

# Temple Isaiah – Annual Education Report 2018-19

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Submitted by:

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Content:

## Preschool

Tamar Andrews, Director of Early Education - Tamar@Templeisaiah.com

## Religious school

Rabbi Zoe Klein Miles, Interim Director - Zoe@templeisaiah.com

## Religious School Director Search Committee

Sharon De Mayo, Vice President of Education – Sharon@sharondemayo.com

## Adult Education

Rabbi Zoe Klein Miles - Zoe@templeisaiah.com

## Preschool - Tamar Andrews, Director of Early Education

The preschool enjoyed a very successful year both academically, communally and financially. We ran 14 regular preschool classrooms and 5 Teddy Bear (Parent and Me) classes, all of which were fully enrolled. We had a total enrollment of 320. We currently employ 55 teachers in classrooms, specialists for Judaica, dance, and music and have an O/T and speech therapist. Our class structure will change slightly next year as we eliminate the Older Preschool category and as such, delete one pre-k and add one more toddler class so we will have five total two's classes next year. We will also be extending hours to 4 pm with extended care operating from 2:30-4 pm.

Our school year saw professional development for the purposes of strengthening developmentally appropriate practices, especially surrounding the Jewish holidays. This included less cookie cutter projects and more child-directed work with a strong emphasis on fine motor skills and STEM. Teachers have been working on their own set of professional protocols and it was decided that teachers would need an annual total of 21 hours of CEU's to continue as lead teachers. We have worked hard as well on the outdoor spaces in the preschool

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with a successful Spruce up for Spring campaign that allowed us to purchase outdoor furniture, bikes, equipment and toys.

We had some really great highlights this year as well. The biggest ones were the class coffees, Night at Tamar's, the installation of our new playground structure in the sand yard, Tzedakah for Shoes, Thanksgiving Market, Mitzvah Run, and increased the availability and work of the Caring Community. This includes an almost weekly distribution of homemade chicken soup to those that are ill, grieving as well as those celebrating the birth of a new child.

We had many teachers and admin planning large staff and community trainings. This included Carol running a second series of the Special Needs Symposium, teachers providing STEM and curriculum training at national conferences and to school districts such as Garden Grove USD and LAUSD.

A new program that begins at the end of our school year and will continue throughout the summer and if successful, into the school year, is Shabbat Shira, a program for 6-12-month old on Shabbat morning with music for the child and a caregiver with sibling supervision on the yards.

Our annual trip to Palm Springs is for Shavuot this year and at the time of this writing, we have over 300 people attending.

The preschool is fully enrolled for the fall with a waiting list with the exception of our parent and me (Teddy Bear) program.

Lastly, PAC continued their great work this year. Here are some of the accomplishments:

- **SUPPORTING OUR BELOVED TEACHERS & KEEPING OUR BEST TALENT**

PAC formed a subcommittee to re-examine our policies around education grants for teachers. We have restructured it to reward our well-performing, long-term teachers and give an incentive for teachers to stay at Isaiah.

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### - **PAC POLICIES' COMPENDIUM**

For the first time ever, PAC put together a book of all its policies in the name of transparency so parents and teachers can easily access them.

### - **CLASS REARRANGEMENTS**

Public School TK/DK programs have changed the age demographics of our students. For example, next year we will have only one DK class instead of the usual two. At the same time, we are seeing an increased demand in our two-year-old classes. Therefore, PAC approved a policy that did the following: 1. Remove the designation of “Older Preschool” and combine them with the Pre-K classes for a total of 4 Pre-K classes. (Students matriculating from the Younger Preschool currently go to either Pre-K or Older Preschool but not both.) The 4 Pre-K classes and the 1 remaining DK class will all get *Siyum* (culmination ceremony.) There will be an additional 2-year-old class, bringing the number of classes for that age group up to 5.

### - **TUITION INCREASES**

PAC approved Tamar’s requested 3% tuition hike for new students of returning preschool families and a 6% requested increase for new students of new preschool families.

### - **CREATING A CULTURE OF GIVING**

This Spring, PAC led the first-ever preschool fundraiser that was a smashing success and raised over \$30,000 for upgrades within the preschool.

### **Religious School - Rabbi Zoe Klein Miles, Interim Director**

- **Students:** 459
- **Teachers:** 30 including Hebrew specialist, Hebrew Through movement specialists, song leader, art specialist.
- **Teaching Assistants:** 28. Teens who have grown up in our school and have stayed and help out in the classroom, often leading lessons and helping in all parts of our program.

