connect
learn
rejuvenate
reflect
network
grow

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is the process of developing the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are vital for school, work, and life success.

With these skills, all of us thrive.

Together we will explore ways to use these strategies and others to strengthen our work as Jewish educators.
3:00 PM  Welcome to the JEA Conference!

3:15 PM  Mincha

3:30 PM  Opening Session
         Unloading Our Baggage – I Need Help With....!
         Facilitators: Rabbi Robin Foonberg & Eddie Edelstein
         As Jewish educators, we all carry a heavy load on our shoulders: parents, teachers, students, curriculum, budget, boards, synagogue politics and more! How do we manage it all? Which areas are the most stressful? Where is the most help needed? What are the greatest challenges? Kick off the conference with an interactive discussion where YOU define the agenda!

5:30 PM  New Member and First-Timers Reception

5:45 PM  Ma’ariv

6:00 PM  Dinner

7:45 PM  Educator Welfare – Success Starts with ME!
         Dr. Norman Fried
         In case of emergency on an airplane, you are always told to put on your own oxygen mask first, before tending to anyone else. What are the mental and emotional tools and skills that we need, not only to cope, but to achieve success in our work?
         Sponsored by Carolann & Steven Leffler

9:30 PM  Hospitality & Entertainment
         Sponsored by Alan and Rabbi Robin Foonberg
7:00 AM Shacharit

8:30 AM Breakfast
Sponsored by Marilyn and Lawrence M. Katz

9:30 AM Limmud
Standing in the Breach:
Utilizing Ancient Leadership to Combat Modern Problems
Rabbi Dave Siegel | Director, Hofstra University Hillel
Throughout history, communities have turned to Jewish texts for guidance during challenging times. Can the lessons of our past still help us understand today’s challenges? In this session, we will explore different examples of leadership from the Jewish tradition and discuss how they relate to our world today.
Sponsored by Laura and Cantor Larry Brandspiegel

10:15 AM Keynote Address
Jewish Education: The Newish and Truish Purpose of Jewish Education
David Bryfman, CEO, The Jewish Education Project, NY
When his son asked him what he does for work, David told him what he does - write emails, have meetings and occasionally get to teach. He then asked why he does this work. Answering the why of Jewish education to a 10-year-old was an eye-opening experience for David, probably more than it was/is for his son. In this keynote address to the annual JEA conference David will explore the changing why of Jewish education today — and why today it is more vital than perhaps ever before.
Sponsored by the Friends of Rabbi Marim D. Charry

11:30 AM Coffee Break
Vendor Area

11:45 AM Break-out Workshops – Social and Emotional Learning
David Bryfman | Grit, Resilience and Thriving for Jewish Educators in a Time of Uncertainty
This workshop will have a look at some of the key terms that have infused education in recent times. But first, before exploring these additions to the Jewish educational lexicon, we will take a moment to take care of ourselves. What do Jewish educators need to be thinking of in terms of their own personal and professional well-being before they even enter the classroom? It’s one thing to talk to our students about issues like global warming, anti-Semitism, and gun violence – but it’s something very different to take a step back and reflect on how these core issues of today are affecting us and the people we surround ourselves with. This session is not therapy, but please only come to this session if you’re prepared to be open and honest with yourself and some others about how you’re experiencing today’s world as a human being who happens to be a Jewish educator.
Nancy Parkes | Social Emotional Learning and Jewish Education
What does social and emotional learning have to do with Jewish education and Jewish values? Everything! Research conducted in public schools indicates that social and emotional skills are necessary for both academic and personal success. Isn’t this what we want for our students, as well? To live what they are learning and to be successful both in and out of the classroom? In this interactive session we will discuss the “why,” “what,” and “how” of social emotional learning.

