THE HELLICHER MAGAZINE

A PUBLICATION OF THE AMOS & CELIA HEILICHER MINNEAPOLIS JEWISH DAY SCHOOL



Enduring Values • Extraordinary Education

From the Head of School



Dear Heilicher Community,

am honored to begin my tenure as the Amos and Celia Heilicher Minneapolis Jewish Day School's seventh head of school. Heilicher has a distinguished history, and its commitment to academic excellence and respect for the diversity of Jewish life has inspired countless graduates to lead lives of purpose. I am eager to join this community of committed parents, faculty, students, and friends of the school in our collective pursuit of learning as a lifelong venture.

Our theme for this issue comes from Pirkei Avot, which asks, "If not now, when?" We are living in a time of profound cultural change. I hope everyone looks to Heilicher as a refuge and a place that makes us feel connected to each other and our community. In the upcoming year, we will explore and discuss our individual and our community's well-being. We will recommit to the cultural elements of our school that have made Heilicher special for so many families, and we will look forward to the things we can do to ensure its prosperity.

Please know that I am grateful for the opportunity to serve our Heilicher students and families. I am thankful for your trust and anticipate a great school year. I welcome the chance to meet each of you in the coming months and to build Heilicher's bright future together.

Very best,

Dan Ahlstrom, Ed.D. Head of School

Heilicher: If Not Now, When?



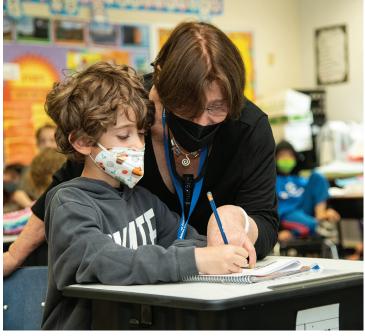
Dr. David Ackerman

BY DR. DAVID ACKERMAN, DIRECTOR OF JEWISH LIVING AND LEARNING

The British government's decision to quit Palestine on May 15, 1948, presented the Zionist Movement's leadership with a momentous decision: declare independence immediately or agree to a truce with the opposing forces and negotiate. David Ben Gurion, chairman of the executive

committee of the Jewish Agency, understood this was a historic, one-time opportunity not to be missed. He surely was inspired, at least in part, by Hillel's admonition, "im lo achshav, eimatai" (If not now, when?; Pirkei Avot 1:14).

The idea of seizing the moment is a value embedded in Heilicher's approach to learning. While our students may not face decisions with national repercussions like Ben Gurion did, the issue is the same: recognizing the importance and ephemeral nature of the present moment. Now is the time to learn. Now is the time to help another person. Now is the time to care for our environment. Now is the time to fight hatred. Now is the time because if you put any of those things off, you may not get another chance.

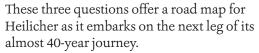


Hebrew teacher Barbara Taragan helps second grader Liam R

But "im lo achshav, eimatai" is only the final segment of Hillel's teaching. The full text reads,

"אָם אֵין אֲנִי לִי, מִי לִי. וּכְשֶׁאֲנִי לְעַצְמִי, מָה אֲנִי. וְאָם לֹא עַכְשָׁיו, אֵימֶתָי:

"If I am not for myself, who am I? But if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?"



If I am not for myself, who am I? Heilicher is a Jewish community day school committed to the inseparability of Jewish living from Jewish learning. It is a fierce advocate of the power of knowledge and the importance of Jewish literacy to a vibrant Jewish community. It is unabashed about its message of Jewish pride.

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Kindergarteners Lev R. and Amelia L. draw the plants around them in the garden, and Lev shares his work with sixth grader Ellie F.

Q&A With Head of School Dan Ahlstrom



Dan Ahlstrom

What drew you to the Heilicher head of school role?

When I first read the position description for the Heilicher head of school role, I was immediately excited. I love the pluralistic values that define the school, the strength and vibrancy of the community, and the fact that the school leads with its ten core values. I had great conversations with Board President Robyn Schein, with members of the search committee, and with staff, parents, and families. I had a positive feeling about Heilicher and felt like it reflected what I personally value about the Jewish day school experience.

What have been your most meaningful personal connections to Jewish day school?

