

# Westchester Jewish Center

## Shabbat and Holiday Youth Programs

2017-2018



Shalom Parents,

At the Westchester Jewish Center, our youth programs are geared for children in all ages. Our services are scheduled for each Shabbat morning and Jewish holiday as they appear on the calendar. Qualified members of our community lead each service on a rotating schedule. Our goal is to provide the best quality Jewish education for your children in a stimulating and nurturing environment. We hope to build an environment for each child that creates a desire to learn and understand, as well as practice, the rituals of Judaism.

The faculty has designed the curriculum for each program in order to ensure that it is creative and encourages interest by each child. Each week, children will spend time learning new prayers, discussing the Torah portion and reviewing the customs of any holiday on our calendar. Children will always be encouraged to participate in all parts of our service.

To succeed in our endeavor we need the help and support of our parents. All parents are encouraged to be as active and supportive as possible in your children's Jewish education. The more involved you become both at home and here at Westchester Jewish Center the more meaningful you and your children's experience on Shabbat can be. In order to help us succeed in our Shabbat services, parents may be encouraged to attend services in the sanctuary while their child is benefiting from our youth programs.

Our faculty hopes that this handbook will give a broad overview of the programs that that we have to offer the members of our WJC community.

I look forward to working closely with you and your family. Please feel free to speak with me throughout the school year with any thoughts, suggestions or concerns you may have.

A happy and sweet new year to you all.  
Shana Tova U'mtoka!

Aleza Kulp  
Director of Education

## **Torah for Tots**

In the Torah for Tots service, children and parents together are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the service. We invite young children to sing songs, dance together, clap hands and enjoy learning about Shabbat.

Our engaging and creative teachers lead an age appropriate service for children in Nursery School through Kindergarten. Once children in Kindergarten become comfortable with the service and prayer, they are encouraged to begin attending Junior Congregation. The Torah for Tots service runs from 10:45-11:45AM. Each week a Kiddush of challah and grape juice follows the service.

In Torah for Tots, parents are encouraged to remain with children for this special hour.

## **Youth Service**

Teaching a child to be "counted" in the community is an essential part of their development in the Jewish community. It is our hope in our Youth Service that their experience will last a lifetime and will certainly contribute toward a child's development as a responsible Jewish adult.

These services, which are geared for children in 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade, begin each week at 10:45 AM and conclude at approximately 11:45AM.

With the guidance of our resourceful Youth Service staff, the children lead one another in the Shabbat morning service. A Siddur is provided to each student with prayers including the Shabbat morning Torah service. During the course of the school year, new prayers will be introduced and taught to the children.

During the service, our clergy will make every attempt to visit and wish the children a Shabbat Shalom. In addition, the clergy may lead a discussion or prayer with the group.

## **Shabbat Learning Programs**

It is our goal to unify WJC children as they learn about Shabbat and pray together. Beginning this coming school year, we will be expanding our Shabbat Youth programs and creating a new opportunity for all children in our community in 1st through 6th grades to learn together on Shabbat morning.

The Shabbat Learning programs will be held five times this year from 10:00 – 12:00 pm as an extension of our weekly Youth Services. Various educators including our

Education Director, Aleza Kulp, will lead them. During the course of the morning, children will participate in their own Shabbat morning service, study the weekly Torah portion, learn about various upcoming holidays on the calendar and participate in the service in the main sanctuary.

Please look at your synagogue calendar and weekly e-mails for the dates for our Shabbat Learning Programs.

### **Adult Participation**

In Torah for Tots, parents are encouraged to remain with children for this special hour. Once children begin participating in our Youth Services, we ask parents to begin making the transition of leaving their child in the strong hands of our capable faculty. This allows the parents in the sanctuary to pray with our clergy and the community.

### **Special Occasions**

#### **Kiddush**

At the conclusion of our Torah for Tots, children participate in a Kiddush of challah and grape juice. Our older children are encouraged to participate in the conclusion of the sanctuary service and join the community for the sponsored WJC Kiddush.

If any family would like to sponsor a Kiddush for the children, please contact Aleza Kulp to make appropriate arrangements.

#### **Birthdays**

If a child is celebrating a birthday, and his or her family would like to bring a special snack for the Shabbat group, please contact Aleza Kulp to arrange a Kiddush in honor of the child's birthday.