



# Chadashot

*Tradition • Vision • Pride*

*Celebrating the Past*

*Preparing for the Future*



CLASS OF 2005



CLASS OF 2018



## THE FACES OF SOLOMON SCHECHTER

## A Message from Head of School

### G. Ben Dachs

Dear Schechter Community,

I hope that your Yamim Tovim were filled with family time and opportunities to rejuvenate both the spirit and the ties with community. For me, it was not only a time to reflect about the future but also an opportunity to remember with fondness the school year which had passed.

Even as we begin to acknowledge our children's early achievement during this new school year, I could not help but reflect on the many accomplishments our youngsters achieved last year. I vividly recall the last few weeks of school in June traveling between the various moving up, moving on and moving out ceremonies we hosted from kindergarten to twelfth grade. What a joy it was to witness the many ways in which our children had grown throughout the year. I cannot think of any better way to get more excited and energized about this year than to review again what our school experience is really all about as reflected in this issue of Chadashot.

We thank you for entrusting us with your children for another year in which you have our pledge that we will continue to encourage intellectual pursuit and character development within the framework of Torah values and love of Israel.

Best wishes for a wonderful 5766.



**After 11 years as a fourth-grade teacher at SSDS, Sandi Swerdloff is now an Assistant Principal.**

"As assistant principal, my personal goal is to ensure that students are provided with a nurturing, risk-free learning environment, where they will develop the ability to think for themselves, trust their decisions, cultivate their self-confidence, and ultimately become lifelong learners."

## A Message from Your Board President

### Les Stern

Dear Schechter Community,

First, and foremost, I want to wish all of you a Shana Tovah U'mtuka, a good and sweet year!

There is a saying that to understand life, one must look back, and to live life, one must look forward. In looking back, I am proud to report that the past school year was one of significant accomplishment by the Board of Directors, administration, and faculty. The sale of our property in Old Westbury will provide the basis of an endowment that will help secure the financial future of our school. The creation of this long-term asset, along with the implementation of a three-year strategic plan, covering all the major issues affecting our children's education, have formed a strong foundation upon which we can build our future.

In looking forward, the Board, administration, and faculty are all working hard to enhance our educational offering, grow our student body, effect significant capital improvements, broaden the participation by parents in our school's decision-making process, and significantly strengthen our development/fundraising opportunities.

As the New Year begins, I and the Board look forward to working with you to better "understand and live" the life of our Schechter family.



**After three years as a resource room teacher at SSDS, Liane Bain is now Director of Pupil Services.**

Mrs. Bain will be working with teachers to meet the needs of all students, and will be fostering relationships with the parents and home districts of students who have been classified as needing special support services.

"I look forward to developing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the families and teachers of Solomon Schechter Day School. It is going to be a wonderful year of growing, sharing, learning, and exploring together!"

# SSDS PRINCIPAL PHILIP DICKSTEIN Broadens the Horizons of Jewish Day School Education



Solomon Schechter Day School Principal Philip Dickstein participated in three intensive international Jewish educational development programs this past summer. Each program enabled him to enhance his professional

skills, and afforded him the privilege of sharing his experiences with others who work in the field of Jewish Day School education.

During the past three summers, Mr. Dickstein worked with the Joseph L. Lookstein Program at Bar Ilan University in Ramat Gan, Israel. As a mentor, he helped staff from other Jewish Day Schools examine the culture of their schools and develop a plan to spark changes that will further develop the professionalism and effectiveness of the Jewish and general educations they provide. Using

the same methods, Mr. Dickstein is working to initiate changes in the growing and evolving environment of SSDS.

"Working with talented and committed administrators from different streams of Judaism helps me appreciate the richness and wonderful diversity of Klal Yisrael," stated Mr. Dickstein. "It also strengthens my appreciation of Solomon Schechter Day School and what makes it successful, and better enables me to tackle the challenges it faces."

In the United States, Mr. Dickstein has been involved with the two-year Mandel Teacher Education Initiative (MTEI), which has included three five-day seminars in Chicago, and a ten-day seminar this summer in Israel. He joined with other day school and synagogue administrators to intensively explore the field of teaching, and has also been privileged to work with several of the most noted Jewish educators in the world today, including Rabbi Daniel Gordis, Director of the

Mandel Foundation's Jerusalem Fellows Program and author of several books including *Home to Stay* and *If A Place Can Make You Cry*.

Mr. Dickstein also facilitated an intensive three-day workshop teaching Jewish Day School staff members from around the country how to implement MaToK, a Bible curriculum that is designed for Conservative Jewish Day Schools (and is used by SSDS). He worked with ten teachers from four different schools explaining the program's underlying principles and how to apply them in the classroom, using SSDS as a model for how MaToK can be implemented effectively.