1:15 PM   Lunch
           NDI Reunion

1:45 PM   Coffee, Dessert, Vendor Visitation
           Sponsored by JNF

2:15 PM   Mincha

2:30 PM   Afternoon Workshops I

SEL Toolkit
Nancy Parkes
Whereas goals of specific Jewish content knowledge are forever being debated and changed among educators, the “major Jewish value” - that of being a mensch - has been a consistent goal that all agree is important. To achieve this, it is not enough to just teach about Jewish values; rather, it is necessary to also focus on the growth and development of the social and emotional skills of our learners and teachers. Teaching these skills can be integrated into any curriculum and does not come at the expense of Jewish content knowledge. In fact, it will lead to greater achievement. Too good to be true? Not according to the research. This session will focus on the steps to teach social emotional skills and examples of SEL tools that can be used to build social emotional competencies of learners and teachers.

Having (and Facilitating) Difficult Conversations about Israel
Steve Kerbel – Center for Israel Education, Atlanta
For the last 3 years The Center for Israel Education has been training teen leaders and young American camp staff to help them be more effective Israel educators. Participate in a session that will share some of our techniques.

The Gift of Nature: An Important Partner in Young Children’s Social-Emotional Development
Shariee Calderone and Emily Herzfeld – Jewish Education Project
Social-emotional development in early childhood includes the child’s experience, expression, and management of emotions and the ability to establish rewarding relationships with others. In this workshop, educators will gain a better understanding of how nature and natural play spaces contribute to children’s social and emotional development. We'll explore rich nature play experiences and the opportunities teachers have to help children build empathy and engage in teamwork, self-reflection, and connections to earth and others, particularly through the medium of nature and outdoor spaces.

4:00 PM   Coffee Break
4:15 PM  Afternoon Workshops II

Upping Your Supervision Game  Grand Ballroom 5&6
*Rabbi Julie Schwarzwald*
Observation, supervision, and evaluation of your teaching staff each have different goals and therefore requires different approaches. Learn how to distinguish among them. Receive different frameworks to use for each goal and discuss how to adapt and personalize them to meet the needs of your institution. Create an effective and meaningful process that helps teachers succeed and grow.

The Resilient Child: Social Emotional Learning in Early Childhood  Lighthouse A
*Shellie Dickstein - Jewish Education Project*
One of the findings in the seminal research done by Emmy Werner and Ruth Smith noted the “extraordinary importance of the early childhood years in laying the foundation for resilience,” (Journeys from Childhood to Midlife: Risk, Resilience, and Recovery, July 2001). As early childhood educational leaders are you noticing a change in the social-emotional development of the children in your care? In this workshop we explore frameworks for social-emotional learning; learn about a rubric to identify children’s character strengths; examine how constructivist models of learning contribute to social-emotional growth; and discuss how Jewish learning experiences contribute to their well-being.

Connecting with the Adult Learner: Update from the Field  Lighthouse B
*Steve Kerbel*
Steve has been teaching and training teachers for over 15 years, taught in the Florence Melton School for Adult Jewish Learning for 12 years, has been teaching an adult Tanakh class for 3 years and is now a Melton Site director. We will talk about strategies, activities and approaches for teaching adults.

All Things Tu B’Shevat – Making the Desert Bloom  Lighthouse C
*Anne Greenspoon – JNF*
Tu B’Shevat, the new year for the trees, marks the time when trees emerge from their winter sleep and begin a new cycle. It is a celebration of spring’s rebirth and renewal, an appreciation of the inter-connectedness of man and nature and the marker by which a tree’s age is determined. Come learn how to teach Tu B’Shevat in a kid-friendly way, about the technological and scientific ideas that make it possible for the desert to bloom. All materials will be provided.

5:45 PM  JEA Business Meeting  Grand Ballroom 5&6

6:30 PM  Ma’ariv  Lighthouse A

Dinner - Installation and Awards  Chardonnay

8:30 PM  Evening Program: Film Screening  Grand Ballroom 5&6
*Screenagers NEXT CHAPTER - Uncovering Skills for Stress Resilience for Teens*
We will view the film NEXT CHAPTER to discuss the social and emotional impact of stress and technology on our students. Jodie Goldberg and Rabbi Robin Foonberg will moderate a discussion to explore the implications demonstrated in the film and how we can work with our families.
*Sponsored by Laurence Epstein*
Learning and Libation:

