

National Jewish Early Childhood Network



Conference 2007 Follow-up Newsletter

From the Presidents

Dear Colleagues,

Our arrival in Chicago for the 2007 NJECN Conference was filled with excitement. Everybody was ready for a week of learning, hard work and fun.

Tuesday's Tour Day was packed with informative visits to schools modeling intentional teaching via Reggio and developmental learning which was integrated with Judaism. Our hostesses were gracious and spent a lot of time teaching us about their philosophies and practices. Wednesday's Conference Day was rich in content and varied in perspective. Our focus this year was centered on "The Pedagogy of Shema". Our gifted speakers, Dr. Alise Shafer, Rabbi Karyn Kedar and Maxine Handelman did an outstanding job of helping us to understand the ways we can help connect to each other and to God.

Jenna Kalkman and Nancy Manewith planned and implemented the Tuesday and Wednesday programs. We are so appreciative for their hard work, attention to detail, and impeccable organization. All participants were grateful for the unique learning experiences.

The week of learning and sharing together provided us with many chances to create stronger relationships with new colleagues as well as reconnect with old friends. The Tuesday evening reception, "Jazz it up in Chicago" was a wonderful celebration. It provided us with an opportunity to catch up with colleagues, enjoy good food, and honor the richness of our organization. Thanks to Pat Nisenholz, our Shabbat Dinner was inviting, warm and full of friendship and, congeniality. The food was good, the entertainment was perfect, and the room was decorated beautifully.

We are grateful to the Chicago community for making us feel at home and to contributing in many ways to the fine conference that we had.

The Program Chairs, Pam Gorin and Jordana Bernstein are working hard to plan next year's tour day and conference and promise a stimulating and inspiring experience. Look for details and information coming to you soon.

We hope you all are having a peaceful and productive year and we look forward to seeing everyone next year in Dallas.

As always, NJECN pledges to provide opportunities for early childhood Jewish educators from around the country to network, reflect, and learn from each other. We are eager to help NJECN sustain the strength and vibrancy of its past and to contribute to its future growth.

Sincerely,

Paula Sayag, Co-President

Leslie Slan, Co-President

Nina Chaitin, Immediate Past President

Thank You

There are so many people to whom we are grateful for their contribution in making Conference 2007 in Chicago so successful...

Thank you to Programming VP's Jenna Kalkman and Nancy Manewith for your endless hours of hard work and dedication to provide us with a week of outstanding and enlightening programming.

Thank you to the directors, staff and students of our Tuesday tour day host schools, BJE at B'nai Tikvah, Gates of Learning and Moriah ECC.

Thank you to Pat Nisenholz for planning our beautiful Shabbat experience and to Rabbi Nina Mizrahi, Alice Honig, the Shirettes and Ella Jenkins for enhancing our Shabbat.

Thank you to our terrific speakers, Alise Shafer, Rabbi Karyn Kedar and Maxine Handelman.

Thank you to Mark Horowitz for an inspiring D'var Torah at the pre-conference session.

Thank you to all the volunteers who were so helpful on our pre-conference day, fulfilling any task asked of them.

Thank you to our vendors for providing items for raffle at our pre-conference day.

Thank you to those who provided program summaries for the newsletter so that all our members can benefit from our programming, even if they were not able to attend.

Wednesday, November 7th

Speaker Summaries

Submitted by :

DJ Jensen, Director, Center for Jewish Education, Baltimore, MD

Sally Heckelman, Music Specialist, Congregation Beth El, Bethesda, MD and Temple Sinai, Washington, DC

Cheryl Horn, Beth Shalom Early Childhood Center, Potomac, MD

Dr. Alise Shafer,

Director, Evergreen Community School, Santa Monica, California

"Head, Heart and Soul: What it Takes to Listen"

How do we inspire wonder? Through stories and experiences, Dr. Shafer shared her theories. She used examples of the "Blue Bike Story" and the "Bug Story", which shows that not every moment requires teacher involvement. She showed us that children learn from experiences, not always from directed activities and the importance of critical listening and trust.

Dr. Shafer's approach to learning is uplifting and inspiring, and shows a strong commitment to and respect for children. Additionally, her streaming video enhanced her workshop as well as added depth of meaning.

Rabbi Karyn Kedar

Senior Rabbi, Congregation B'nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim, Glenview, IL

"Shema: Listening to the Whispers of God"

Rabbi Kedar explained the meaning of Shema based on four principles:

- ◆ Shema -We have access to the divine - we just have to listen
- ◆ Yisrael - We are the children of Yisrael, and like Jacob we need to struggle with God. Things are unfair and we should question why.
- ◆ God's name -is written in letters we can't pronounce, signifying the mystery of "beingness".
- ◆ Echad - One. To remind us that God loves us. To remind us of the abundant love from a spiritual reality.

Rabbi Kedar emphasized that we need to tell children "You are loved by God". We need to create a vocabulary to talk about God and that there is a divine out there watching over us. This gives teachers an impetus to talk about God and share memories with students about how God is with us all the time.

Maxine Segal Handelman

Consultant for Early Childhood Education, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

"Partnering with Families - Guiding the Journey"

Getting parents involved in Judaism - start now, start early. This is the message that Maxine Handelman shared with us during her presentation. "Families are on a journey and we are the bus drivers". Preschool is a re-entry into Judaism for many parents. It is our responsibility to steer them to continue their journey. It is important to get parents involved early through programs such as:

- ◆ Milchig moms nursing groups
- ◆ Infant massage classes
- ◆ Infant play groups

It is important to address Jewish concepts of "b'tzelem Elokim" and "kavod".

Maxine's presentation was entertaining, informative, dynamic and inspiring. It further justified and proved the power of what we do and how we affect families, not just children.

Thank you....
to the following individuals, schools, synagogues,
agencies and companies
for continued support of NJECN

Benefactor

Community Foundation for Jewish Education
of Metropolitan Chicago
Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
Temma Kingsley
Michael Klein, Constructive Playthings

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Jewish Community Centers Association
Anne Weil

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Karen Juncker Albert
Isabel Baker, The Book Vine for Children
Mara Bier, Partnership for Jewish Life
and Learning, Washington, DC
Barbara Goldstein
Robin Mayes, Ellison
Nanci Freedberg, Promise Haggadah
Gratz College, Lyndall Miller
Vicki Perler, in memory of Irene Dicker's husband Norman
Michele Lifshen Reing, Judaica Kit Company
Shelley Remer, Adas Israel Gan Hayered
Kar-Ben Publishing, Joanie Sussman
Marsha Newstat
Susan Topek
Jennifer Zukowski

Contributor

Nina Chaitin
Esther Elfenbaum
Nancy Goldstein
Pamela Gorin

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Mark Your calendars for
Conference 2008

Dallas



November 4-8

Featuring

❖ Tuesday School Tours ❖

❖ Wednesday Pre-Conference Day ❖

L'Chayim:

Reconnecting to the Joy of Teaching

Featuring

Mimi Brodsky Chenfeld

❖ Friday Evening Shabbat Dinner ❖

Location to be announced soon!

Job Announcement ~Germantown Jewish Centre

Synagogue-based Early Care and Education Program in Philadelphia, PA, is in search of a Director. For more information on the position contact Rachel Gross at 215-844-1507x12 or by email, director@germantownjewishcentre.org. You can email or mail a cover letter and resume to Rachel Gross, 400 West Ellet St., Philadelphia, PA 19119.

We are pleased to announce the launch of our new website

www.njecn.org

Look for monthly e-newsletters by Sue Topek and Barbara Goldstein,
upcoming conference, membership and registration information