

VBS ECC NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER, 2014



A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTORS

Gratitude is a central theme in Judaism. When we wake up in the morning, the first thing we do is express gratitude for our existence. When we come together as a community, or in celebration, we say a prayer of gratitude for the opportunity.

We feel better about ourselves and others when we know that we are appreciated, and expressing gratitude to those around us enhances our relationships. Perhaps it is not so surprising then, that modern science has demonstrated that practicing and experiencing gratitude actually makes us better learners as well. Areas of our brain that are activated in the presence of gratitude – either expressed gratitude or received gratitude – are those areas of the brain that perform higher-level thinking skills, such as reasoning and analysis. In contrast, in the presence of fear or anger, the opposite of gratitude, our “higher brain” shuts down, and the “lower brain,” sometimes known as our reptilian brain, is activated.

Gratitude as a core Jewish value is more than just a “warm fuzzy”. By opening our hearts, we open our brains, and learning and relating to others is enhanced. By incorporating a daily practice of gratitude in our daily lives, we train our brains to remain in this open state. There are many ways to do this in our families that build on Jewish traditions. There are lots of fun gratitude games that you can incorporate on a daily basis. Try sharing gratitudes at meal times, before bedtime, at bath time, or in the car on the way to school. Create your own funny little song for your family, to express different gratitudes each day. Create a family gratitude jar to keep on your kitchen counter. Let everyone help decorate it, and fill it too!

Let this month of gratitude mark the beginning of new family traditions that will improve relationships, happiness, and learning.

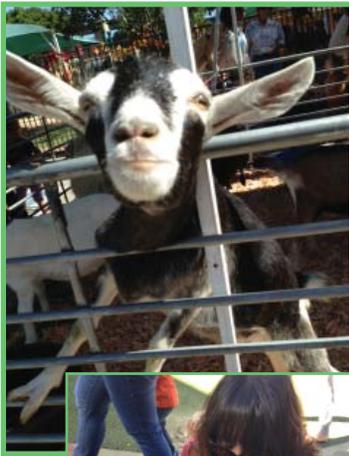
ECC NOVEMBER DATES TO REMEMBER

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| 11/2 Mitzvah Day- Cycles 4 Smiles 9:30-11:00am | 11/22 Tot Shabbat 10AM |
| 11/5 1PM Early Dismissal for Parent/Teacher Conferences | 11/26 1PM Early Dismissal |
| 11/6 ECC CLOSED- Parent-Teacher Conferences | 11/27-28 Thanksgiving Break
ECC CLOSED |
| 11/7 Community Pot Luck Shabbat 5:30pm | |
| 11/8 Tot Shabbat 10AM | |
| 11/11 Veteran's Day-ECC CLOSED | |
| 11/14-16 ECC Family Retreat- Brandeis-Bardin, Simi Valley | |
| 11/19 PA Meeting 6:30PM | |
| 11/19 Kindergarten Readiness 7:30pm | |



HARVEST FESTIVAL ROUND-UP

The ECC Harvest Festival was a joyful romp through Autumn for our entire ECC community. A HUGE THANK YOU to Harvest Festival Chair Liza Ruszecki and every parent who helped make this day an extra-special one for our children. Here are a few photo highlights. For more captured moments, please visit VBS ECC Facebook and Instagram.



ECC YOUNG FAMILY RETREAT 11/14-16-REGISTER TODAY!

Have you registered for the ECC Weekend Retreat? Join us for a memorable weekend with our ECC families as we connect through nature, Judaism and community spirit **Friday, November 14-16th** at the beautiful Brandeis- Bardin Institute in Simi Valley. Comfy beds, private bathrooms, three delicious meals (and snacks!) set in the mountains is the perfect 'glamping' experience for your family. We even provide evening babysitters for special evening events just for parents. **Registration is limited, so please sign up soon.** Registration forms are available at the front desk, on EduLoops Forms & Flyers and in Claire's office. Join us for the beauty and serenity of Shabbat in this glorious surrounding, surrounded by your friends from the ECC.



We have enough stuff in the world -- it's just not in the right places.

- Becky Morrison

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES - 11/5 & 6

Our ECC Parent-Teacher Conference, offer you an invaluable insight into your child's day-to-day growth and development. Be sure to sign up in your classroom for either an evening or day time conference on November 5th or 6th.

Please note: We'll be offering complimentary childcare for ECC children only in the courtyard on 11/6 during your Parent-Teacher conference time.



MITZVAH DAY IS 11/2 - GET YOUR FAMILY INVOLVED!

Teach your children the beauty of a Mitzvah by attending The Mitzvah Day ECC Cycles 4 Smiles Trike-a-thon which raises money for Beit Issie Shapiro in Israel and Our Space. Both organizations provide a specialized Jewish education for children and young adults with special needs. Please be sure to let your children know that when they ride their trikes and bounce in the bouncy house they are actually making a donation to these two wonderful causes,. We'll also be decorating lunch bags and making handprint cards for patients at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

Meet us on the ECC Play Yard Sunday 11/2 @ 9:30-11:30 AM for this family-friendly Mitzvah Day fundraiser and begin a lifelong family tradition of Tikkun Olam (Healing the World).

A poster for 'MITZVAH DAY and the Valley Beth Shalom Chesed Fair'. The text on the poster includes 'Sunday, November 2, 2014' and '9 am - 12 pm, at VBS'. The poster features various icons at the top and bottom, including a pencil, a sandwich, a bicycle, a kite, a book, a house, a yarn ball, a shoe, a jar, a coin, a blue container, a globe, and logos for 'The Jewish Federation' and 'Valley Beth Shalom Chesed Connection'.