"The guiding principle of our work in Jewish Day School educational development can best be summed up by a t-shirt I saw in Israel," Dickstein said. "The best way to predict the future is to invent it." Mr. Dickstein encourages staff to embrace that philosophy and help students to think beyond the classroom.

# THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

## MOVING FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE AND PRIDE

The Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island Class of 2005 spent the last few days of their senior year reminiscing with their fellow classmates and teachers, sharing fond memories, and saying their final good-byes. The Class of 2005 has served as role models and mentors and will be remembered for their academic achievements, their dedication to their school and community, their loyalty to Israel, and their devotion and commitment to their Jewish faith.

During their trip to Israel, the Senior Class purchased a Havdallah Set and Challah Cover as their gift to the high school. Both of these

articles will be used to enhance the annual Shabbaton experience for our students.

As they stood together for the last time during their graduation ceremony, proud family, faculty, and invited guests could not help but be amazed by the graduates' self-confidence and new found sense of maturity. While their high school career has ended, they are approaching the next phase of their life with the academic skills needed to be competitive in a global workforce, and the social awareness to make significant contributions to humanity. Our thanks and congratulations to the members of the Class of 2005!

## A YEAR OF FIRSTS

The kindergarten curriculum is designed to prepare students for a lifetime of challenges and achievements. The day is a blend of English and Hebrew classes designed to introduce students to the academic skills that are the foundation of a successful transition to first grade.

As a Conservative Day School, mitzvah is taught, experienced, and celebrated in all phases of the school day. Kindergarten students are immersed in Hebrew, learning about Israel, the Torah, Shabbat, and the holidays through drama, songs, and group activities.

A sense of self-awareness and concern for others is also nurtured as students become more confident in their abilities and develop the social skills needed to positively interact with others. Learning to follow rules, developing listening and speaking skills, accepting responsibility for one's action, and learning to become a productive member of the Solomon Schechter Community are all integral components of the kindergarten experience.

The graduating Class of 2017 concluded their first school year with a Moving Up Day commemorating their remarkable first steps down the lifelong path of learning.

## HONORING THE PAST

Fifth-grade students culminated their six years in elementary school with a celebration that showcased their yearlong theme of immigration. The students performed songs and dances from their American and Israeli heritage and celebrated the Delet I'Mitzvah – *Open The Door To Mitzvah* program that enabled them to make positive and lasting contributions to the school and community.

A tradition at Solomon Schechter Day School was also celebrated as graduating fifth-grade students passed the American and Israeli flags to the upcoming members of the fifth-grade class.



## The Future Looks Bright

The past nine years have been dedicated to preparing the eighth-grade Class of 2005 for a successful transition into high school and to build upon the strong academic foundation and religious beliefs that distinguish them as Solomon Schechter students.

Since 2002-2003, an average of 30% of students have achieved Mastery Level (defined as scoring 85% or higher) on the New York State Earth Science Regents and 40% have achieved Mastery Level on the New York State Hebrew Regents. This, among other outstanding academic and religious achievements, has fully prepared the eighth-grade for the challenges of high school.



# SSDS Students Garner State and Nationwide Attention

Six students at Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island were recently recognized for outstanding achievements in academics, leadership, art, athletics, and community service.



Reyzl Geselowitz, Jordan Hoch, and Elah Lanis (left to right) have been selected as Semifinalists for the 2006 National Merit Scholarship Program based on the scores they achieved on the 2004 Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Out of the 1.3 million participants in the nation, the Semifinalists represent less than one percent. These outstanding students will have the opportunity to advance to Finalist status, making them eligible for thousands of dollars in scholarships, based on their academic record and other high school accomplishments.

Sophomore Lauren Koenig was selected by the Board of Regents and the New York State Archives as the recipient of the 2005 Laura and Robert Chodos Award for Excellence in Student Research Using Historical Records, Grades 9-12. Laura's entry, a documentary entitled *Image Against Ideology: Edward R. Murrow and Senator McCarthy Battle for National Understanding*, was described by the review panel as "an excellent project showing real thinking and a concise view of a difficult topic."



Elah Lanis, Reyzl Geselowitz, and Dannielle Stern, and Rachel Simonson (left to right), seniors at SSHSLI, received the Young Women of Achievement Award from the National Organization of Women (NOW), the largest feminist activist organization in the country. They have been recognized for their leadership and dedication to academics, athletics, the arts, and community service.