Three of my four children attended Jewish day school through grade 12. For them, the most impactful part of their education was the experiential component, especially their school trips to Israel. My most meaningful connections are the relationships I have built over the past ten years in the community. Most of my closest friends in education and the people that I get advice from come from Jewish day schools.

What is special about Jewish day school?

I've always been attracted to the emphasis that Jewish day schools place on ethical decision-making as part of the core mission of the school. Jewish day schools combine academic rigor with menschlichkayt (human decency). Our Jewish educational communities set a high moral standard for students and give values-based education far more than lip service. Kids leave Jewish day schools immensely academically prepared but also deeply invested in helping make their community and their world a better place.

What are you most looking forward to in your new role?

I am looking forward to getting to know people from throughout the Heilicher community. I welcome the chance to meet students, parents, faculty and staff, clergy members, donors, and other Jewish leaders. I look forward to helping facilitate the vision that the community wants for Heilicher. I want to support teachers in educating the next generation of Heilicher students and to make sure that parents feel confident in the investment they are making in their students' education.

Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your family?

I was trained academically as a musician (bass player) with a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in music but quickly moved into the education field, eventually earning my doctorate in education. I taught kindergarten and music and served in a variety of leadership capacities, including as an assistant head of school at a Jewish day school in Tucson, Arizona, and as a head of school at a Jewish day school in Houston and a Montessori school in San Antonio.

My wife, Shannon, was an attorney but has been an educator for the past ten years. I am thrilled that she will be teaching middle school language arts at Heilicher this year.

I have four adult children. My oldest son, Alex, works in higher education research in Washington, D.C. My daughter, Emma, graduated from college with a degree in graphic design and now works for a design firm in San Antonio. My two younger boys are still in college: William is at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, studying psychology, and Thomas recently completed his freshman year at Regis College. I could not be more proud of all of them.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I tend to focus a lot of my "free" time on my professional responsibilities. That said, I like to walk my dog, and I read a lot and listen to audiobooks and podcasts. Shannon and I were involved in volunteer work in San Antonio and Houston, especially in the areas of flood recovery and home rebuilding. I look forward to finding opportunities to engage in meaningful volunteer work in the Twin Cities as well.

What are you most excited about in Minnesota?

Having four seasons. In the south, the seasons are hot, hotter, and hottest. I am actually looking forward to snow!

Dan Ahlstrom looks forward to connecting with families and community members at dahlstrom@hmjds.org.

Jackie Smith, Director of General Studies



Jackie Smith

Jackie Smith, M.Ed., began as Heilicher's director of general studies this summer after two years as an assistant principal in the Saint Paul Public Schools. She has held

many positions in the St. Paul and Robbinsdale schools, including as an English language learning teacher and an instructional coach and facilitator.

"I am thrilled to be a part of Heilicher because I think it's going to be really exciting and fulfilling to work in a community that is rooted in Jewish values," Jackie said.

Jackie feels her new position is a good fit because it builds on her strengths while providing opportunities for professional growth. She enjoys working with and supporting teachers as well as developing curricula that are innovative and engaging and meet the needs of a diverse group of learners. She likes connecting the social and emotional aspects of learning to academics and integrating social justice work and experiential education into the curricula. Jackie looks forward to

growing all of these opportunities at Heilicher over the coming school year.

Jackie has high expectations of teachers but also a wide scope for what success looks like from teacher to teacher. "It's really about that person coming to the class and being themselves but also providing what the child needs and being in touch with their needs," she said. She also emphasizes respect for the educator as a learner and sees education as an ongoing process.

"It's true there are challenges that the community and the school are facing, but I see so much commitment and passion in the teachers and families." Jackie said. "I think a lot of the things we see as problems are actually really wonderful opportunities. I look forward to exploring these opportunities together, helping our students continue to grow and thrive in this incredibly special school community."

Jackie lives in Falcon Heights with her husband and fellow teacher, Dave; their youngest of three children; and, during the summer, foster kittens. Jackie can be reached at jsmith@hmjds.org.



Jackie, second to left, with (L to R) her children, Phina, Gus, and Levi; and husband, Dave.

Deborah Getsug, Admissions Director



Deborah Getsug

Deborah Getsug, M.Ed., became Heilicher's admissions director this summer. She had a short move from the Sabes Center's Early Childhood Center, where she was the assistant director for four years.