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- **Grades:** Tot - 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - Tot Religious School is a twice per month class for children who are 3 years old.
  - Pre-Kindergarten is a weekly class for children who were not 5 by September 1<sup>st</sup> and graduated from preschool so they can continue being in a Jewish environment.
  - K- 3<sup>rd</sup> are weekly classes offered either on Tuesdays or Sundays.
  - 4<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> meet twice a week on Tuesdays and Sundays.
  - Our teens in grades 7-10<sup>th</sup> come on Tuesday nights. They enjoy dinner together while they socialize and connect with friends followed by class.
  - 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grade once a month class where teens learn about day to day issues that affect them and their friends.
- We are one of the largest schools in West Los Angeles.

### Programming Highlights

- **Hebrew Through Movement** – Our students are surrounded by Hebrew. They practice moving to commands and as they grow, the list of words grows with them, eventually reaching words from prayers to bring the level of understanding to a higher level.
- **L’Dough Vadough** – Students in grades 4-9 meet with Holocaust Survivors and while braiding challah, learn the stories of the survivors.
- **Social Action work**
  - 4<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents learn together about issues of homelessness; families prepare breakfast and bring it on a visit to two homeless shelters where it’s served while getting to know the residents.
  - 5<sup>th</sup> graders and their families learn about Upward Bound House, an organization that helps provide temporary housing for families with children. Isaiah families donate what is needed to decorate the home so a family who was homeless will move in to a lovely decorated apartment with everything they need.
  - Teens – Social Justice Field Trips for 7 – 9<sup>th</sup> graders in partnership with Tzedek America:

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- **October 7, 2018: Food Justice Tour** - students learned about food deserts and food injustices in Los Angeles through the experience, of growing, eating and making food.
- **December 16, 2018: Thrift Shopping with a Purpose** - students learned about Social Enterprises and Non-Profits by shopping at thrift shops and meeting the people who work at the non-profit's headquarters.
- **March 24, 2019: Supporting People with Special Needs** - students visited various non-profits and social enterprises that work with children and adults with varying special needs. Ending the day by working alongside special needs adults while helping them sell their products on Venice Beach.
- **May 19, 2019: Immigration and Refugees, A Deeper Look** - students ate at a restaurant owned by refugees and hear the owner's story, met DACA recipients and met organizations doing work to help the immigrants and refugees in our country, had an encounter with an ICE agent.
- **Teen Wellness** - 3-Part Series in partnership with URJ 6 Point Sports Academy, 10<sup>th</sup> Planet Jiu Jitsu and experts in teen health and wellness on empowerment, reflection, and mindfulness, 20 families participated
- **Trips and Retreats**
  - Israel Twinning 3 students
  - L'Taken 9 students
  - 456 Retreat

More highlights from the year:

- Updated Religious School website page
- Early Start to year
  - Developing consistent approach to start of year in relation to Jewish holidays and secular school
- Professional Development
  - Robust and rich this year, with the help of donation from Michael Goldberg
- Religious School Coffees for grades Pre-K through 3<sup>rd</sup>

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- Tot Religious School once a month - participants want it to be at least twice a month
- Summer Camp Fair
- Hebrew Boot Camp
- Torah in the Home
- Religious School Shabbat
- Parent learning
  - Sunday morning with Rabbi Dara, PG13 with Rabbi Joel, Connect4 Adult Religious School
- Parent Engagement – RSPA
  - Room Parents for all classes
  - Hanukkah Party
  - March Madness Party
  - Teacher Appreciation

### Religious School Director Search – Sharon De Mayo

In June 2018 a committee was formed to conduct a search for a permanent Religious School Director. The committee screened 17 resumes which were narrowed down to 7 phone interviews, then from those, 5 in-person 1-hour interviews and then 2 finalist all day visits to Temple Isaiah. The two final candidates each met in small groups with members of the senior staff, Clergy, Board of Trustees, lay leaders, religious school parents and students. Those visits were also followed by conversations and a survey that was sent to all those who had a chance to interact however marginally with the candidates. The committee's rationale for the selection and the evaluation of the candidates was based on several factors including but not limited to education requirements, teaching and administrative experience, communication and technology skills, knowledge of leading-edge Jewish education models, interpersonal skills and performance during the interviews. As a result of that process, after lengthy and careful deliberations, and weighing of all factors, the search committee determined to not recommend either applicant for the position. The committee also recommended to maintain Interim RS Director, Rabbi Zoe Klein Miles, in her position for an additional school year or until the search yields a compelling candidate, and we are pleased and grateful to have Rabbi Klein Miles remaining in the position for the coming year.

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We would like to express our gratitude to all the search committee members that worked tirelessly and diligently for more than a year on this task - Senior Rabbi Joel Nickerson; Interim Religious School Director, Rabbi Zoe Klein Miles; Temple President, David Leichinger; Committee Chair, Sharon De Mayo; Susan Bartholomew; Michelle Dar; Karen Hedges; Melissa Lustgarten; Farshid Nejad; Kenny Rogers; Pej Sabet.