## SUCCESS SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

The true test of a rigorous academic curriculum is when it is challenged outside the confines of the classroom in a broader competitive atmosphere. None is more competitive than the college admissions process where students, on a national and international level, are competing for the same highly coveted admission opportunities. Members of the Class of 2005 met the challenge and were accepted to the following colleges and universities:

American University  
Bard College  
Boston University  
Brandeis University  
Brown University  
Bucknell University  
C.W. Post Campus  
Carnegie Mellon  
University  
Case Western Reserve  
University  
Clark University  
Colgate University  
Columbia University  
Cornell University  
CUNY Baruch College  
CUNY Hunter College

CUNY New York City  
College of Technology  
CUNY Queens College  
Florida Atlantic University  
Florida State University  
Fordham University  
George Washington  
University  
Goucher College  
Hofstra University  
Indiana University  
Ithaca College  
Johnson & Wales  
University  
List College/ Columbia  
Lynn University  
Maryland Institute -

College of Art  
Maryland University -  
College Park  
Marymount College  
Fordham University  
McGill University  
Mitchell College  
Muhlenberg College  
Nassau Community  
College  
New York Institute of  
Technology  
New York University  
Northeastern University  
Oberlin College  
Occidental College  
Pace University

Quinnipiac University  
Skidmore College  
St. John's University  
SUNY Albany  
SUNY Binghamton  
SUNY Buffalo  
SUNY Farmingdale  
SUNY Oneonta  
SUNY Purchase  
SUNY Stony Brook  
SUNY Westbury  
Syracuse University  
Towson University  
Tulane University  
Union College  
University of Arizona  
University of Delaware

University of Florida  
University of Hartford  
University of Maryland  
University of  
Massachusetts  
University of Miami  
University of Michigan  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Rhode Island  
University of Rochester  
University of Tampa  
University of Vermont  
Vassar College  
Washington University  
Wellesley College  
Wells College  
Wesleyan University

## Shabbaton - Coming Together

Each year the students and staff at Solomon Schechter High School spend time together away from the confines of the classroom to discuss the challenges and choices they face, and to introduce peer mentors to the freshman class. These senior mentors, who volunteer their services, best represent the values and ideals embraced by the student body

and faculty. "The emotional and social development of our students is equally important to us as is their academic achievement," stated Head of School G. Ben Dachs. "Spending quality time together sends a clear message to our students that as a family we care about who they are and who they become in the future."



# Kivunim 2005 *Connecting With Israel*

Thirteen teachers from Solomon Schechter Day School attended the Kivunim program in Israel this summer, coordinated by SSHS Assistant Principal Adele Spickler. The annual program is a two-week long excursion designed to expose Jewish Day School teachers and staff to the lives and culture of Israelis so they can bring back a newly enriched Jewish spirit to share with their students and coworkers.

“What do American Jews mean when they say they feel ‘connected with Israel?’” asked Kivunim founder Peter Geffen, who has personally attended the trip each year since the program began in 1999 and raises about two-thirds of the trip’s expenses for all participants. “They don’t know the reality of the culture and the politics. So we immerse them in it by taking groups of Jewish Day School staff to workplaces, museums, and theaters. They get

to know each other and their fellow Israelis, and become united in their deepened faith and broadened understanding.”

Kindergarten teacher Levana Lichter was particularly impressed by Ne’ot Kedumim, where the lives of Biblical Israelis were recreated. She recalls seeing how oil, wine, and bread were made and how Israel’s seven major crops - wheat, barley, grapes, pomegranates, figs, olives, and dates - are grown.

“The experiences have been absorbed in us all and will manifest themselves in so many ways when we teach or talk about Israel with our students,” stated Mrs. Lichter. “We now have a better understanding of the difficulties Israel is facing, how Israelis solve problems, and how we Jews around the world can remember our past and incorporate it into our lives.”

## 2005 KIVUNIM PARTICIPANTS

### Middle/High School

Esther Gadon  
Howard Levine  
Ruth Meir  
Sara Poniachek  
Linda Rabino

### Elementary

Tsipy Becker  
Loretta Gross  
Hannah Hirsch  
Levana Lichter  
Lizet Romano  
Aviva Stern  
Sara Vaday  
Shoshana Zaifman

## Curriculum Development - A CONTINUOUS JOURNEY

Several teachers from SSDS attended summer conferences and workshops where they received extensive instruction on the implementation of innovative and deeply researched curricula, for both General and Judaic studies, that are used around the country.

### Open Circle

Seven elementary teachers attended a two-day conference at the Solomon Schechter School in Westchester where they learned how to implement the Open Circle curriculum, which is designed to address the need for social and emotional learning in all grades. Teachers discussed Open Circle with the leaders of the program, practiced techniques such as using nonverbal language and initiating discussions about everyday emotional issues students face, and critiqued each other’s approaches. Kindergarten teacher Pam Shampman says she most looks forward to engaging in one of the principle components of the curriculum, which is “having a time set aside to sit in a circle and initiate group discussions about everyday issues that are so important to the social

and emotional well being of the students.”

