



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

SUSAN ALPERT

I was thinking the other day about this thing called success!

I never really thought much about success, but more about doing the best that one can. Sure, there are little triumphs that I feel successful about, like finishing a complicated project, seeing the support and interest in our school grow, enjoying the stability of staff who return year after year and observing the building of friendships among the children and parents (I still have friends from my own children's nursery years). But is this what success is all about?

I suppose that feeling good about oneself is most important. Just like enthusiasm, success can be contagious. When in a positive environment others want to achieve and excel, including children. And this is how the topic of success popped into my head. It is because of a phone call from a former Nursery School child who called to say hello. Clearly, her experience here was memorable enough that she still thinks about her friends and teachers. She has since moved out of the city, and called to tell us that she is now an "expert reader" and wants to come back to read in her old classroom. I think that I have figured out for me what success is all about and how to measure it!

When I was growing up, spring was a big deal! One of my jobs was to paint the white picket fence in our front yard; another was to trim the beautiful yellow forsythia bushes with my father. But there was another ritual that I remember vividly: going out to the garden to check on the progress of our planted horseradish plant, which would be displayed prominently on our Seder plate. Each year after the horseradish root was used at the Seder, we rooted it again for planting. We used that one root for as long I remember!

I find the memories of these rituals both comforting and important with regard to early childhood. While many of you may not have access to a garden, you do have opportunities to create memories with your child. Take in the blossoming and reawakening of the spring with your child. Save your child's art work; hold on to the Seder plate or afikomen bag made when s/he was three. Bringing these items out at future holidays creates rituals, and what a thrill for all to "walk down memory lane."

As time and seasons march on and reveal inevitable changes, we in the Nursery School are also feeling a change. When a director leaves, we understand that there are concerns about continuity of service. We have been blessed to have had Ann Obsatz as part of

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CALENDAR

- MAY**
- 6**
Tzipporim/Blue Room
Museum Field Trip
 - 9**
Yom HaAtzma-ut
Israel Independence Day Celebration
 - 13**
11:15 am, Room 903
Caregiver Appreciation Brunch
 - 5:00 pm, Rooms 902 & 903
Tot Shabbat
 - 17**
6:30-7:30 pm, Pavilion
New Parent Social
 - 20**
Teacher Appreciation Lunch
 - 21**
5:00 pm, Rooms 902 & 903
Tot Shabbat
 - 27**
Tutim & Tzipporim
Graduation
 - 30**
Memorial Day
No School

- JUNE**
- 1**
Last Day of School
Family Fun Day (off site)

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MAZEL TOV

Dana and Steven Spencer, big sister **Alexandra (Green Room)** and big brother **Darren**, on the arrival of baby sister, **Naomi Jessica**, on November 3, 2010.

Karen and Steven Kay, and big brother **Noah (Red Room)**, on the arrival of baby brother **Dean**.



JUDAISM ON THE SILVER SCREEN

Rabbi Michael S. Friedman



I have long been fascinated by the intersection of Judaism and film. Much has been written about Jews' role, first in creating Hollywood and later in shaping the films that Hollywood produced. In fact, many of the films that we think of as classic American cinema were created by Jews. But a film that is written, directed, acted or produced by Jews may not necessarily be a Jewish film. Many have attempted to define what makes a Jewish film. To me, a Jewish film is one that attempts, in a deep and essential way, to explore what it means to be Jewish. Thus I present just a few of my favorites below. (Note: I have decided to exclude Holocaust films from this list, because I consider them to be in a different category altogether.)

Sunshine (1999)

A little-known but beautifully-made saga about a Hungarian-Jewish family. The Sonnenscheins ("sunshine" in German) become a microcosm of the modern Jewish experience, as the family encounters the whirling forces of modernity over the course of several generations.

Crimes and Misdemeanors (1989)

Woody Allen had to show up somewhere on this list, didn't he? While Annie Hall has some classic Jewish scenes, the deep Jewish exploration of the nature of morality in Crimes and Misdemeanors makes it my choice.

A Serious Man (2009)

Jews delight in asking questions. This Coen brothers film asks the most important ones of all: Why are we here? What is the nature of good and evil? Is there reward and punishment? Does God care what we do?

Ushpizin (2005)

This list would not be complete without an Israeli film on it. One of my favorites is Ushpizin, a redemptive tale of a barren couple who welcome mischievous "Sukkot guests" into their home.

Of course, many excellent Jewish films were left off this list! And if you have a particular favorite, I would love to hear about it. Email: Backpack@censyn.org



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IN THE CLASSROOM...

TUTIM

תותים 



ANAVIM

ענבים



KESHETOT

קשתות



TZIPPORIM

ציפורים



KESHETOT



TAPUZIM

תפוזים



BANANOT

בננות



TZEFARDIM

צפרדעים



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the Parenting Center and the Nursery School for the past fifteen years. Ann is a gifted early childhood educator and skilled in parent education. Those of us who have worked closely with her admire her for the many qualities of leadership that she embodies: her commitment to staff and parents, her everyday kindness, wise counsel and good listening skills are a few of the many traits that come naturally to Ann.

Please know that the Central Synagogue May Family Nursery School is in the hands of good administrators and dedicated and experienced teachers who are committed to the excellence of our nurturing and exceptional school. Our objective is for every child and every parent to have a first school experience that prepares children well for future educational experiences and has also given them a strong Jewish identity.

Let's march into spring together full of strength and promise.

B'shalom,

Susan Alpert

The PJ Library
www.thepjlibrary.org

We are excited to offer this program to our Nursery School families!

To start receiving Jewish bedtime stories in the mail, enroll online:
www.centralsynagogue.org

OPEN CENTRAL

OFTEN HUMOROUS AND SOMETIMES EVEN TOUCHING, WE CHERISH EVERY WORD OUR CHILDREN SAY...

OVERHEARD IN THE BLUE ROOM:

Did you ever see Obama kissing a llama?"

—Discussion about rhyming

OVERHEARD IN THE PURPLE 3 ROOM:

Cows feed their babies with their udders or else their throats would get dry and they can't moo.

—Discussion about cows

OVERHEARD IN THE RAINBOW ROOM:

How about flying jet green?

— Discussion about transportation

OVERHEARD IN THE ORANGE ROOM:

Child to teacher:
I'm wearing a cotton shirt today.

Teacher:
Do you know where cotton comes from?

Child: *Of course! Cotton Candy!!!*

—Discussion about cotton

OVERHEARD IN THE PURPLE 2 ROOM:

Pigs are not kosher because they roll around in the mud.

—Discussion about farm animals

OVERHEARD IN THE RED ROOM:

I only want to color with Ferrari Red!

—Art table chatter

OVERHEARD IN THE ORANGE ROOM:

I'm going to Punta Cana on vacation. It's in another world!

—Discussion about vacation

OVERHEARD IN THE RED ROOM:

When I grow up, I want to be GOD!

OUR HERO ANN OBSATZ



This edition of the backpack is focused on Jewish heroes and mentors. Though it may seem natural to look up to those in movies or television, more often it is the people we are surrounded by everyday that have the most impact in our life. It is with great sadness that we must say good bye to a hero and mentor to the families of Central Synagogue, Ann Obsatz. She has touched so many children and parents' lives with her open heart and nurturing demeanor. We wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors and know she will forever have an imprint on the walls of Central Synagogue.