Parashat Va’era and the Cardiology of Pharaoh’s Heart

Steve Kerbel

Have you ever been bothered by the fact that Pharaoh loses his free will and that God “hardens Pharaoh’s heart?” Despite overwhelming evidence of God’s power, do you wonder why Pharaoh takes so long to figure out what everyone else already knows? We will do a close reading of some of the narrative and language and see where it takes us. Adult beverages will be available.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2020

7:00 AM  Shacharit  Lighthouse A

8:00 AM  Breakfast  Grand Ballroom 4

Sponsored by Steve Kerbel / Kerbel Consulting

9:00 AM  Limmud – A Sage Begins: A Story About the Origins of Rabbi Akiva  Grand Ballroom 5&6

Dr. Barry Holtz – Jewish Theological Seminary

How did Akiva ben Yosef, born in poverty with little education begin his journey to become, arguably the greatest of the early rabbis? In this session we will look at a tale from Rabbinic literature about the “self-creation” of a sage and how he came to embrace his destiny as a scholar and teacher.

Sponsored by Charles Dimston

10:00 AM  Confronting the New Anti-Semitism  Grand Ballroom 5&6

David M. Pollock, Associate Executive Director and Director of Public Policy & Security, Jewish Community Relations Council of New York

David will address security concerns in our schools and global anti-Semitism.

11:30 AM  Morning Workshops  Lighthouse A

Planning for Retirement Begins NOW!

Mitch Smilowitz – Joint Retirement Board of Conservative Judaism

Mitch will give an overview of how the pension plan of the Joint Retirement Board works and how putting away even a small amount each month can help you build a secure financial future.

*Mitch will be available for individual and confidential consultations before or after this session.

Vision and Curriculum: The Differences Make a Difference  Lighthouse B

Dr. Barry Holtz, Jewish Theological Seminary

We will explore a few different statements of educational vision and consider the ways that those differing visions—both from general and Jewish education—can have a direct impact on the kind of curriculum decisions that a school (or teacher) might make.
Jewish Values, Social Justice

*Mina Rush – Stand with Us*

What inspires today’s youth, and how do we use Israel as the lens to give students the space to express their Jewish identity through their core values? Find out how to inspire and challenge your students to grapple with these issues as they play out in Israel. *This session repeats this afternoon.*

Better Together:

Engaging Teens in Tikkun Olam through Intergenerational Relationships

*Ari Rudolph – Better Together*

The Better Together™ program provides schools with the funding (50K+) guidance and curriculum, to give students (6th-12th grade) the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with local community seniors. Come learn how to get and maintain this multi-year grant to implement this life-changing intergenerational program in your community.

1:00 PM  Lunch  
*Grand Ballroom 4*

MTEI Reunion

Mincha  
*Lighthouse A*

2:15 PM  Afternoon Sessions I

Helping Learners Thrive Through Text Study

*Suri Jacknis / Ellen Rank – Jewish Education Project*

Participants will explore how to develop social emotional intelligences through the study of Jewish text. We will examine texts and consider how to create opportunities for learners to identify and use their own strengths in their daily lives. We will also consider how to use Jewish texts to identify problems, analyze situations, and make responsible decisions based on Jewish values. *This session repeats later this afternoon.*

Redesigning the Hebrew Reading Program with SEL

*Dr. Melissa Ser*

In every congregational school, we are tasked with the impossible. Teach children to read, understand, explore, and chant Hebrew prayers. With limited time and an ever-increasing number of social-emotional and academic challenges, we will explore best practices, new ideas, and strategies for training teachers and madrichim.

