



Message from Dr. Schatz, Assistant Director

We had quite a busy day in the Jane Fishman Grinberg Religious School on Sunday, March 13!

The day began with our Dalet class making *mezuzot* from clay, with the teachers from the traveling “Clay Studio”, whom we have worked with before. The children made original designs, and the *mezuzot* will be returned to us in a few weeks for the children to take home and, we hope, hang in a prominent doorway in your homes. This project, as are the other art programs we offer, was supported by a gift from the Abiri-Jean Judaic Art Fund at Har Zion Temple.

If you walked a little down the hallway toward the auditoriums, you might have thought you had traveled in time to a Friday evening, as our Gan and Aleph class was celebrating a traditional Shabbat dinner! The children displayed their challah covers and Kiddush cups, made through the same Abiri-Jean Fund. They led the blessings of the Shabbat table including candlelighting, *Borei Pri Hagafen* over grape juice, and *HaMotzi*, over delicious challah. Rabbi Shawn led the parents in the *Birkat HaBanim*, the traditional blessing of the children that recalls the ancient patriarchal blessings on the Imahot, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Leah, and the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Menashe, along with the three part *Birkat Kohanim* asking Hashem to bless and watch over our treasured children. This blessing is recited in traditional Jewish homes each Friday night as well as on special occasions like the Bar or Bat Mitzvah or wedding. We enjoyed a model Shabbat dinner of breakfast foods like waffles and bagels, as well as the opportunity to sit together with our friends. It was a delight to see so many of our families join for this program. We are so grateful that the pandemic seems to be more under control and are hopeful to have more gatherings over meals such as this in the coming months.

Lest we think this was enough for one day, aside from the classroom learning upstairs in the religious school wing, the entire Gan-Hay lower school participated in a series of Purim activities in anticipation of this most joyous Jewish holiday that we celebrate on Wednesday night and Thursday of this week. It was so great to spend time with various special people at Har Zion! Rabbi Haaz led a Purim Story Mad Lib activity where we made up funny versions of the story read in Megillat Esther. Norman Einhorn had a game show style quiz of Purim trivia, complete with candy prizes. Steve Goldberg led an activity where we packed snack bags for a charity called The Breathing Room that supports families affected by cancer. We also enjoyed our own snack of Hamantaschen. Ariela Barlas helped us create unique masks to celebrate Purim in costume, though so many of the children came and spent the day in a Purim costume! Finally, we got to dance and party with Ethan Einhorn and Michael Zlotnick as we played a freeze dance to some Purim music. These activities helped us prepare for the four *mitzvot* of Purim: hearing the **Megillah**, giving our friends gifts of **Mishloach Manot**, giving other gifts to the needy, called **Matanot Le-Evyonim**, and finally having a Purim Party – sometimes called a **Mishteh**. It is easy to remember the four **Mitzvot of Purim** as they all begin with the letter **Mem!**

We hope families were able to join us for a congregational Purim service and reading of the Megillah on Wednesday evening this week, and will be able to perform the other *mitzvot* with their families as part of Purim Day on Thursday. **HAG PURIM SAMEACH!**