Tot Shabbat Family services are filled with joyful singing, story telling and family friendly prayers. Join fellow ECC families November 8th & 22nd @10:00am in Burdoff Hall.

When I see you through my eyes, I think we are different. When I see you through my heart, I know we are the same.

-Doe Zantamata

ECC PARENT ASSOCIATION UPDATE

October was such a great month at the ECC! Thank you to all of the parents who dedicated their time to make our Harvest Festival a major success. We had more than 40 parents help out during the day—and this included a few dads that came straight from work in ties! We look forward to the same enthusiastic participation all year long.

Our monthly Parent Association meeting was such a treat with Brenda and Michele there to teach us about the Reggio philosophy. Stay tuned for more parenting education during upcoming meetings. November's meeting is on November 19th at 6:30pm (followed by a session on Kindergarten Readiness)—line up your babysitter and come join us!

ECC shirts (\$12) and sweatshirts (\$20) are still for sale in sizes 2 through 6. We will be announcing upcoming Spirit Days soon, so make sure your kids can join the fun wearing their shirts and sweatshirts. Lastly, please join our private group on Facebook, Valley Beth Shalom ECC Parent Association, to stay up to date on important news! Have fun at Mitzvah Day on Sunday, November 2!

SIMCHAT TORAH CELEBRATION AT THE ECC

ECC preschoolers had a rare opportunity to view the Torah fully unrolled, up close and were treated to a story from Rabbi Josh about how a Torah is made, read and preserved for generations of Jewish families. Our Simchat Torah celebration inspired many questions from your children as they learned about their connection to the Torah. Biblical characters came to life, including Noah, Abraham, Moses and Miriam as our children were surrounded by the sacred scroll.



Follow us on Instagram!
<http://instagram.com/vbsecc>



We've got a great page on Pinterest! Check out fun-filled activities, crafts, recipes and inspirational ideas specially selected for preschool parents. Search **VBS ECC Preschool** and join the fun.

Please join our Facebook community!
"Like" the Valley Beth Shalom ECC Preschool page.
Get a joyful glimpse into your child's day. This is a great way for you to share your child's preschool experience with loved ones across the world. We often post great candid shots that you can share friends and family. Remember, for security reasons,

Nothing is impossible. The word itself says "I'm possible!"
- Audrey Hepburn

KINDERGARTEN READINESS



It's never too soon to get ready for kindergarten! Our directors will guide you on this exciting journey November 19th, at 7:30pm right after the evening Parent Association Meeting at 6:30PM. **Plan to attend both!**

- * *Will my child be ready for Kindergarten?*
- * *How is TK and Pre-K preparing my child for Kindergarten?*
- * *How do I choose a Kindergarten?*

These questions and many more will be answered during this informative evening.

LINKS WE LOVE: LIVE IN THE MOMENT

We hear a lot about the importance of living in the moment but as parents we are often distracted and miss the opportunities that may bring us the most positive energy, connection to our family and our sanity! Here's a link to the Huffington Post's recent article listing **4 Simple Ways to Live in the Moment** :

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/22/mindfulness-tips_n_6016326.html?utm_hp_ref=healthy-living



KIDTALK

As we celebrated the High Holidays, your children had some touching observations about Jewish tradition and celebrations surrounding these special days. Here's a quote from Room #112's Drew:



"There's books in the Torah from G-d. Mom and Dad taught me that. Torahs have little covers that cover them so you don't get germs in the Torah."

ONE LITTLE PERSON MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE!
Get your family involved in social action. Contact VBS Social Action Chair Brooke Wirtschafter (bwirtschafter@vbs.org) for family-friendly opportunities to make a positive difference in the world.

Play energizes and enlivens us. It eases our burdens. It renews our natural sense of optimism and opens us up to new possibilities.

- Stuart Brown

VBS DAY SCHOOL NEWS



Ariela Nehemne
with Richard Sandler,
VP of Milken Family
Foundation

VBS Day School Teacher Receives Milken Jewish Educator Award

Ariela Nehemne, VBS Day School's Kindergarten Hebrew and Judaic Studies Teacher, was awarded the prestigious Milken Jewish Educator Award last month at an all school spirit assembly. Ariela is one of only four teachers in the entire Los Angeles Jewish community to receive the award this year. Ariela is a master teacher who has a deep passion and love for her students, and their ability to learn Hebrew in a natural, dynamic, and multi-faceted way. Speaking only Hebrew to her eager Kindergarten students, the language and our Jewish heritage comes alive through music, art, cooking, drama, movement, and authentic Hebrew children's literature. Her students speak, sing, and dance as if this were the only language they have ever known. The light that Ariela brings also goes beyond the classroom. She has led the Hebrew department in initiating best practices of the Hebrew At the Center program, mentoring the entire staff to teach toward Hebrew proficiency. She is also a leader in curriculum mapping, guiding the faculty in documenting the Hebrew language curriculum. Ariela joins three other Day School staff members who have won the distinguished Milken Jewish Educator Award: Tamar Raff (2003), Bilha Schechter (2007), and Coach Sam (2010).



Happy Thanksgiving!

Make some delicious memories
with treasured family and friends.

Gobble! Gobble!



WE HAVE A BIG WINNER
HERE AT THE ECC!
BE SURE TO ASK SARA
(ROOM 107) ALL ABOUT HER
EXCITING ADVENTURES ON
"LET'S MAKE A DEAL!"

EDULOOPS QUESTIONS?

Contact Claire Berger,
cberger@vbs.org for
assistance.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

Please contribute to the ECC Newsletter!
Email your thoughts, suggestions, interesting links and
adorable pictures to me, Claire Berger, your ECC News
Gatherer. My email is: cberger@vbs.org
We value all your contributions.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

- Margaret Mead