospered greatly. Others who served as superintendent of the School with distinction and ability were: Joel Krone, Lewis Jacobs, Michael Furst, E.N. Sonnestrahl, Samuel Lederman, Max Brown, Samuel Cohn, Nat N. Tuck, Harry G. Anderson, Aaron Danglo, Louis J. Moss, Ralph Copland, Julius I. Kahn, Harold L. Turk, Samuel Leibowitz, Jennie Schwartz, Arthur Moscowitz, Nathan Hoffman, Dr. Herbert Moscowitz and Corsel Strahs. To these, thousands of men and women throughout the city owe not only their knowledge of God and Judaism, but also a generous and feeling heart. For the children of the Baith Israel Sunday School are not only taught the tenets of their faith but also the practice of philanthropy. Charitable endeavor was always encouraged among the children who were trained at an early age to sympathize and feel with the distressed and needy.

The social side of the school was emphasized by means of children's clubs of every description, weekly assemblies, entertainments and festival celebrations. The school possessed also a library with a fine collection of books for the use of teachers and pupils. The school is housed in a separate building at 236 Kane Street, having accommodations for about 500 children. Important innovations of recent years were the Post Graduate course, which trained the Sunday School graduates to become the future teachers, and a High School Department.

The teachers of Baith Israel Sunday School have always given their services voluntarily. Their enthusiasm for the school, their devotion to its ideals and their eagerness to do things were greatly responsible for its efficiency and success.

Unfortunately the falling off in the school attendance which was due to the unfavorable change in the neighborhood necessitated a retrenchment in the School's elaborate program. For the time being only a skeleton organization is maintained with a readiness to expand its activities should a change for the better warrant it

THE TALMUD TORAH

The excellent work of the Sunday School, praiseworthy as it was, did not seem to satisfy many of the parents who wished their children to obtain a more thorough religious training based on the study of Hebrew. Accordingly a plan was set afoot agitating the establishment of a Talmud Torah, or Daily Hebrew School, where children may receive a thorough Hebrew education. On the Eve of the Day of Atonement of 1905 Rabbi Israel Goldfarb preached a strong sermon appealing for the establishment of the school. This had its effect. A committee composed of President Michael Salit, H. Alexander, Mrs. H. Sonnestrahl and Rabbi Israel Goldfarb visited the members, soliciting donations for the school which opened on November 26, 1905, with 90 pupils on the rolls. The first officers of the Talmud Torah were as follows: H. M. Copland, Chairman; Louis Summer, treasurer; Mark M. Solomon, Secretary, and Rabbi I. Goldfarb, principal. Others who have served as chairmen of the Talmud Torah in the course of the years were: H. Alexander, Michael Salit, H. Goldsmith, Joseph Schnittka, H. Kohen. I. A. Goldberg and Louis Kronenberg. Mr. Kohen who served from 1917 to 1936, has made the Talmud Torah his lifework. His zeal and devotion to the Hebrew School and his deep interest in the welfare of the children have earned for him the esteem and the love of both teachers and pupils. He helped to raise the standard of the school to a high plane of efficiency. The school conducts classes from 4 to 6 P.M. The subjects of instructions are: Hebrew reading, writing and speaking; the Prayer book; translation of the Bible; Jewish Music; Jewish History and Religion.



Student Life at the Synagogue: 1920s - 1930s

Joseph Goldfarb and Belle Goldfarb Lehrman, children of Rabbi Goldfarb, and Albert Socolov spoke with Carol Levin about schooldays at the synagogue during the Goldfarb years. The following remarks are excerpted from conversations of March, May and June 2002. To read more about this period, see Issue 20 of The Synagogue Journal "Bar Mitzvahs of the 1930s" and "Confirmations of Faith."

The Synagogue Schools

Joseph:

"We had a Talmud Torah and we had a Sunday school. The Talmud Torah was a small weekday school. The kids came for two hours, M-T-W-TH afternoon. That was the Hebrew School. And maybe the two hours were split between two classes. It was probably only one hour for any one student. The younger ones were sent out and the older ones came in. Four-to-five and five-to-six were the hours. There were no assemblies for the Talmud Torah. There were just the classrooms. The teachers were paid teachers and some were professional teachers. The pay was so low.