SEL with Moving Traditions

*Sarah Fox / Rabbi Diana Fersko – Moving Traditions*

Moving Traditions’ Teen and B’nai Mitzvah Programs are based on a SEL framework integrated with Jewish wisdom. Multiple years of evaluation have shown how teens in Moving Traditions programs are building SEL skills including empathy, critical thinking, and self-awareness while also deepening their Jewish identities and strengthening their connection to other Jewish teens. We will share research that shows how critical an SEL approach is to helping teens develop the skills needed for healthy and safe friendships and romantic relationships which we believe is enhanced through Jewish ethics. Come learn about Moving Traditions’ approach to supporting healthy Jewish teens and how you can implement our approach in your own institutions with families of B’nai Mitzvah students and with post B’nai Mitzvah teens.
How Mindfulness & Social-Emotional Learning Enhance the Early Childhood Classroom

Nancy Siegel

In this experiential workshop educators will learn how Social-Emotional Learning and Mindfulness work together, how they are similar and how they differ. Through a mindfulness lens, educators will learn effective ways to respond to their current work demands in order to focus on their own well-being. Participants will walk away with practical mindfulness tools and techniques for themselves and their classrooms to foster a calm and enlivened environment for harmonious learning. This session is geared to Early Childhood Educators.

3:30 PM  Coffee Break

3:45 PM  Afternoon Sessions II

Helping Learners Thrive Through Text Study

Surji Jacknis / Ellen Rank - Jewish Education Project

Participants will explore how to develop social emotional intelligences through the study of Jewish text. We will examine texts and consider how to create opportunities for learners to identify and use their own strengths in their daily lives. We will also consider how to use Jewish texts to identify problems, analyze situations, and make responsible decisions based on Jewish values.

Engaging Teens through SEL

Dr. Melissa Ser

What do Jewish teens want to gain from their connections to the synagogue? How do we know, and what do we do about it? How do we both reach our teens where they are and provide what they need in order to learn to “adult” Jewishly? SEL offers us benchmarks for guiding teens through our programming. In this workshop, we will discuss key issues, review best practices, and explore implementation strategies.

Jewish Values, Social Justice

Mina Rush – Stand with Us

What inspires today’s youth, and how do we use Israel as the lens to give students the space to express their Jewish identity through their core values? Find out how to inspire and challenge your students to grapple with these issues as they play out in Israel.

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5:30 PM  Dinner

5:30 PM  Dinner
7:00 PM  Dessert Reception  

*Honoring the Long Island Professional Staff of the Jewish Education Project and Synagogue Lay Leaders*

10:00 PM  Hospitality  

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2020**

7:30 AM  Shacharit  

8:15 AM  Breakfast  
*Sponsored by Congregation Olam Tikvah, Fairfax, VA*

Networking and Next Steps

10:00 AM  Closing Session | Our Role in Shaping the Culture: Social and Emotional Leading  
*Dr. Shira Epstein, Dean of the Davidson School of Education at JTS*

In this interactive session, we, as leaders, will have the opportunity to synthesize the themes and leaning of the conference. We will consider the opportunities and challenges of shaping a culture that elevates contemplative practice.

12:00 PM  שָׁלוֹם וַלְתֻשׁרָות  *SEE YOU IN 2021!*

1:00 pm  JEA Board Meeting begins
**OUR PRESENTERS**

**Dr. David Bryfman** is the CEO of The Jewish Education Project. After working in formal and informal Jewish educational institutions in Australia, Israel, and North America, David earned his Ph.D. in Education and Jewish Studies from NYU, focusing on the identity development of Jewish adolescents. David has authored several articles and presented broadly on topics ranging from the Jewish teenage experience, innovation and change in Jewish life, Israel education and more broadly about Jewish education. He is a founder of the annual Jewish Futures conference, lead researcher of the groundbreaking 2016 study, “Generation Now: Understanding and Engaging Jewish Teenagers Today,” and editor of “Experience and Jewish Education,” a compendium of essays written by and for Jewish experiential educators. David is an alum of the Wexner Graduate Fellowship Program and the Schusterman Fellowship. David lives in Brooklyn with his wife, Mirm and 2 children Jonah and Abby.

**Shariee Calderone** is a Senior Communal Education Consultant at The Jewish Education project and has been working in the field of Jewish education and engagement for over 15 years. Shariee explores and helps spread innovative approaches and courageous leadership in Jewish early childhood and family engagement through networking, coaching, workshops, and conferences. Shariee promotes the development of nature-inspired settings and environments and serves as a coach for Jewish Ed Project microgrant recipients. Shariee is also the project manager for Music Together Sing Shalom.