Deborah worked in the Montessori community before deciding she wanted to be with her Jewish community, though she brings the Montessori philosophies of positive and gentle discipline and respectful guidance with her. She also previously served as an admissions counselor for an independent college.

"I love admissions because I get to work with everybody," Deborah said. "I particularly enjoy working in the community with children and their parents because we can get to know each other beyond admissions. It's extremely fulfilling."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Amazing Alumni

Gabe Segal Gives Back

Gabe Segal (Heilicher '01) graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Madison with a master's degree in industrial engineering and has developed a career in the financial sector.

"When it came time to decide on volunteer work, I wanted to get involved in something that had personal meaning to me," Gabe said. "Heilicher gave me a great foundational education during an important period of my life. Giving back to the school was something I wanted to do."

Joining the Board

Gabe joined the Heilicher Board of Trustees in 2018. Two years ago he became a member of the finance committee, and he has now been the treasurer for one year. "It is really meaningful to have alumni serve on the Board," Robyn Schein, Board president, said. "Gabe recognizes what the school provided him in his formative years and is actively giving back with his time and energy. He exemplifies what we hope for our students: that they grow up to be engaged and involved leaders in the Jewish community."

She added, "In his role as treasurer, Gabe and I work closely on the financial health of the school. Gabe is thoughtful, inquisitive, and diligent. He brings his professional skills to the Board and is an important voice of the future of the school."

Gabe is vice president at Norwest Mezzanine Partners, a Minneapolis private equity group that makes

> investments in private companies. Prior to his five years at Norwest, he was an investment banking analyst.

He said, "I understand the ins and outs of the financial statements and position of the school as well as have the strategic angle to evaluate Heilicher's finances and help solve any financial issues."

Heilicher as a Foundation for Success

Gabe credits Heilicher with setting him up for success: "I definitely think that the individualized and one-on-one education opportunities that the school gave were beneficial to me. The school allowed me to pursue my areas of interest and my strong suits, such as math and science — while not letting me fall behind in the other areas. This was an important lesson about cultivating a passion and recognizing how having a passion can help you succeed and excel."

That success applies to relationships as well. "I made a couple of lifelong friends at Heilicher that I'm still friends with today," Gabe said. "I think that was key to me recognizing the importance of relationships in my life and working to maintain those."

It's not only the friends that he remembers. Gabe recalled his sixth-grade teacher who he said pushed him to do his best in math. "She knew math was a subject I enjoyed and was good at, and I think her encouragement was overall a great experience for me and set me up for much of the rest of my life," Gabe said.

Already a vice president at his company, Gabe has big goals and an entrepreneurial spirit. He hopes to found and run his own company some day. Gabe lives in Minneapolis with his wife, Michelle, and their two dogs, Kona and Maui. In his free time he enjoys snowboarding and sailing.



Gabe Segal

Mazal tov and l'hitraot (until we see you again) to the Heilicher graduating class of 2022



They get the last word. Here are excerpts from eighth-grade graduation essays:

"I felt connected to my history, and community, in a way I had never felt before. [Then] I realized that so many aspects of Judaism would no longer be a part of my school life, and this made me start to be more appreciative of what I have now: an amazing Jewish education that I love and that has made me extremely proud of my Jewish identity."

-Phoenix F.

"Every single teacher has encouraged questions, and every single one has made me feel comfortable asking questions."

-Avital K.

"Through the years Heilicher has pushed me in math and reading and helped me become the best student I could be."

-Ben R.

"I had my first ever 94%. I was so proud of myself, and finally I could say, 'I understand math and I AM good at it."

- Sarah B.

"I believe I have succeeded through the loving hand of Heilicher and I will miss this place I call home."

- Edison M.

Heilicher alumni from the high school graduating class of 2022 are taking their next steps at these colleges, universities, and other experiences this fall. Mazal tov!