"At the end of Talmud Torah, in May or June when the school year was ending, they had public examinations for pupils in each class. For the kids it was a very terrifying experience. They had folding chairs here (ed. note: in the middle of the room facing the rabbi's desk). The kids would be called in class by class. And along this wall (south wall) there would be another line of folding chairs for invited guests and parents to sit on the side. The classes would come in and then there would be an examination. My father or the teacher would ask them certain questions and hear the questions and then hear how well the children would respond or perform. If someone springs a surprise, it's a challenge for the kids to come up with the right kind of answer. After ten minutes or so that class would go out and the next class would come in."

"The other school was a Sunday school. They met every Sunday for two hours in the morning, and it started for kids of about six or seven, more or less parallel with the public school classes, and they stayed through eight grades. And there was a graduation. (CL: This was Confirmation, which occurred on the 1st day of Shavuot. A description appears in the section on holidays) And then there was a post-graduate which was a teachers training course. Once they passed the eighth grade they were considered competent in a year or two of "study" they became eligible to teach the younger grades. They taught the bible stories, the Genesis, the book of Exodus, that material. Usually every grade, every child had a text book which he was supposed to look at and study. There were volunteer teachers. Tuition was five cents a week. The teachers were not paid. The reward that the teachers got was that every year when the congregation had its annual dinner dance, which was an annual function that continued years and years. Each year the teachers were invited as guests of the congregation, no charge. It was a big gala social affair. We had probably ten, twelve classes. The post-graduate teachers were sixteen, seventeen years old. Some stayed on for a number of years and some never came back."

"They bused in the kids from other neighborhoods, Jewish neighborhoods, and then bused them to school there and then bused them home."

Albert:

"I had the impression in retrospect that there was some conscious effort to make it seem like you were in an Eastern European shtetl shul with a long bench, and kids sitting at the bench. It was hardly your vision of contemporary educational methods. It was very, very structured. The teachers made the laws."

"Usually there'd be an assembly after the Sunday School service. Around noontime, they'd come down and the rabbi would speak to the kids. There would be some kind of program based upon whatever holiday was approaching or occurring. On the second floor, there was an office that was a meeting room for the board of trustees, the Rabbi had an office off that room, and then the other rooms were Talmud Torah classrooms. The partitions in the classrooms were wooden on the bottom, and then they had glass above them."

"The Talmud Torah took place after school, everyday. When I was little, I was walked there by a neighbor. My mother helped my father in the store."

"I went to the rabbi a couple of times a week the year prior to my bar mitzvah, (in addition to) Talmud Torah every weekday afternoon and Sunday school. If my mother took me to services, I went to services on Saturday. I don't recall specifically how many and whether it was frequently. I did have other things to do on Saturday, and I was going to do them."

"My recollection is, it [Talmud Torah] was mainly boys, and yes, there was some separation by age. It was a pretty substantial curriculum. I remember I had books and workbooks. I was taught to read and to write in Hebrew. There were no craft projects, no singing. There was singing in the Sunday School."

"The Sunday School had a curriculum in English. There was Samson Bendole's book, The History of the Jews, the holidays, the Yiddish religion from the point of view of Americanization learning about historical events. There were more

kids who went to the Sunday school than the Talmud Torah. There were teenagers who attended, although I didn't choose to continue after my bar mitzvah. I never participated in any youth groups or field days. There may have been things that took place without my participation or awareness. There were boy scouts that met there."

"Mirsky was an old world teacher. They'd play a lot of pranks on him because he was rigid and very European. It was easy to make his life miserable. The Sunday school teachers were young women and young men. I think Rabbi Goldfarb's daughters were teachers. They tried to put together a faculty. It wasn't that easy."

Synagogue Attendance

Joseph:

"There was no mandatory rule for Talmud Torah and Sunday school students to attend services. My father used to coax them. He would urge them, and cajole them and everything else, but there was no discipline. He would encourage them to come. It was voluntary. Some came, and some didn't come. We didn't attend each other's bar mitzvahs."

Belle:

"There were mixed classes [Talmud Torah].... It was every afternoon, Monday through Thursday from 4 to 6. ... we got the same speech, for thirty years, the same speech. 'Now tomorrow night is Shabbos, and we come to shul and we wear our best clothes when we go to shul because shul is very special. And Shabbos is very special. Now if that didn't sink into those kids! Every Thursday, we had assembly the last thing ... downstairs in the big room. Father gave his speech and everyone went home."

