

PROFILE Liz Greenberg

Among the passions of the Greenberg/Hall family – Liz, Eric, Ethan and Becca – are education and the great outdoors. They are especially thankful that Liz and Eric decided in 1999 to live and work in Vermont, where our beautiful little corner of the world has, thus far, managed the corona virus scourge better than most of the rest of America. They felt fortunate that last summer they were able to spend so much time outdoors, from improving the grounds in their own yard to camping at several of the state parks. “We were on the water kayaking (all of us) and sailing (Eric and Ethan’s interest),” Liz adds, “and Becca followed a training schedule for cross-country and ran most days.” Father and son even ventured beyond Vermont on a backpacking trip in the Adirondacks. Still, COVID restrictions derailed their traditional annual trip to visit family and friends at a campground in Michigan.

The Greenbergs are from the Detroit area, where one set of Liz’s great-grandparents lived since the 1880s. Liz, who will turn 50 next summer, grew up the youngest of three siblings in Farmington Hills, a northern suburb of Detroit. Her mother, after a stay-at-home stint, worked as a business manager at a mental health clinic; her father was a professor of film at Oakland Community College. (He passed away unexpectedly at 88½ from non-COVID related causes in mid-August). Her parents were both born in Detroit, though the Greenberg family tree is rooted in the ultra-Orthodox community of Mea Sharim in the Holy Land. “My grandmother, who had been teaching in Detroit for several years, took a sabbatical in 1929 for a steamship tour to Palestine with other family members,” says Liz. “When the ship docked in Haifa she met my grandfather, who was working there. He was quite taken with her and pursued her, ultimately taking time off work so he could follow her as she toured. They married there and returned to the US together, where he first worked for his father-in-law and later worked in sales.” In the ensuing years, all but two of her grandfather’s four siblings left Palestine, ultimately settling in California.

In Farmington Hills, the Greenbergs belonged to Adat Shalom, a dynamic Conservative synagogue. Liz celebrated her bat mitzvah there in 1984, followed by confirmation in 1987 and involvement through eleventh grade in a Hebrew high school regional program. She participated in a summer program in Israel through B’nai B’rith International in 1988. As an active B’nai B’rith member, she served as president of the local chapter in her junior year and third vice president of the regional board as a senior. Jaqui Rose, a new member of OZ, was a friend at that time, and Liz was happy to become reacquainted with her in Burlington.

In 1993 Liz earned an undergraduate degree in English Literature from the University of Michigan, following in the footsteps of her father and older siblings, all of whom preceded her as U of M alumni. A week at Camp Michigania Walloon, the Michigan Alumni Association’s summer camp program for alumni and their family members, has been at the center of the Greenberg/Halls’ summer activities for many years. The camp accommodates up to 100 visitors every session, offering Alumni Association members a week of recreational and educational opportunities and the chance to reconnect with out-of-state family, friends and other alumni. Though the tradition was interrupted in 2020, the family looks forward to resuming their annual camping trip to the Midwest.

As an undergraduate at Michigan Liz attended Friday night services at Hillel and headed the UJA campus annual campaign. Her stint with UJA set her to San Francisco for a weekend and to Israel for three weeks during winter break. Tamarack Camps, established and run by the Fresh Air Society of southeastern Michigan, lured her during the summer. The camps, which provide enriching Jewish camping experiences for children and families through a wide range of special overnight programs, include Teen Travel Trips and Outpost Camps. Having been a camper there for five summers, Liz worked

in main camp for two summers and in out-of-camp programs for four summers, during which she supervised a 5-week bus trip to the Rockies and a 7-week tour of Alaska for 16-year-olds.

Her love of the outdoors led her to seek employment at Nature's Classroom, a seasonal outdoor educational program in southern New England. She joined the Nature's Classroom staff at Camp Washington in Lakeside, CT in 1993, where Eric Hall was the site supervisor and her boss. He and Liz worked together as friends and colleagues for a couple of years before their relationship turned romantic. Eric was raised in Acton, MA, along with an older brother and younger sister. As a middle schooler he moved to Fairlee, VT with his father and brother a couple of years after his parents separated. His father remarried, adding a half-sister to the family; they all still live in Vermont. Eric graduated from Hanover High School over the border in New Hampshire, and earned his Bachelor's degree in Physical Science Education from UVM with a minor in geology.

Eric's first teaching position, which he held for three years, was in eighth grade math and science in Woodstock. He later taught eighth grade science at the Barre City Elementary School before making the switch to technology, serving as the technology coordinator for the Waterbury Duxbury Schools for 11 years. This is his ninth year as the technology integration specialist at Mount Mansfield Union High School in Jericho. Liz received an MA in Education from Antioch New England Graduate School in Keene, NH in 1988. Her first teaching experience was a year-and-a-half-long term substitute position in Fairlee.

