

Good evening and thank you. I am pleased to deliver the Education Report as your Director of Religious Education

Thank you to the Hamilton Jewish Federation for the continued support of our Religious School and Educational Programming that we deliver at Temple Anshe Sholom. Please note that it is through generous donations of Temple members to the Hamilton Jewish Federation campaign that we are able to benefit from the financial support of Hamilton Jewish Federation.

Thank you to the many efforts of the Education working group (above and beyond our monthly education working group zoom meetings). You continued to provide guidance and parent input throughout the school year and over this summer, as we developed new safe reopening and behaviour policies for our school families. I offer a very heartfelt thank you for the many, many efforts of the Education Working Group; Chair- Joanne Warren, Members- Rhonda Dahan, Donna Sampson, Paula Korman, Karen Sniderman, Gillian Burman, Carrie Sniderman and Alyssa Sampson. If you are passionate about the success of our Temple School and the nurturing of our future generations, I encourage you to join our education working group. The working group meets on the first Wednesday of each month, virtually at 7pm. Our first meeting is October 6th at 7pm.

Though our doors were physically closed for the whole 2020-2021 school year, our family homes were wide open, inviting friends and teachers to learn together virtually in our homes, in our twice a week zoom classes. Our enrollment held steady at 21 students, and students were so excited to see each other each week, especially at times when we were in full lockdown and they were unable to attend their day schools in person. We continued offering classes for Kindergarten through Grade 9 every Shabbat morning online, as well as small group and one to one Hebrew & Judaica classes on Wednesday Afternoons. I cannot say enough wonderful things about the fantastic teaching staff at Temple, as they continued learn new and engaging strategies to deliver unique Hebrew lessons, Judaica activities and small group gatherings in our Zoom Classrooms. In our primary grades, weekly family lessons were also provided to keep our students engaging with Judaism in their home, and to shorten their classes online to avoid the dreaded zoom fatigue! Thank you to Rebecca Sampson our Arts specialist, Ellen Orgel, our Primary class teacher, and Sonja Botnick Hebrew Teacher, Rabbi Cohen and Cantor Baruch all of whom are returning to our in person or Virtual Classrooms this year.

In March we held a very successful annual Passover Flower sale, and through flower sales, donations to the Religious School Fund, school tuition and our generous Hamilton Jewish Federation Education Grant, we ended the year with a fiscally responsible balanced budget. My sincere thanks to all Temple members who have supported the Religious School with flower purchases, cards in memory, blessing or condolence and personal donations for projects of interest. Because of your financial support, we are starting this year with 2 new HEPA air filtration units, fully funded filter replacements, Plexi glass dividers for each class, many, many more hands on materials for our play-based Primary program of learning, and 3 tents for outdoor learning. To maintain a safe learning environment, we will be purchasing 3 laptops to enable access to our in-class program for our students that may need to remain at home if sick and unable to attend class. The laptops will also be used for students to access our online Hebrew enrichment activities while learning in class together. We are still looking for a sponsor for this purchase if you are interested in supporting this safety and inclusion initiative. This week, we also realized that 9:30-12:15 is a long time for students to learn without a snack, and we need a covid-safe way of making kiddush and motzi. Would you be interested in sponsoring a weekly class kiddush?

Our school doors have been closed for a year and a half, and just yesterday we cautiously flung our Temple doors open and welcomed 21 students from Junior Kindergarten through Grade 7. In a few weeks we will begin our senior program with 6 additional students participating in grade 8 through 10 classes with me and Rabbi Cohen. Cantor Paula has continued on our Shabbat teaching team as the Sha'ar B'nai Mitzvah Teacher, as have our Ontario Certified (or very soon to be certified) teachers, Ellen Orgel and Rebecca Sampson. An amazing part of our program is the continuation of our students as madrichim, classroom leaders, and this year 3 senior school students are returning to learn and develop their own leadership skills in the classroom setting. Our growing school numbers reflect 3 new families that have recently moved to the Hamilton area, and 7 students that are brand new to our school. Our Temple Community is growing and of our 27 students, once again, 10 of them are in Kindergarten and Grade 1!

With the addition of masks and frequent hand-hygiene, we are learning ways to safely sing & dance together, and to engage in hands-on learning with friends. These are the activities that make learning at Temple Anshe Sholom fun, keep students excited to attend classes each week, and create lasting memories that become a piece of a child's Jewish Identity. At our Shabbat morning program students learn Torah & Middot (values) through the arts; history, traditions, and community through class activities; and prayer fluency and understanding in their Hebrew classes. Most importantly, our school goal is to engage students in activities that build lasting Jewish friendships and love of Jewish traditions. After Thanksgiving, Families with children age 1-4 are invited to begin Shabbat morning with me, as we continue to offer our drop-in Tot-Shabbat Virtually; at 8:30am on ZOOM! Wednesday Hebrew and Torah classes will also begin after Thanksgiving, with our students meeting online for study of the weekly parasha and Hebrew Fluency lessons in small group and individual classes.

Over the last 2 years, our learning space has become more open, more accessible, more welcoming, and we will continue to change and adapt as our program of Jewish learning evolves and morphs throughout the years to come.

Highlights of the 2020-2021 school year:

- Provided families with all materials needed to fully participate in online learning activities, and home learning virtual classrooms to extend learning as a family
- **Co-Hosted a Chanukah at Shalom Village program.** Together with Beth Jacob, we prepared songs and poems about love and caring for our senior family, gathered virtually to pray for healing and celebrate Chanukah together, and shared the video with Shalom Village residents while they were enduring a painful lock down
- Other Temple- Beth Jacob programs included:
 - Tu B'shevat succulent planting and learning about JNF, with all plants and materials generously donated by Tropical Expressions
 - Amazingly entertaining Virtual Purim Schpiel with Judy & David Gershon- this shpiel included a total of 15 families from the 2 synagogues, and was attended by more than 50 households!
 - Shavuot learning session and cheesecake baking demo
- Our whole school took part in a Channukah coat & food drive. We collected a trunk-load of food for the Hamilton Kosher Food Bank and donated 4 garbage bags full of winter coats to local shelters.

- For Purim, we involved our students in creating Matanat l'evyonim bags for Homeless individuals. Our Junior students were given a bag and asked to collect items from their home, or purchase new, to put in a bag to handout from the car when they saw someone in need.
- We sold & delivered over 80 arrangements for our Passover Flower Fundraiser
- Continue to integrate our Kindergarten and grade 1 students into our Wednesday session. This continues to be very positively received by families, which is reflected in regular attendance of our youngest students
- Involved our high school youth in the facilitation of all our zoom classrooms and in Tot Shabbat programming
- Held a beautiful Confirmation Kabbalat Shabbat where our 3 senior students led us in prayer and study. Mazel Tov to Alyssa Sampson, Julian Orgel, Eli Sniderman and their families.

Thank you for your continued support of our vibrant and growing Religious School,

Dora-Ann