

THE HEILICHER MAGAZINE

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

עשה לך רב, וקנה לך חבר

Make For Yourself
a Teacher, and Get
Yourself a Friend

Our Teachers Are Lifelong Learners

Amazing Alumni:
Ron Garber and the Yaya Foundation
Double Your Fun at Two Benefits in 2022

Enduring Values • Extraordinary Education



From the Acting Head of School



Dear Heilicher Families & Friends,

One of my favorite Heilicher core values is:
עֲשֵׂה לָךְ רֵב, וְיָקִיחָ לָךְ חֵבֶר (אבות א:ו)

Make for yourself a teacher, and get yourself a friend (Avot 1:6). As we begin our third year living with a global pandemic that has upended our routines at home, work, and school, I cannot think of a more appropriate time to pay tribute to our wonderful teachers.

Our cover story (page 3) highlights the extraordinary work of the Heilicher faculty who unceasingly strive to create a robust, meaningful, and engaging learning environment for our students. In addition to fabulous teachers, our Heilicher community includes amazing alumni and donors. You can read about some of these remarkable people on pages 6 and 7.

This year, with great anticipation, we are looking forward to several opportunities to gather as a community, beginning with our school play on April 7 and 10 (see below). In addition, we have two benefits to look forward to this year. Come celebrate on May 19 as we honor Stacy Pinck and Brad Birnberg and Jill and Jon Halper with the Ner Tamid Award. Also mark your calendar for a November 20 event with honorees Wendy Lovell-Smith and Colin Smith (page 7).

Thank you to our entire Heilicher community for your enduring support and commitment to our mission.

L'shalom,

Maia

Maia Poling, Acting Head of School

JOIN US FOR THE HEILICHER GRADES 7-8 PLAY



Dolly and Edward
Fiterman Theatre
Barry Family Campus

**Thursday,
April 7 at
7 p.m.
&
Sunday,
April 10 at
2 p.m.**

Lifelong Learning for Teachers: A Key to Academic Excellence

Heilicher is proud to produce lifelong learners, and our teachers lead by example. Heilicher's faculty are able to provide academic excellence and nurture students by continuing to learn through professional development opportunities at school and beyond.

"I feel fortunate that Heilicher has supported my professional development, including attending the Teachers College Reading and Writing summer workshops in New York," said Polly Holzman, the Lower School Coordinator and a fourth-grade general studies teacher. "These week-long trainings have given me tools to better support my students during reading and writing workshop."

Higher Education

Polly is working toward a master's degree in teaching. Having previously received a certificate in day school teaching as part of the Day School Leadership Through Learning (DeLeT) Fellowship at Hebrew Union College, she is able to teach at Heilicher while participating in a one-year DeLeT graduate program.

Polly and eight other Jewish day school teachers across the country meet weekly over Zoom to collaboratively reflect on the professional learning cultures in their schools. They also learn theoretical frameworks and practical knowledge to qualitatively research their own teaching practices.



"Ms. Danovsky is my teacher and a friend to me."

—Adina G. (Grade 1)



Lower School Coordinator and Fourth-Grade Teacher Polly Holzman

"Through this program, I am recognizing the importance of collaborative learning among teachers, and I appreciate participating in this professional learning community with other Jewish educators," Polly said.

Jewish Studies teachers Hadassa Slager and Ariel Brudoley are also enrolled in master's programs. Hadassa is studying for a master's degree in Jewish education through the Jewish Theological Seminary. Ariel is working toward rabbinical ordination and a master of science in Jewish education from Yeshiva University.

Lifelong Learning

Heilicher faculty, staff, and administrators have over 30 collective master's degrees or higher. Music Teacher David Shaw holds a master's degree and has made professional development an important part of his teaching practice during his 21-year tenure at Heilicher.

In the summer, he attends national workshops, researches new music and resources, and makes music with other adult learners. Last summer David went to Fort Worth, Texas, to participate in the "JJ and Me Live!" music workshops, where he spent three days focusing on materials for student singers.

"Attending these types of workshops always helps me in jump-starting ideas for my curriculum," he said. "It allows me to find new materials and evaluate current music from publishers that can support our Heilicher music program."

During the school year, David participates in online professional development; one of his favorites is "Teaching with Orff," which provides a place for music and movement educators to share information, collaborate, and connect.

Batsheva Berman, Hebrew Language Coordinator and Hebrew and Jewish



“Batsheva gives everyone their own challenge when teaching. She wants to make sure you are able to learn as much as you can.”

—Atara M. (Grade 5)

Studies teacher, is another experienced educator who takes classes that help her provide an optimal education for students. She takes summer classes in teaching a second language at the University of Minnesota and courses in Torah study at the Pardes and Herzog Institutes in Israel.

“Professional development is essential for keeping the learning environment fresh and relevant for students,” said Maia Poling, Acting Head of School. “Investing in our teachers’ development furthers our mission.”