### Adult Education - Rabbi Zoe Klein Miles

Adult Education at Temple Isaiah is a collaboration of many individuals. The **PPA** and the **RSPA** organize learning opportunities for the Preschool and Religious school. The Clergy teach and bring relevant speakers. The **Green Team** brings opportunities and speakers.

What Temple Isaiah offers for adults, however, goes far beyond the traditional category of “Education,” including activities, social opportunities, travel and field trips, activism and holiday celebrations. **CVLA** gives older adults community and purpose with member-provided services. **Isaiah Women** creates community through activities and experiences. **Isaiah Men’s Group** gathers people together to strengthen community through events and service. The schools and the clergy offer opportunities for adults to gather together such as **Sukkot at Rabbi Joel’s**, the **Religious School Hanukkah Party**, **Night at Tamar’s** and **Mamouna**. **HaSharim Choir** is its own unique adult journey group, as is the **Writers’ Group**. None of these easily fall under the umbrella of Adult Education. Membership and Development also generate community building events including the **Chai dinner** and **Legacy Circle dinner**. There are also education and events through the Temple’s Social Justice groups including **Am Tzedek** and **CAST**. We may, in the future, want to create a new category called Adult Engagement, to create a fuller picture of all that Isaiah offers.

Below is an overview of Adult Education for the 2018-2019 year, as well as a sampling of the community building at Isaiah that falls under the broader title Adult Engagement.

- **Friday night speakers**

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- **Jessica Dabney and Jim Winett** on Climate Reality
- **Congresswoman Karen Bass**
- **Dr. Alexander Marson** on “*Engineering Human Immune Cells to Treat Cancer.*”
- **Emilia Zeidenfeld**, founder of Women’s March LA
- **Pastor J. Edgar Boyd**, F.A.M.E. Church
  
- **Other special speakers**
  - **Congressman Ted Lieu**
  - **Pastor and Author Rob Bell**
  - **Sue Dunlap** Protecting Access to Women’s Health, 46 years After Roe v. Wade
  - **Rabbi Mary Zamore** The Sacred Exchange: Creating A Jewish Money
  - **Hillel Smith** Parsha Posters Art Exhibit
  
- **Ongoing Adult Learning**
  - **Torah Study** for Rabbi Zoe every Saturday morning
  - **Daughters of Torah Study** with Elaine Diamond Wednesdays
  - **Spine Tingles Book Group** with Librarian Ellen Cole
  - **Hearts & Minds Torah Study Group**, monthly
  - **Podcast** with Rabbi Joel and Rabbi Dara
  
- **Other Adult Learning Opportunities this year:**
  - **A Taste of Talmud** with Rabbi Zoe Klein Miles and Michael Tolwin, Saturdays
  
- **Speakers**
  - **Scholar in Residence – Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso**
    - **I Am Not Religious, I’m Spiritual**
    - **Jewish Stories of Love and Marriage**
    - **Author Talk**
    - **Women and Spirituality – A Personal Journey**
  - **On the Map – Screening and discussion with Director Dani Menkin**
  - **Unpacking Whiteness with Documentarian John Biewen**
  
- **Preschool Parent Education**

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- **Challenging Behaviors and Childhood Anxiety** with Dr. Tamar Andrews, EdD
- **Gain Peace of Mind by Learning How to Prepare for the Future –**
- **The Way We Speak to Our Children Becomes Their Inner Voice –** Larissa Neilson, author of “The LA Nanny Book”, Infant/Toddler specialist
- **An Ounce of Prevention** - Pattie Fitzgerald
- **Are You a Yeller?** An ongoing series with Dr. Tamar Andrews.
- **Special Needs Symposium, “Giftedness” with Adriane Ransom**
  
- **Religious School Parent Education**
  - **3-Part Parent Clergy Discussion** with Rabbi Frimmer
    - **Returning to Sukkot:** A re-engagement with fragility and impermanence
    - **Returning to Shabbat:** A re-examination of ritual and rest
    - **Returning to Kashrut:** A revival of conscientious consumption
  - **Connect4: Parent Education Series** Learn – Taste – Create – Connect: Learn what your children are learning in Religious School
    - **Chocolate Making and Wine Tasting**
    - **DIY Menorah Making, Latkes & Vodka**
    - **Get "Lit" with this Havdalah workshop**
    - **Matzah & Manischewitz**
  - **PG13 – Parental Guidance –**
    - **“Talking to Kids about Sexuality”** with Rabbi Joel Nickerson
    - **“Teaching Resilience”** with Rabbi Zoe Klein Miles
  - **Rabbi Dara gatherings with Parents of Teens**
  
- **Isaiah Women**
  - **Ongoing/Monthly Events**
- **Chai Village LA**
  - **Ongoing Events**