**Shellie Dickstein** is Managing Director of Early Childhood and Family Engagement for the Jewish Education Project. Shellie leads a team to facilitate professional development and change initiatives that spark and spread innovative approaches and new models in Jewish early childhood education and early family engagement that help children and families thrive. She has facilitated workshops and seminars nationally and internationally, and as adjunct faculty for HUC-JIR in New York. Shellie has written and contributed to various articles, blogs and publications such as JTS Gleanings, eJP and Jewish Family Education: A Casebook for the Twenty-first Century published by Torah Aura.

**Edward Edelstein** is the Executive Director of the Jewish Educators Assembly. His previous work includes serving as the Headmaster of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Suffolk County, a Teacher Educator and Consultant for the Etgar Curriculum and a longtime Rosh Edah and Senior Advisor at Camp Ramah, Nyack. Eddie has enjoyed a longtime relationship with Temple Beth El of Cedarhurst, NY where he has served as a Youth Director, Education Director and Executive Director. In 2007 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the Jewish Theological Seminary.

**Dr. Shira D. Epstein** is Dean of the William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education at JTS, where she has served as faculty since 2004. For 14 years, Shira was the coordinator of the Pedagogy and Teaching concentration for MA in-house students. In recent years, the practicum seminar focused on “mindfulness and classroom learning”.

**Rabbi Diana Fersko**, New York Director, oversees strategic partnerships, programming, and development for the New York area. Prior to joining Moving Traditions, Diana served at Stephen Wise Free Synagogue for seven years as Associate Rabbi. There, she worked closely with hundreds of families to strengthen Jewish identity. Diana received her ordination from Hebrew Union College in New York City, where she also earned a master’s degree in Hebrew literature. She is a proud graduate of the University of Wisconsin – Madison, where she completed her undergraduate studies with highest academic honors.

**Norman J. Fried, Ph.D.**, After receiving his PhD in Clinical and Pediatric Psychology from Emory University, Norman served as the Director of Psychosocial Services for the Cancer Center for Kids and the Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at Winthrop University and North Shore University Hospitals for eighteen years. His academic appointments include Assistant Professor in Pediatrics and Psychiatry at New York University Medical School, Adjunct Assistant Professor at St. John’s University, and Fellow in clinical and pediatric psychology at Harvard Medical School. Now in full time private practice as a grief and bereavement specialist, Norman lectures on the Practice of Psychotherapy with Critically and Terminally Ill Children and their Families at conferences across the U.S. and Europe, as well as at the Jewish Theological Seminary in NY. Additionally, he is a Disaster Mental Health Specialist for The American

Rabbi Robin Foonberg is celebrating 25 years in Jewish Education. She holds a Master’s Degree in Jewish Education from Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies and rabbinic ordination from Academy for Jewish Religion/CA. She has worked in Reform synagogues and a community day school. She has been at Congregation B’nai Israel, a conservative synagogue, for 9 years. She has served as president of Jewish Educators Association of Orange County and is proud to serve as the new president of the Jewish Educators Assembly.

Sarah Fox, Senior National Program Manager, promotes program work nationally, and manages Training Conferences and program projects at Moving Traditions. Prior to Moving Traditions, Sarah worked with the Jewish community in Canada and the US as a chaplain and Hillel Director, and then as a synagogue Executive Director. Sarah actively participates in all aspects of Jewish life, from reading Torah to teaching Hebrew School, and holds a BA Honours in Religious Studies and Music from the University of Saskatchewan.

Jodie Goldberg received a dual Master from The Jewish Theological Seminary in Jewish Education and Hebrew Bible, and served as the President of the Davidson School Student’s Association. Jodie has helped create curriculum for JCC Association’s TAG summer camp curriculum, and worked to strengthen the Hebrew High School program, Havurat Torah, at Temple Israel Center of White Plains. She is currently a Teen Engagement Consultant and Project Manager at the Jewish Education Project. Her role is working to support youth and teen professionals in the New York area through facilitating networks, educational and networking opportunities, and creating professional development events that meet the needs of teen engagement professionals today.