Children's Choir

Joseph:

"The first few years of the Congregational Singers the caps sat in the front row and they could turn around and lead. And the others sat in the second, third and fourth rows. There were boys singing two-parts. The choir sat in the front pews on the left aisle. When girls were added to the choir, some of the men objected to the mixed voices, and as a compromise, the choir was moved to the balcony. The choir, girls and boys, stood in front of the silent organ and faced the congregation.

I sang in that choir for many years. I sang with them when they were still a children's choir for about a year or two. I must have been very young at that time. And then, I didn't sing with them at first when they were downstairs here, but I did join them later on after my voice changed, and we were up there for many years."



The Kane Street Nursery - 1971

Rabbi Elliott J. Rosen, Kane Street Synagogue's spiritual leader from 1970 to 1974 was unable to attend the funeral of past-president Arthur Lichtman in June 2003, but asked Rabbi Sam Weintraub to read this note in which he reminisced about the challenges of running the shul then.

I have the fondest memories of Arthur. We were really "shul running buddies", meaning that we were both equally naive as to how to run the place. I was a newly minted rabbi, he was a hotshot downtown lawyer, and neither one of us had quite prepared for our new roles, particularly his as president. So the two of us, president and rabbi, would meet frequently, and talk endlessly and comfortably about what to do with this woolly mammoth called Kane Street. He was so incredibly down-to-earth and while he was keenly respectful of my *position*, he was as straight with me as I'm sure he was with his business associates.

What I remember best and most vividly is how we nearly single-handedly started the Kane Street Nursery. I think it was 1972. [ed. note: records show it was 1971] Basically it was a question of where we were going to send our own kids -- his Adam, my Aliza. There wasn't a nursery school in the area that we liked -- and none that had even the hint of Jewish content. Believe me, it was folly to do this. The building was falling apart. Mr. Kahn, who really ran things, thought we were nuts. This was something that had never been done before and we didn't have a dime. And we weren't sure that anybody would ever take a chance to send a kid to this kind of place.

Arthur was determined, and my utter doubt that we could ever pull this off was only assuaged by his constant activity and certainty that we were going to have a nursery school. I remember vividly that one night we were sitting in the shul and needed to make a final decision -- to go or not to go.



Kane Street Kids

by Joyce Heller

Pre-School Director Joyce Heller has eighteen years experience in early childhood education. She received her Masters in education from Hunter College.

Here on Kane Street Synagogue's third floor, Kane Street Kids' young children are becoming a part of Kane Street's present and future. All morning they are busy with the "work" of children blessed with a peaceful environment in which to learn and grow: they have been exploring their environment, building with blocks, painting freely, putting together puzzles, and creating nutritious pretend meals for the dolls and for each other in the dramatic play area. All this is done under the attentive eye of experienced and caring teachers who guide the children as they develop, grow and learn.

A closer glance at the children reveals that at Kane Street Kids, the Jewish content is an inherent part of the day. The science and art explorations, the books and the songs all reflect that the children at Kane Street Kids are living and breathing the cycles of the Jewish calendar and the Jewish day. Each morning, as a part of their circle time, the children say the Shema and the beginning of Mode Ani, and sing morning songs that reflect Jewish life. Throughout the day, the children say the blessings when they wash their hands and have snacks. Each week, the children sing songs of Shabbat, and make Kiddush.

Jewish life is an inherent part of play in the Kane Street Kids preschool. For example, as the children play in the play area, the wooden Shabbat set is part of their daily play; as they grow to feel at home in their room, the posters on the wall showing Israel are part of their everyday classroom life, and in the library, when the children pick up a good book, they choose among books that reflect Jewish themes. As the children play outside in the courtyard, they play beside the gorgeous stained glass windows of the shul. As they play in the social hall on cold days, they are playing in a room where congregants join together for important moments, happy or sad, in the life of the community. All of this helps the children understand that being Jewish is a positive and everyday part of their lives.

