

CELEBRATING AN INCREDIBLE YEAR

Bringing a Dream to Life

One year ago, members from across the Great Neck community embarked on the initial stages of a mission to create a unique program that would teach Judaic Studies to students with special education needs, utilizing a comprehensive, individualized and supportive approach. As our inaugural year concludes, it is our pleasure and joy to share the incredible



accomplishments of our Kindergarten and First grade students: they have mastered the Alef-Bet, practiced blending and understanding full Hebrew sentences, became fluent in the core components of *Tefillah* and one student is ready to enter a mainstream Yeshiva classroom for the upcoming academic year.

One way in which we facilitate learning is through cross-curriculum activities. For example, in our Tu B'Shvat unit, we used a familiar English book about the holiday and transposed new Hebrew words

to be read in lieu of the English words. Through this approach, our students were able to practice reading, learn new words, and absorb more information about the holiday, while associating all of it with a story that is already imprinted in their memory. Through this

unique approach, we make Hebrew and Judaism accessible – as one parent put it:

“Meorot illuminates and brings light to the world by giving yiddishkeit to precious Jewish children who may not have another effective outlet through which to attain it.”

As we transition from a dream to a reality, we must express our deepest gratitude to Hashem for enabling this to happen, to our supporters for your generosity, to our board and staff for your tireless efforts, to our parents for your faith in us and to our students for inspiring us.

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THIS INCREDIBLE JOURNEY!

A GLIMMER OF MEOROT...

At Meorot, our main goal in reading is to improve phonemic awareness and comprehension of the Hebrew language. We teach sound-symbol connections using a multi-sensory approach by presenting the visual information (letters and vowels) with the associated sounds while integrating hand gestures, body movement and other cues so our students can master Hebrew sound structures. Next, our students engage in decoding activities to improve fluency. Finally, after much practice, our students can think about and manipulate these sounds into meaningful words.



PARENTS' CORNER: "GOING TO SHUL"

Our son has come a long way in his ability to follow along with the davening in a siddur. Even when he is home, he opens up his siddur and sings the words to the best of his ability. I truly believe that in these moments Hashem opens up the heavens to listen to him. Our son used to shy away from the thought of going to shul on Shabbat, and the singing and crowded atmosphere of shul made him anxious. But since starting at Meorot, he not only wants to go to shul with his father every Shabbat, but independently asks to go. He usually brings his siddur with him.



Whereas our son never used to like having a kippah on his head, he started wearing one to shul. Even more recently, he started wearing one every day to school as well. Overall, the development we've seen in our son's Jewish identity over the past year has been incredible.

MEET THE MEOROT TEAM

Program Director -
Rabbi Bradley
Hercman, PsyD



Rabbi Dr. Bradley Hercman's passion for Jewish Special Education is palpable. In his role as Program Director, he oversees all the activities of Meorot, including community relations, recruitment, admissions, consultation and transition planning. Tapping into his expertise as a psychologist, Rabbi, and educator, he has worked tirelessly to build Meorot into a unique, innovative, supportive and engaging program. Under his guidance, Meorot has experienced a tremendously successful first year: students learned how to read, staff created a Jewish Special Education curriculum, parents experienced unprecedented levels of *nachas*, the community united to support Jewish special education, and the stigma around learning challenges in Great Neck has diminished. At the conclusion of each session, Rabbi Dr. Hercman leads an educational *tefillah* to introduce students to the core components and procedures of Jewish prayer. One of his proudest additions to Meorot has been the Community Lecture Series, which has served as an educational and emotional support for parents of children with special education needs, as well as Rabbis, teachers, school administrators and the community at large.

Meorot is an innovative Judaic Studies Special Education program, providing elementary aged students with an inspired Modern Orthodox Jewish education.



Thank you for being part of an incredible year at Meorot. For more information, visit our website www.meorotgn.org or contact our Program Director at 516.215.4551 or RabbiHercman@meorotgn.org