Schoolwide Opportunities — Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Heilicher provides professional development at faculty meetings and on two full days dedicated to professional development during the school year.

One topic covered this year was student-teacher relationships. Then in February, faculty focused on safety with Rahel Bayar, CEO of The Bayar Group, LLC. Rahel also spoke with parents about internet safety for children.

Heilicher is affiliated with various organizations – such as the Independent Schools Association of the Central States, Prizmah: Center for Jewish Day Schools, the Minnesota Independent School Forum, Minnesota Association of Independent Schools, and more – that provide trainings that Heilicher staff utilize to keep their knowledge current and grow their skills.

This school year, Heilicher is working with Joelle Allen, CEO of Interaction Traction Inc., on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training. Joelle started by leading the staff through a school-specific Intercultural Development

Inventory (IDI). IDI is a tool that provides insights on how people make sense of cultural differences and respond to them. Heilicher participants answered a questionnaire to understand where they are on a spectrum that ranges from denial of differences to adaptation for differences.

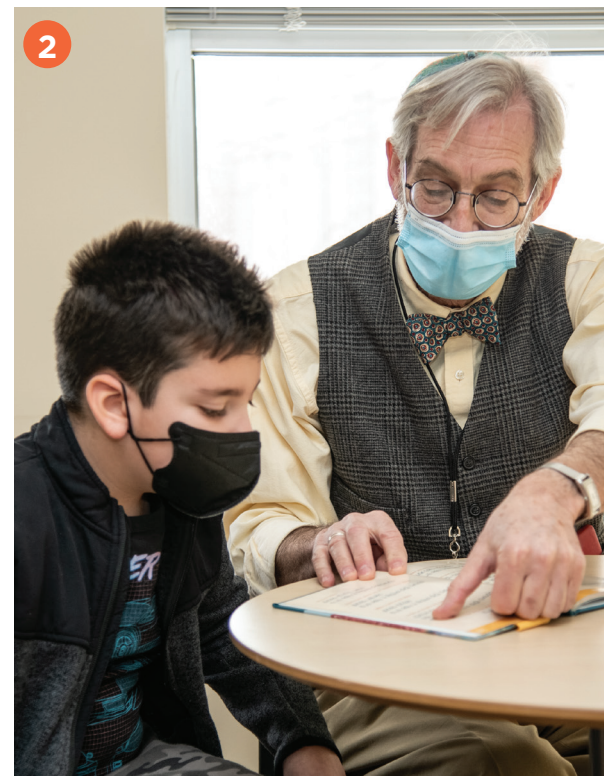
Heilicher will identify and implement schoolwide goals for progress in diversity, equity, and inclusion based on the results of the Intercultural Development Inventory. Areas of focus may include racial literacy, microaggressions, integrating diversity into curriculum, external messaging, and inclusive leadership. “We have great energy around our DEI work and look forward to digging deeply into these topics on our path ahead,” said Maia.



“Our teachers are not afraid to say they don’t know the answers and are willing to find them.”

—Akiva O. (Grade 6)

1. Teacher Ilana Marron in the Makerspace with kindergarteners Ari S. and Halle K.
2. Director of Jewish Living and Learning Dr. David Ackerman working with Jonah F.
3. Miriam Rotem and Ayelet-Hashachar Klein, Heilicher’s first *b’not sherut*, service volunteers, from Israel
4. Hebrew Language Coordinator and Hebrew and Jewish Studies teacher Batsheva Berman
5. Jewish Studies Teacher Hadassa Slager



New Faces, New Perspectives

The school has benefitted from fresh energy and perspectives with new hires this year. Dr. David Ackerman brings experience in special education, Judaism, music, and more to his role as Director of Jewish Living and Learning. He also oversees a new position: the *b'not sherut*, service volunteers from Israel.



“Ms. Steinberg always makes sure we fully understand things before moving on.”

—Noa R. (Grade 3)

Ayelet-Hashachar Klein and Miriam Rotem are Heilicher’s first *b’not sherut*, a program in partnership with Darchei Noam Congregation and Bnei Akiva. Klein and Rotem came from Israel to provide a fresh and vibrant Israeli presence through Hebrew language activities. They create interactive activities for holidays, Judaics, and Hebrew.

One of their initiatives is a bulletin board: Chadashot MeiYisrael (News from Israel). They curate human interest stories from Israel, Hebrew slang, and Israeli music for students to read in Hebrew.



“I have a great relationship with my teachers at Heilicher. They give me support and insight when I need it, and I also have a lot of fun with them. My teachers create a great learning environment as well.”

—Phoenix F. (Grade 8)



“I love that at Heilicher the teachers really know who we are.”

—Benny Z. (Grade 7)

A Winning Combination

“Professional development, lifelong learning, and fresh perspectives from new faculty allow us to provide a relevant and high-quality education,” said Maia. “We want our students to become lifelong learners, and our faculty models that every day.”