Kane Street Kids opened its doors in September 2005 with fourteen families and one classroom of two-year-olds. In September 2006, we will add a three's class and more than double the number of children. Class size is small, no more than ten children for two-year-olds and no more than fourteen children for three-year-olds. Some children come for the mornings, and others stay for the afternoon. In the afternoon, our two's and three's merge into one class. All teachers at Kane Street Kids are educated and experienced, but just as important, they care about each child. All head teachers have a Jewish background and a commitment to passing on Jewish values and practices to the next generation. Our assistant teachers reflect diverse backgrounds, but share this commitment.

Kane Street Kids brings Jewish values to life by trying to live these values. Kindness and respect, for oneself, one's peers, one's community and all communities – these are the most important lessons our children learn. We are a welcoming school, embracing children and teachers of all backgrounds who wish to be part of this Jewish environment. We are a diverse and welcoming school. We hope that more congregants will enroll their children in the school, that more school families will become congregants and that Kane Street Kids children will become part of Kane Street Synagogue's future, G-d willing.

Daily life at Kane Street Kids reflects a balance between structure and flexibility. Teachers establish a comfortably familiar routine for the children. Within that structure there are many opportunities for each child to learn and explore individually, in small groups and at circle time. Mornings begin with guided free play, also called choice time. The children are encouraged to choose an activity or area which interests them. As they play teachers circulate, responding to the children's choices, observations and creations. The library, art and writing center, building area, dramatic play, and science areas are generally open when the children arrive. For circle-time the whole class comes together to discuss themes and activities children have been working on, to sing, to move, to read a book. Often, during circle time the teachers will develop the concepts related to special activities the children explored earlier in the morning. For example, if the children explored various leaves and compared their colors, shapes and textures that morning, they might read a book about leaves and their colors, shapes and textures; if the children made matzoh covers, they might then sing a song about matzoh and Pesach.

Kane Street Kids warmly welcomes families and children of all religious approaches, perspectives and backgrounds, Jewish or not Jewish, and welcomes families with diverse approaches to Judaism as long as parents are comfortable with the traditions that are presented during the children's day. Most important, all the children here receive quality and caring attention throughout the day in a loving environment. As part of Kane Street Kids, the children are warmly embraced by and Street Synagogue, a living and growing Jewish environment welcoming to all who share in its values and vision.

BBUSY & Kadima – What an Excellent Trip It's Been

By Dina Garfinkel

Dina Garfinkel, advisor to the combined youth program of Kane Street Synagogue and Park Slope Jewish Center, was an active participant in USY through high school. She spent six years as counselor and rosh eidah at Camp Ramah in Wisconsin and a year as madricha for Nativ, the Conservative Movement's year program in Israel. During the week she's a project manager at a software company in Manhattan.

It started on a sunny Sunday morning in late September of 2001. Ten 9th and 10th graders from the Cobble Hill, Park Slope, and Windsor Terrace area gathered in Prospect Park to play games like 'Tear the toilet paper and share some things about your self', 'Psychiatrist', 'Slide tag', and more. It was the beginning of a new group that would regularly bring together kids from Park Slope Jewish Center and Kane Street Synagogue for social, community service, Israel awareness and religious activities. We became Brownstone Brooklyn USY, a new local chapter of the national organization of United Synagogue Youth the youth wing of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. These groups had existed in the past in some shape or form, a small USY and Kadima chapter at Kane Street Synagogue, and an unaffiliated youth group at Park Slope Jewish Center. For the first time the two synagogues came together to form a joint chapter...and the rest is history.

Those 9th and 10th graders are all now 2nd and 3rd years in college, and many have served leadership roles in the program. The leaders of the chapter have come from both Kane Street Synagogue and Park Slope Jewish Center, and in many cases chapter co-presidents represented both synagogues respectively. Each year there has been a fairly equal representation of kids from both synagogues, and we also attract participants from other local synagogues. It's been a great place for kids who have grown up knowing each other in Hebrew school, baseball and soccer league, public school and other local activities, to come together as a Jewish youth group and do lots of good stuff.