- Augsburg University
- Brandeis University
- Columbia University-List College
- DePaul University
- Drake University
- George Washington University
- Hofstra University
- Kivunim Gap-Year Program
- Lawrence University
- Loyola University
- Northwestern University
- St. Cloud Technical and Community College
- Tulane University
- University of Denver
- University of Georgia
- University of Iowa
- University of Minnesota-Duluth
- University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
- University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Ursinus College
- Yale University

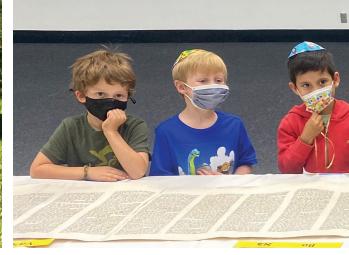
Listings are those known by Heilicher at the time of publication.













Heilicher Highlights

TOP ROW

Sixth graders spend a night around the campfire singing songs and roasting marshmallows on the sixth- and seventh-grade trip to Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center.

On Purim, the third graders join everybody at school in dressing up in costume.

MIDDLE ROW

Eighth-grade students and chaperones stop in front of the Capitol on their bike tour of Washington, D.C.

Students play four square, one of the many activities at Maccabiah, Heilicher's field day, which was full of friendly competition and ruach (spirit).

Fourth-grade students enjoy the outdoors and Heilicher's playground.

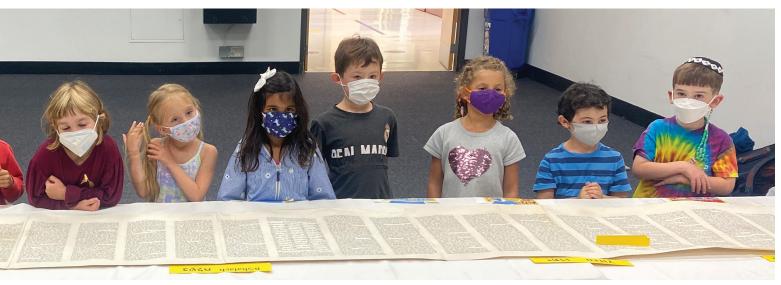
BOTTOM ROW

Fifth graders pose with a sculpture that reads "love" on a field trip to Big Stone Mini Golf and Sculpture Garden. Along with touring the sculptures, they played mini golf and met animals.

In celebration of Simchat Torah, students (kindergarten pictured) view a rolled out Torah scroll.







Heilicher Donors

JULY 1, 2021, THROUGH JUNE 30, 2022

We extend our deep gratitude to the 700 donors who supported Heilicher this year with generous philanthropic contributions. Heilicher raised over \$2.8 million this year, including both endowment contributions and annual gifts. We are incredibly honored to be the recipients of such generous support, which helps keep our school strong and vibrant.

The below list reflects all monetary donations to Heilicher during the last fiscal year. We apologize if any donor was inadvertently left off this list.

For corrections or questions about philanthropy, please contact Institutional Advancement Director Rebecca Skelton at 952.381.3503 or rskelton@hmjds.org. We welcome online contributions at hmjds.org/donate.

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Deb Olkon and Mike Zis with their children, (L to R) Abe, Saul, and Meyer.



Orlee Tatarka and Yehuda Gruenberg with their children, (L to R) Asher and Caleb.

2022 ANNUAL FUND

Led by our Annual Fund Parent Co-Chairs Deb Olkon and Mike Zis, and Orlee Tatarka and Yehuda Gruenberg, we had another successful Annual Fund campaign. The Annual Fund closed on June 30, 2022, at just over \$533,000 from 320 donors. We are honored by the generosity of the Heilicher community and grateful for the leadership of our parent co-chairs.

2022 SPRING BENEFIT







The Pinck/Birnberg Family. From left: Julia, Brad, Stacy, Allison, and Jake

Heilicher was thrilled to honor Jill and Jon Halper, and Stacy Pinck and Brad Birnberg at our Annual Benefit in May 2022. For a photo gallery, a video about the honoree families, and a full list of sponsors, visit hmjds.org/news-events/annualbenefit/2021.

Thank you to all the generous sponsors of the May 2022 Heilicher Benefit, led by Presenting Corporate Sponsor: BMO Harris Bank, Ner Tamid Sponsor: Carl and Tammy Birnberg and Family, and Presenting Community Sponsors: Stacy Pinck and Brad Birnberg; Jill and Jon Halper; Amy, Jack, Linda, and Mike Fiterman; Lisa and Mark Ratner; Hindy and Scott Tankenoff/The Tankenoff Families Foundation; and Marni and Chuck Bond/Judy and Keith Rosenblum.