Anne Greenspoon is the Director of Community Engagement at Jewish National Fund. She oversees JNF’s outreach to synagogues, schools, and communities across the country to bring resources and tools to teach about Israel and encourage people to go to Israel. Anne has staffed many JNF trips to Israel for college students and educators and enjoys showing Israel through the lens of JNF. She is a life-long Jewish educator. She lives in Leesburg, VA with her family.

Emily Herzfeld has been teaching for over fourteen years in pre-schools, religious schools with various ages, after school programs, and camps. She has Masters Degrees in Early Education and Social Work. With a passion for nature and the outdoors, Emily has had the privilege to teach preschool with access to a developing outdoor classroom, and camp sessions at nature centers. Emily became certified to teach yoga to children six years ago and greatly enjoys teaching with an emphasis on mindfulness and the breath.

Dr. Barry W. Holtz is the Theodore and Florence Baumritter Professor of Jewish Education at The Jewish Theological Seminary. From 2008 to 2013 he served as dean of the William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education of JTS. Dr. Holtz has written and edited numerous publications in the field of Jewish education as well as works aimed at general audiences. In 1984, he edited Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts (Simon and Schuster), a guide to reading, understanding, and appreciating the great Jewish books. Among other books, he is the author of Textual Knowledge: Teaching the Bible in Theory and in Practice (JTS Press) which won the National Jewish Book Award for education in 2004. His most recent book is Rabbi Akiva: Sage of the Talmud (Yale University Press, 2016).

Suri Jacknis is currently Director of the Educator Networks at The Jewish Education Project where she manages a system of over 35 networks that help educators thrive as they work together on common issues. Suri personally enjoys facilitating six networks as well as working with other staff and independent network facilitators to support their work. Suri also consults to innovating congregations serving as mentor to those who are experimenting to find new ways to contribute to the well-being of their youth, families and learners. Suri holds a BA in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies and History from Brandeis University and an MA in Hebrew Literature from The Jewish Theological Seminary. Past Director of the Morasha Teacher Preparation Institute and Director of Educational Resources, she continues to facilitate workshops in congregations, day schools and conferences both locally and nationally.
Steve Kerbel is an independent education consultant in the Greater Washington DC area. Steve serves as a consultant and project director for the Center for Israel Education at Emory University in Atlanta. Prior to this, he served as Director of Education for Congregation B’nai Tzedek in Potomac, Maryland. Before this, he served as the inaugural Retreat Director of Capital Camps & Retreat Center in Waynesboro, PA. Prior to working at Capital Camps, Steve was Director of Education of Ohr Kodesh Congregation in Chevy Chase for seven years. Steve has also been a full-time faculty member at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in Rockville and an educational consultant to the Seaboard Region of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and USY. Steve is completing a two-year term as National President of the Jewish Educators Assembly. Among Steve’s avocations, he facilitates wine tastings featuring Israeli wines and teaches about the geography of diversity of Israel through its wines and wine makers.

Nancy Parkes is an educational consultant and taught Jewish Leadership at JTS for two years. She currently works with educators enrolled in a certification program in Social Emotional Learning at Rutgers University as they translate their learning into Jewish educational settings. Previously, she was the Director of Congregational Learning at Temple Israel Center in White Plains for ten years. Nancy received her M.A. degree in Jewish Studies and Education in the William Davidson School of Education at JTS and is currently earning her Ed.D there.