Our most popular programs have been the holiday parties and other activities we have planned for children from 'Horizons' (a domestic violence shelter), our camping/canoeing trips, and a regular Friday night program called "Shabbat Dinner & Games". Our programs with Horizons began in 2001, with trips to the zoo and a gathering on Martin Luther King Day. By the next year we had planned our first Holiday Party for the kids, and it was attended by over 20 USY'ers volunteering their time running games, painting faces, decorating cupcakes, wrapping gifts and more. Our interaction with the Horizons group continued over the years, and we have always enjoyed spending time with them. In the fall of 2002 we went on our first camping trip, and 15 kids from both Kane Street Synagogue and Park Slope Jewish Center were accompanied by me Dina Garfinkel (the youth programs advisor) and two parent chaperones and camping pros. We traveled upstate and stayed overnight in a beautiful camping area. We got plenty of time in for hiking, campfires, swimming, and getting to know each other better. We've also had very popular canoe trips in the spring. In the winter of 2002 the first "Dinner & Games" night was held at the home of Dina Garfinkel. Ten energetic kids crammed into Dina's small apartment for Shabbat dinner and then a couple hours of improv games, ice-breakers that were too cool to be called ice-breakers, and more. Since then we've held "Dinner & Games" at the homes of other USY families, at both Kane Street Synagogue & Park Slope Jewish Center, and in the sukkahs of both synagogues. Our most popular "Dinner & Games" was held at Kane Street Synagogue during sukkot of 2004. More than 20 kids squeezed into the Kane Street sukkah for dinner, singing, and a great evening.

In the fall of 2001 the Kadima program began, which is a group for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders from both synagogues. Over the years our most popular programs have been scavenger hunts around Brooklyn and our yearly "Casino Night", where Kadimaniks can gamble the night away with plenty of fake money. Since the fall of 2002 the program has been run by Dina Garfinkel with the assistance of USY'ers from Kane Street Synagogue and Park Slope Jewish Center.

This year we are starting a new program for both USY and Kadima, a partnership with Castle Senior Living at Grand Army Plaza for "Adopt a Grandparent". USY'ers and Kadimaniks will each visit the center once a month (with an additional extra visit for interested USY'ers) and spend time with one of the residents of the center. Castle Senior Living has not done this type of program in the past and is very excited to get to know the kids. This in addition to a lot of other exciting programs for both USY and Kadima should make for an exciting year!



Teen Scholarship

Kane Street Synagogue annually awards funds to teenagers of members “to engage in a new activity, during the coming year that contributes to the teen’s ... increased knowledge of Judaism, and their overall Jewish pride and identity.” The Ben and Martha Friedman Scholarship was established in 2002 by Mordechai and Ellen Friedman in memory of Mordechai’s beloved parents. Past recipients and areas of study are Joshua Marx (Ramah Seminar in Israel), Dara Young (Holocaust studies) and Natan Skop (Berkshire Institute for Music and Art, www.bimasummerarts.org).

The 2006 scholarship was awarded to Julia Mayer who attended the synagogue’s Hebrew school, the Prozdor, from 1999 to 2001. Julia wrote a compelling essay on her desire to, “establish a personal and spiritual connection to Israel and the Israeli community.” We reprint her proposal and the stirring email she sent July 30, 2006 during the war. Julia is entering her senior year at Bard High School Early College, a public school in the lower East Side.

To learn more about the trip contact her at juliasisraeltrip@gmail.com

Julia’s 2006 Essay

The beautiful thing about Kane Street, my Saturday nights out with USY, the years I spent in Prozdor and the time I spend leading musaf on the bimah on Shabbat is that I feel a different connection to Judaism every time. My family has always lit candles every Friday night and gone to synagogue every Shabbat. The group of kids that I sit with at shul every week ranges from public school to yeshiva educated, from left wing to right wing, and from otherwise affiliated to only being involved in Judaism through synagogue. But we’re all connected by our one-day a week together.

Yet even with all of this around me, with all of the support and certainty I have, I still feel like there is one thing missing from my Jewish identity: a hard and fast connection to Israel. I’ve taken classes about Israeli politics and gone to camp with Israeli kids; I went to Israel with my family six years ago and while I remember the trip vividly, I was too young to really gain a sense of connection from the trip.

I have a lot of friends who have gone on summer programs to Israel, and I’ve noticed time after time that they come back changed. They’re stronger and more confident, and there’s an overall sense of pride that develops in just one summer. There’s something incredible about that. I have pride in the person I am, and I have pride in my Judaism. But there is so much more to see, to learn and to do.