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Heilicher: If Not Now, When?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

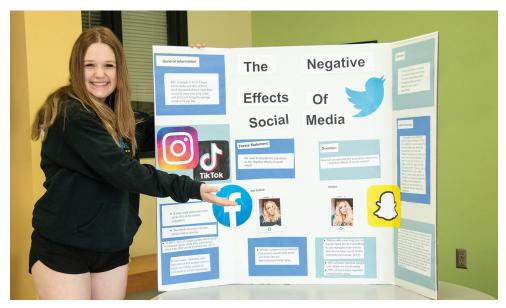
But if I am only for myself, what am I? Heilicher is equally committed to the obligation to seek the common good (Jeremiah 29:7) and to contribute to a more just society for everyone. It is determined to prepare its graduates to be active, engaged, and constructive citizens of the wider world that they live in and will inherit.

And if not now, when? Heilicher is proud of the education it provided these past three years under the many constraints of COVID-19. But now is the time to ask: What comes next? How can we move from where we are to where

we dream of being? How can Heilicher's commitment to both a particular vision of Jewish life as well as a universal vision of life within a larger society be realized, educationally? How can the strengths of the school be celebrated? And how can we reimagine the school to meet the challenges of the next 40 years?

Now is the time to apply the hardearned wisdom possessed by Heilicher's faculty, supplemented by the fresh perspectives of our new head of school, director of general studies, and other faculty members, to these questions. *Im lo achshav, eimatai?*

The idea of seizing the moment is a value embedded in Heilicher's approach to learning.



Sarah B. presents her findings and ideas about the negative effects of social media, which she researched for the eighth-grade capstone project.

Deborah Getsug

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Heilicher's motto is: "You will be proud of the person your child becomes," and Deborah would add that the child should be proud of the person they become as well. She is excited to help foster that.

"I'm very much looking forward to helping children find their place where they feel safe, heard, and seen," she said.

Deborah is a member of Temple of Aaron and a Jewish day school graduate herself. She lives in St. Paul with her daughter, Luna, and makes beautiful art and delicious treats at Moona Made. Deborah can be reached at dgetsug@hmjds.org.



Deborah and Luna

2022 Heilicher **Annual Benefit**

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2022

5 p.m. at Beth El Synagogue

HONORING WENDY LOVELL-SMITH & COLIN SMITH



Photo courtesy of Leslie Parker Photography

Wendy Lovell-Smith and Colin Smith have been Heilicher parents and volunteer leaders for 18 years. In addition to a long tenure as a member of the Board of Trustees, Wendy served as Heilicher president from 2019 to 2021. Wendy and Colin are co-chairs of Heilicher's endowment campaign, As They Planted for Me.

Save the date as we look forward to celebrating Heilicher and honoring Wendy and Colin's generosity and stewardship of the school. Invitations will be mailed in September 2022.

For more information and benefit sponsorship opportunities, visit hmjds.org/news-events/annualbenefit.



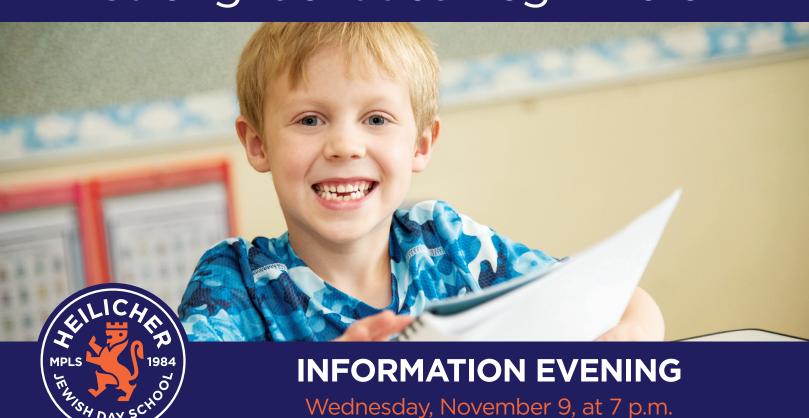
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