When they were ready to get engaged, five years after they met, Liz convinced Eric to ask her father for her hand. "My dad appreciated this old-world formality and kept it a secret from my mom until the ring my grandmother had left to me was removed from their safe deposit box and resized." The ring contained a diamond a jeweler cousin had gotten from Egypt and was her grandmother's engagement ring, which Liz inherited at 15 when her grandmother passed away. She and Eric married in April of 1999 in a small family event outside of Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Shortly after their marriage Liz started a job in Starksboro. "Robinson Elementary School proved to be the place for me," she says. "It's like it was meant to be." This is her 22nd year there, all but five years in a multi-age fifth and sixth grade classroom. For nine years, through Ethan's and Becca's early childhood, Liz job shared and worked half-time. She resumed her full-time position in 2006, when Becca was in kindergarten. "I am deeply committed to this small school and its community," she says.

Having lived in Windsor and Waterbury, the Greenberg/Halls moved to their home in Huntington in December of 2000, the year after Liz began teaching in Starksboro. "Living here gives us the best of Vermont," she believes: "a rural setting in a community we love, with access to all that Burlington offers." As a civic-minded citizen of her town, Liz has served as a select board reporter for *The Times Ink! of Richmond and Huntington*, a bi-weekly publication, and has brought her experience of the outdoors to the Huntington Search and Rescue Squad. Participation in the squad, which is under the auspices of the Fire Department, has included monthly trainings for the past two-and-a-half years.

Liz has always loved to write. Her special interest is in creative writing, where she focuses on fiction geared to fourth through eighth graders. She has attended workshops, conferences and retreats sponsored by *Highlights*, the respected educational publication engaged in quality children's literature. Having completed five novels over the past decade, her self-evaluation reveals that her writing has improved over the years, and she is currently in the process of reworking the latter three of her literary attempts and searching for an agent.

Before they became members of Ohavi Zedek the family attended High Holy Day services and other lifecycle events here, including Ethan's bris in 2002 and Rebecca's baby naming in 2006. They joined the congregation soon after Becca was born, when Ethan was a first grade Hebrew School student, and Liz served on the Hebrew School Committee for several years when Rabbi David was principal. She notes that Eric, who is not Jewish, appreciates being warmly welcomed into OZ and receiving the extra blessings bestowed on a non-Jewish parent during the bar or bat mitzvah service. "Liz and her family have been huge supporters of OZHS through the years," Director of Youth Education Naomi Barell says. "Both Ethan and Becca regularly attended Hebrew School, Becca was a NADAV intern and is now a *madricha*, (classroom assistant) as her brother was for many years. Eric and Liz never fail to offer any kind of assistance for OZHS events." As the parent who did most of the driving, Eric logged many hours behind the wheel to and from the synagogue, often carpooling with the Coffey/Silver and Giroux families.

When Ethan celebrated his bar mitzvah in May of 2015, visiting family and friends looked forward to seeing the Lost Mural, which they'd heard and read about; however, the lobby was closed off at that time to everyone but the conservator, who was cleaning and restoring small sections of OZ'S historical treasure. Liz's dad, a great lover of Jewish history, was especially disappointed. Liz had sent him information about the first time she'd seen the mural in its original setting in the building on Hyde Street and he'd seen the video of the big move to OZ. At Becca's bat mitzvah, four years after Ethan's, guests were able to enjoy kiddush directly under the biblical Tent of the Tabernacle, as depicted in the mural. "I have a very special memory of standing next to my father in the lobby with our arms over each others' shoulders during the kiddush," Liz says. "He had made donations to the mural project over the years, most recently in the spring."

Ethan, now 18 and a 2020 graduate of MMUHS, is currently working at the Part 2 after school program at Richmond Elementary School. He will be attending Temple University's prestigious Boyer School of Music next fall. While both of his parents are musical, "performance has not been a passion for us like it is for Ethan," his mom says. Ethan's principal instrument is trombone; he sings; is self-taught on the keyboard, electric bass, guitar and ukulele; and has won high school awards in composition.

Becca, 14, is a cross-country runner. She first became involved in running in elementary school through Girls on the Run Vermont, an after-school program with trained volunteer coaches. She ran cross country through middle school, then trained over the spring and summer to prepare for her first season as a high school student. Becca is currently enjoying her first year at MMU and has racked up personal records at her first two meets this fall.

Aside from their traditional summer trip back to Michigan, the family has enjoyed traveling together over the years. They have visited national parks, the Grand Canyon and Costa Rica. Three summers ago they spent a memorable three weeks in Israel, touring with a guide and visiting in Haifa with their cousins, descendants of Liz's grandfather's brother with whom they've stayed in contact. They also camped under the stars in the desert with their guide one night, after a day riding camels into the wilderness.

Now that Vermont schools have cautiously reopened, Liz has gone back to work full-time. "Even with current restrictions the kids are joyous," she says. "They need the structure, stimulation and social time that a regular school day provides." Just what the doctor ordered for every one of us: structure, stimulation, social time and – perhaps most important of all – the joy of togetherness.

~ Judy Hershberg

