

The story of your child's creation.

**Merav Dill, Shelicha for JewishColumbus and parent of 2 CJDS students:** מודה אני

**One of my favorite tefillot is** לפניך מלך חי וקיים שהחזרת בי נשמתִי בחמלה רבה אמונתך **Modah Ani, because it reminds me** that “*Modah*” (Thank you) should come before “*Ani*” (Myself), and that everything we do, we should do with compassion (Chemla/Rachamim). It reminds me that at the end of the day, it is our *Emunah*, faith, that keeps us alive, חיים וקיימים . Not just alive חיים , but living a meaningful life, קיימים . **So, as you receive your own first siddur, I use this prayer to wish you** to remember to be thankful, think about others with compassion, and live a meaningful life.

**Rabbi Mitch Levine, Rabbi of Agudas Achim: A. My favorite prayer is a bracha thanking Adonai for...** the exceptionally beautiful and exceptionally unusual Bexley white squirrels I sometimes see, **B. Because it reminds me ...** that uniqueness is worthy of blessing. **C. And/So, as you receive your own first siddur, I share with you my blessing dilemma over a white squirrel.** *Either I say the blessing for exceptional beauty or the blessing for the exceptionally strange. Which means more, the wonder that God's world includes this squirrel for its beauty or because it is so unusual?*

**Or Mars, Vice President, The Wexner Foundation and parent of 3 CJDS Alumni:** My favorite tefilla is Shema because it tells us to pay attention to the oneness of everything! We think we are separate, but we are not! We are all connected. As you receive your first siddur, I bless you with knowing that we are all part of the oneness that we sometimes call God.

**Rabbi Hillel Skolnik, Senior Rabbi of Tifereth Israel and parent of 2 CJDS students:** One of my favorite b'rachot is hal'luyah because I love that every living thing in the world has the power to praise God. Frogs, trees, cows, ants, fish and every person can say words of praise just like us. So as you receive your own first siddur, I use this prayer to bless you with spirit to praise God just as well as every living thing on the Earth, and the wisdom to learn from the words of praise that you'll hear from them all.