You can learn more about the *Open Circle* program by visiting [www.open-circle.org](http://www.open-circle.org).

### Math Trailblazers

SSDS of Nassau County Assistant Principal Sandi Swerdloff attended a conference in Mahwah, New Jersey, focusing on the implementation of a rigorous curriculum, entitled Math Trailblazers – a standards and research-based program that integrates math and science. The program empowers elementary students to solve problems using scientific methods. With this curriculum, students will become engaged in problem solving and logical reasoning that can be applied to everyday life. During the summer, all General Studies teachers participated in a day-long workshop facilitated by Ms. Swerdloff. The workshop was both

well received and very productive.

To learn more about *Math Trailblazers*, you can visit [www.kendallhunt.com](http://www.kendallhunt.com) and click “K-12,” and then “Elementary.”

### WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

#### Open Circle

Ronit Barr  
Gila Caelv

Loretta Gross  
Guila Marrache  
Pam Shampman  
Amanda Shyman  
Sara Vaday

#### Tal Am

Dorrit Sherman  
Aviva Stern

Math Trailblazers  
Sandi Swerdloff

### Tal Am

Elementary teachers Dorrit Sherman and Aviva Stern participated in a workshop on Tal Am, a Hebrew studies curriculum that employs a variety of activities such as music, games, and visual aids, which utilize each of the five senses. The program is designed to make the study of Hebrew and Judaism relevant to the students’ everyday lives.

Ms. Sherman enjoys the curriculum immensely because it allows students to learn Hebrew and Jewish history “with love, joy, and ease.”

You can learn more about the *Tal Am* program at [www.talam.org](http://www.talam.org).

## A Brighter Look For Solomon Schechter

SSDS students are seeing some bright and colorful building improvements at both the Jericho and Glen Cove campuses this year.

Three of the kindergarten classrooms at the Elementary School in Jericho have been repainted white or bright yellow and new furniture has been ordered, giving each room a cheerful new atmosphere. Repainting was also done at the Solomon Schechter campus in Glen Cove, as well as some additional landscaping.

At the Middle School in Glen Cove, old carpeting has been replaced, as needed, with

polished wood floors and tiling. In addition, rooms 309 A and B of the middle school have been converted into one larger classroom to accommodate a thriving student body and create a more interactive environment.

“Regular remodeling and refinishing are part of the educational package,” stated Solomon Schechter High School’s Assistant Administrator Howard Plotsker. “A sound education doesn’t come only from text books, but is enhanced by a comfortable, secure environment.”



# Kids Who Care OPERATION BACKPACK



In light of the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, the students of Solomon Schechter Day School collected 350 backpacks and many school supplies for victimized children who have been displaced to other schools. The drive culminated with a special ceremony at SSDS where several students expressed thoughts and prayers for the victims before placing the backpacks into boxes to be shipped to the Gulf Coast. SSDS Principal Philip Dickstein and Assistant Principal Sandi Swerdloff thanked the students for their caring of others and their dedication to mitzvah.



## Alumni Making a Difference

Solomon Schechter High School alumnus Eytan Kurshan (Class of 2004) visited with elementary students at SSDS to share stories of his adventures as a cross-country cyclist. Eytan spent eight weeks of his summer biking from Providence, Rhode Island, to Seattle, Washington (3,850 miles) to raise money for Habitat for Humanity, an organization that builds homes for underprivileged families. Eytan and his fellow participants rode in rain or shine, and raised \$300,000, which is enough to build an entire home.



Eytan emphasized to the students that his expedition was an important way of practicing *gimilut chasadim*, “acts of love and kindness.”

“You don’t only have to help others,” Eytan explained to the students. “*Gimilut chasadim* should also be a way of helping yourself. Helping people through my love of cycling makes me feel good.”

Eytan is no stranger to community service. Last year, he participated in a five-day ride from the northern to the southern end of Israel, raising money and awareness about the environment.

Eytan expressed his appreciation to the teachers at SSDS for instilling in him an understanding of the importance of mitzvah and *gimilut chasadim*. He now attends Brown University where he is studying economics.

## Where Are You Now?

While the years students spend as part of the Solomon Schechter family are filled with challenges, accomplishments, and memories to last a lifetime, there is also a world full of opportunities after graduation. The caring doesn’t stop when students graduate. Teachers and faculty would love to hear about SSDS alumni’s latest adventures and achievements.

Please contact Bonnie Cahn at [senoracahn@aol.com](mailto:senoracahn@aol.com) and share your latest experiences!

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