Ellen Rank is a Senior Congregational Education Consultant for The Jewish Education Project where she facilitates networks to build collaborative relationships among educators and help them explore and implement new innovative learning models. Ellen has taught in congregational schools, day schools, and college and mentors graduate students at the Davidson School of the Jewish Theological Seminary. She is the author and editor of many Jewish educational books by Behrman House Publishing, including *Shalom Hebrew* and the *Teachers’ Guides to Kol Yisrael*, and served as a writer and associate editor of the MaToK Bible Curriculum. Ellen holds a MA in Classical Hebrew Literature from the University of Pennsylvania and a MS in Jewish Education from the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Ari Rudolph has been the Chief Program Officer at the Legacy Heritage Fund since January 2018. From 2015-2017, he was the Planning Director of the Jewish Life Planning Department at UJA-Federation of New York, overseeing a team of grant/program officers, and from 2013-2015, was a senior program officer at that Federation overseeing Israel centric and international philanthropic grant portfolios. Born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa, Ari completed his undergraduate degree there in Finance and Economics. In 2002, he moved to Israel where he served as a lone soldier in a combat unit in the Israeli Army. Ari completed his Masters in Diplomacy and National Security at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, after which he moved to Washington D.C. (2007) to serve as the Israel Affairs Associate at the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington. From 2009-2011, Ari worked in the Department for Combating Antisemitism at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a Legacy Heritage Fellow, and from 2011-2013, was the Director of the Israel Research Fellowship in Jerusalem.

Mina Rush is the Director of Middle School Education and Programming for StandWithUs. Passionate about Jewish continuity and Israel, she believes a strong foundation and connection to Israel must be student centered and presented through the lens of the core values of today’s youth. With a team of remarkable educators, she developed LINK, an experiential curriculum currently in over 160 schools nation-wide.

Rabbi Julie Schwarzwald is currently the Director of Congregational Learning at Congregation B’nai Israel in Millburn, NJ. Her first career was as an elementary educator in public, private, and day schools. She has a BA from Wesleyan University in Education Policy Studies and an MA from Teachers College, Columbia University in Computing in Education.

Dr. Melissa Ser, CJE is the Director of Education at Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills, Michigan. She holds a MA in Jewish Educational Leadership from the Davidson School of the Jewish Theological Seminary, an MA and PhD in Literature from the University of Rochester, and a BA in English from Florida State University. Melissa is a graduate of the 8th Cohort of the Mandel Teacher Educator Institute (MTEI). She has been actively working in the field of Jewish Education for over 20 years. She and her husband Sam are the proud parents of Ariel (13), Yonatan (10), and Maya (4), and the fabulous kitten duo of Ash and Ember.

Rabbi Dave Siegel received his BA in Politics, Philosophy, and Law/History from Binghamton University and has received Masters degrees from both New York University’s Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service and the Jewish
Theological Seminary's William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education. During his time in Rabbinical School, he focused on leadership and professional development in the Jewish community. He has served in positions at Camp Ramah in the Berkshires, the Foundation for Jewish Camp, and United Synagogue Youth. Dave is currently the Executive Director of Hofstra University Hillel and lives on Long Island with his family.

**Nancy Siegel** has a Master’s in Educational Leadership and is an Educational Consultant specializing in mindfulness education and children’s yoga teacher training. She is a nationally recognized presenter, teacher trainer and instructor and began her career in the early childhood classroom. For the past 20 years she has created yoga inspired and educationally based programming that has resonated with school leaders, educators, parents, children and executives. In her work with educators she advocates, nurtures and supports teacher learning, development and growth. Her track record shows that she has what it takes to make a good teacher great and a great teacher even greater. Nancy can be reached at: nancysiegelconsulting@gmail.com, [www.nancysiegelconsulting.com](http://www.nancysiegelconsulting.com), 201-390-2809.

**Mitchell J. Smilowitz**, CPA, is the CEO of The Joint Retirement Board for Conservative Judaism (JRB). He joined the JRB in 2006 with over 20 years of experience in pension consulting, investment analysis and financial/retirement planning. He has an MBA in Accounting and Finance and completed the Certified Financial Planning Program at New York University. In his younger days, Mitch was President of his synagogue’s USY Chapter and, later, lived and worked on a kibbutz in Israel for a year. Mitch’s skill is in simplifying complex financial, tax and investment concepts and helping the professionals of the Conservative Movement achieve their retirement goals.