I want to go to Israel to study Israeli politics, and find out what the social life is like, and how it’s similar to and different from my own. I want to go to Israel because I think I’ll learn, and I think I’ll have fun while I’m doing it. But most importantly I want to go to Israel because for many years I’ve been *told* answers to so many questions I have. I can be told where this all comes from and where it’s all leading to. But I think I’m old enough to start searching for the answers myself, to experience the answers directly. And I think the best way for me to do that is to establish a personal and spiritual connection to Israel and the Israeli community.

I plan to go to Israel with Nesiya, one of the many incredible summer trips available for teens. Nesiya encompasses the typical tours that any of the teen programs will do, but it also adds an artistic and creative element to the trip. You are expected to immerse yourself in Israeli culture and respond to it. I am an artistic person and I would like to spend the summer understanding Israel and expressing myself in all of the ways that Nesiya suggests, with writing, discussion, visual and theater arts and much more. I think that Nesiya is the best program for me to create the connection and community that I need.

I don’t know where I’m going to go to college, or where I’m going to end up after college. But no matter where it is, I want to be connected enough to bring Judaism with me. If I don’t go to Israel, I’ll still have that connection to the extent that I do today. But I have so many questions and there is more that I want to feel and understand.

Julia’s Email from Israel: July 30, 2006

As most of you know I’m currently in Israel on a trip called Nesiya. This weekend is my home stay weekend (I’m in Maccabim with family friends) so I have access to a computer for the first time this trip. I hope everyone is having a good summer and I thought I’d just say a quick hello and let everyone know I’m doing well.

I'm not going to pretend right now that Israel is a comfortable place to be, but I'm glad I'm here. You can't really understand the magnitude of what's going on from outside (as I've noticed looking at the New York Times in the last few days. If you're curious about another perspective, check out Ha'aretz-Israel's daily newspaper at www.haaretz.com)

Our trip has been entirely changed due to what's going on in the north. We won't be going above Jerusalem as a group (to the dismay of many of the Israelis on my bus.) Instead we find ourselves back in the desert time and time again...I know the Negev better than most people would care to having now seen it from all sides, at sunrise and sunset and during the hot middle part of the day. I say this all to assure you of my safety and security on Nesiya.

The day the two soldiers were kidnapped (starting this whole conflict) we were much further north and were supposed to be spending the night in the northern town of Tsfat. Instead we went to a town called Tiberias, where we arrived around 8. We ate dinner, played some guitar and at 10:30 one of the senior counselors stood up to make an announcement. "We don't mean to alarm anyone, but everyone needs to be packed and on the bus in seven minutes." As we packed, one of my roommates and I started talking about what was going on. The Americans were much more frightened than the Israelis who still saw the situation as status quo. "What the Americans don't get," my friend Negba said to me, "is that in one month you're all going home where it's safe. The Israelis, we're just going home."

Tiberias was hit with ketuysha rockets the following day. Now all of that being said, I reiterate that Nesiya has been keeping us incredibly safe and there is no need to worry about my safety.

There is something about being here right now that I find incredible. The country pulls together in the face of war much differently than the US does. The best example I can give is this: looking through *The Jerusalem Post* yesterday a large add that caught my attention. People in the south, volunteering to house people from the north. People who live alone, couples and even families from all over the south have opened their homes to strangers until this war has ended. There is a sense of community and bonding all over the country and even within our small group of 100 or so Nesiyaers that has taken place because of what's going on.

I can never understand and because of that can never express the fundamental separation that exists between the Israelis and Americans in the Nesiya community. One of my counselors reminded me that the difference between him (an Israeli) and one of our other counselors (an American) is that an Israeli can be called into the army at any moment. If his reserve number was called today he would be on a bus to wherever they needed him, and he would be happy to be there. That's something the Americans can't really understand.

I'll be happy to tell you more about the responses here when I get back but I haven't got much time right now. I'll finish by saying that I'm having an absolutely fabulous time. I've been all over the south which is beautiful (done enough sunrise hikes to last me a lifetime) and spent a week in Jerusalem. This week we'll be learning about the Bedouins then we'll be back in Jerusalem. The group of kids I'm with is amazing and we have really really nice counselors as well. I can't wait to tell you more about the trip but time is ticking and I've got to leave Maccabim and get back to my group in about half an hour.

Feel free to respond to the email but know that I won't have access for the next two weeks while I'm still in Israel. I want to stress again that I'm completely safe and secure here and that I'm having an amazing time. I hope everyone else's summers are going well and I can't wait to here about them.

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Julia