Turning Tragedy into Purpose: Rob Garber and June Cheng



June Cheng, Ron Garber, and Yael.

When Ron Garber (Heilicher '92) and June Cheng's first child, Yael (Yaya), was born in 2015, they were thrilled about their growing family. But that excitement turned to anxiety when, at six weeks old, Yaya began to miss developmental milestones. Increasingly desperate as her health problems worsened, Ron and June visited a wide variety of specialists until, at eight months old, Yaya was diagnosed with 4H Leukodystrophy (4HL) – an extremely rare, degenerative neurological disorder about which very little was known. Tragically, Yaya passed away from this genetic disease at the age of 13 months.

As grieving parents and advocates for their daughter, Ron and June committed to ensuring that other families who have children with 4HL and related conditions would have the support they need to pursue treatment and, hopefully one day, a cure. "We looked around for the 'American Cancer Society' of 4HL and found there was absolutely nothing to support families in dealing with this serious diagnosis," Ron said. "Heilicher taught me that if you see something wrong, it is your obligation to do something about it." This commitment

led Ron and June to create the Yaya Foundation in 2018 to pursue research and lifesaving treatments for children with 4HL.

In 2020, the Yaya Foundation received a grant of \$450,000 from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative's "Rare as One" project. This grant allowed the Yaya Foundation to build an infrastructure, hire an executive director, and further professionalize its activities. The organization continues to go from strength to strength, launching new initiatives, building and facilitating research and treatment partnerships, and creating connections between families affected by 4HL internationally.

When asked what Ron and June hope people take away from their story, June responded, "Initially, when we lost Yaya, we lost our sense of purpose. In the years that have followed, we have taken great comfort in building something

that other people can depend on." Ron added, "It's so easy to hear the name of a disease or how rare it is and think, 'It's not my problem.' But this could happen to any one of us. I want people to have a sense of obligation to be present for members of the community who have not been so fortunate."

Since Yaya's passing, Ron and June have added two healthy children to their family – Ilan (born in 2018) and Yasmin (born in 2020). June is an attorney in immigration law at Fredrikson and Byron, P.A., and Ron serves as in-house counsel at Medtronic. Among other experiences, Ron credits his K-6 Heilicher education with providing him the moral foundation, public speaking skills, and leadership opportunities that have served him well as a change-maker and rare disease advocate. He currently serves on the Heilicher Board of Trustees.



Ron with Yasmin (left) and June with Ilan.

For more information about the Yaya Foundation, visit: yayafoundation4hl.org



Meet Laura and Norm Taple



Norm, Laura, and Sammi

We sat down with Laura and Norm Taple to find out about their Heilicher experience and why they choose to support Heilicher as philanthropic donors.

What brought your family to Heilicher in August 2020?

We were both products of public school education, and it was a natural choice to enroll our daughter Sammi in our neighborhood elementary school for kindergarten. Fast forward two years, and we realized that we wanted a different educational experience for our daughter. Sammi was doing fine at her school, but we wanted an environment in which she would THRIVE socially, emotionally, and academically. Enter Heilicher!

Why did you ultimately choose Heilicher for Sammi?

Our priorities changed, and we realized that smaller class size and the ability to truly partner with teachers in Sammi's development are invaluable. We looked forward to being a part of a vibrant, caring, welcoming community. Heilicher is unique in its focus on the whole school, from teachers and students to parents and the greater community. We wanted Sammi to have a strong sense of belonging, and that included pride in her Jewish identity.

Over the past 1.5 years, what is an example of a moment or experience that reinforced that you made the right choice?

We invited non-Jewish friends to celebrate Chanukah, and Sammi proudly led the evening's festivities, introducing many traditions. This included sharing the story of Chanukah, lighting the *menorah*, and relieving our friends of their *gelt* in a raucous round of *dreidel*!

Why did you make a donation to the Heilicher Annual Fund?

Our family feels it's important to support an institution that is strengthening future generations of leaders in the Jewish community and broader society. For us, this is the best way to give back to a school that truly "walks the walk," helping ensure that our kids are not only well-educated, but are *mensch*es (good people)!

Heilicher Annual Benefit!

Thursday,
May 19, 2022

BETH EL SYNAGOGUE

HONORING
Stacy Pinck & Brad
Birnberg and Jill &
Jon Halper



SAVE THE DATE

2022
ANNUAL
BENEFIT

Sunday,
November 20, 2022
BETH EL SYNAGOGUE

Honoring
Wendy Lovell-Smith
and Colin Smith



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MAIS: The Minnesota Association of Independent Schools

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PRIZMAH: Center for Jewish Day Schools

2022 Annual Fund

You can help strengthen Heilicher with a tax-deductible donation to the 2022 Annual Fund.

Give online at
www.hmjds.org/donate

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INFORMATION EVENING • Thursday, March 31 at 7 p.m.
Schedule a tour today at 952.381.3500 or visit hmjds.org