

Hebrew School

Summer is here! And believe it or not, this tends to be a very busy time of year for me. It is when I do most of my planning for the coming school year. And this year is no different. But actually, it is.

The pandemic and its subsequent regulations will definitely impact our programming for the 2020-2021 OZHS year. With careful consideration, we have decided to start out our classes online in September.

OZHS is all about community. Our students, parents, teachers, *madrachim* and clergy make our Hebrew School a place where kids learn and play together, a place where parents chat in the hallways, drink coffee and eat bagels together, a place where teachers share ideas around a table together, a place where our teen *madrachim* hang out with their friends together, a place where we pray and sing with clergy together and where I get to laugh with the kids together.

COVID-19 does not allow for 'together', not in any real sense of the word. And so we will hold our community together in different ways come the fall. We will take a new approach to our curriculum that includes theme and project based learning, outdoor socially distant gatherings and monthly kits for families including recipes, art supplies and other materials. Parents are not expected to homeschool their children, just get them online at the right time and in the right place and we'll do the rest!

We'll be using our Shalom Shavuot extended curriculum unit as a model. It was a very successful endeavor that included singing, prayers, stories, art projects, cooking, games, movement and discussion. Participating students, ages 5-11, learned more about Shavuot than I ever did (up until about six weeks ago)! It was a holistic approach that brought together many ideas and learning modalities.

Once conditions allow us to be together under one roof without the stresses of the pandemic we will easily be able to pivot our program for in-person learning. I am counting the days...

In the meantime, stay safe, stay healthy, wash your hands and enjoy all that Vermont has to offer over the summer. (See page 2 for Bar Mitzvah project)

~ Naomi Barell
Director of Youth Education

Hebrew School student Orion Cooper sews cloth masks to donate to UVM Medical Center for his bar mitzvah project.

