

MOSAIC



SPRING 2018

NEWSLETTER OF SAUL MIROWITZ JEWISH COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Measuring Success

Six years ago, bold, innovative, community leaders brought together two movement-based Jewish day schools to create St. Louis' only pluralistic Jewish independent school. They injected it with millions of dollars to ensure that its education would parallel the finest independent schools in the nation.



The success of that merger is cited nationally as an example of what is possible when a community shares a vision of what is best for children. "Even the ISACS team that awards accreditation to independent schools acknowledged that what we have achieved is nothing short of extraordinary," says Cheryl Maayan, head of school. The proof of our success is in the numbers.

1 Double digit growth: Enrollment has grown by nearly 20 percent since 2013, and that trajectory is expected to continue. The reason is simple: 98 percent of Mirowitz parents surveyed say they are highly satisfied.



This number looks even better when compared to parent satisfaction norms at independent and public schools: 81 and 56 percent respectively. *EducationNext 2017*



2 Mirowitz students are excelling: We purposefully fill childhood with meaningful learning experiences. The result is a student body that collectively exceeds public and independent school norms on standardized tests. (See graph.)

3 Mirowitz alumni are thriving: Mirowitz prepares its students to excel at rigorous high schools and universities. (See page 7.) Current college freshmen collectively received \$65 thousand in merit scholarship and a median ACT score of 31-33. They lead youth boards and social action clubs, and resist risky behaviors.

4 Knowledgeable and engaged Jewish leaders: 98 percent of Mirowitz alumni say they were involved in Jewish organizations during high school. They feel informed about Israel and able to confidently take a stand. Community rabbis rely on them to teach religious school classes, to lead youth services and to serve as youth ambassadors. "Our greatest achievement is in raising well-rounded, intelligent young leaders who are capable, confident and driven to participate in the repair of the world." ★



Comparison of 8th grade performance on standardized tests (ERB).

CHERYL MAAYAN, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Headlines

"You have power to make a difference." Our students consistently hear that message. Those lessons in affecting social change were good preparation for four Mirowitz alumni who are set to graduate from the Parkway School District this year. When the schools announced that the commencement ceremony would take place on Shavuot, they signed petitions, presented at school board meetings, spoke to the media and ultimately helped influence the district to change the date of graduation.

I, for one, was not at all surprised that these young adults — Adina, Rina, Koby and Melina — so effectively



articulated their perspectives and engaged the board in respectful dialogue. The Parkway superintendent shared compliments about the way our alumni handled themselves. "If Mirowitz had any hand in that, you should be really proud," he said.

Our students affected change by demonstrating that they are valuable members of the Parkway community, to be counted and included. Adina emailed me during the ordeal to say, "You should know that my classmates and I feel comfortable speaking up because of the way Mirowitz raised us."

The Mirowitz faculty and I thank these leaders for representing themselves and the Jewish community with dignity and grace. We do not have to wait for our young alumni to be our leaders. They clearly already are!

Annual Campaign Gifts

July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017

We are grateful for all of the generous donations we receive and make an attempt to accurately acknowledge them. Please accept our apology if your donation has been inadvertently omitted. Please contact us at 314-576-6177, and we will gladly include it in our next edition.

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The following donors contributed \$1,800 or more to our Annual Campaign.

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Learning the Responsibilities of Philanthropy

During Chanukah, Mirowitz students considered the plights of children suffering from malnutrition and wild birds facing extinction. They learned about a project to bring solar energy to remote African villages, and about bilingual schools that bring Israeli and Arab children together. Then, without protest, they forfeited a night of Chanukah gifts in order to contribute money to the school's *tamchui* — an Aramaic word for community collection. The term dates back to medieval times when Jewish communities collected and allocated money for the most pressing needs of the moment.

"*Tamchui* gives Chanukah a new dimension," explains Rabbi Scott Slarskey. "The focus on giving, rather than getting, allows our students to see their own power to spread light and create miracles for others."

Each day of Chanukah, students



reflect on the beneficiary organizations they have learned about and are given two tokens to allocate to any of the five chosen organizations. So in addition to the mathematical lessons that ensue, students learn the responsibilities of philanthropy. They feel significant in their ability to improve the world. And they remember to count their blessings. "It makes me feel good to know that during Chanukah, we are actively helping people, animals and the earth," explains fifth-grader Riva Stern. ★



Socially Responsible...

Mirowitz is not only a place of academic enrichment. It's a place where intelligence is combined with ethics, where Jewish tradition guides children toward goodness. This year, Mirowitz students are finding solutions to real-world problems:

Hurricane Relief

Problem: Beth Yeshurun Day School in Houston lost most of its children's books when Hurricane Harvey flooded its library.

Solution: Mirowitz students — led by the 3rd grade — started a collection. The weekend of Rosh Hashanah, they sent more than 3,000 books to restock their shelves.

Speaking Out

Problem: Elected officials don't often hear from their youngest constituents about the issues that matter to them.

Solution: Fourth graders meet with their own elected official to discuss a range of issues including animal rights, texting while driving, and tax incentives for solar energy.

Eliminating Waste

Problem: Kindergarteners discovered that not all wrappers have a recycling symbol and worried about their impact on landfills.

Solution: The young environmentalists are collecting foil wrappers to be recycled by TerraCycle then cleaned and melted into hard plastic.

Get Movin'



Our sports program continues to expand under the direction of Athletic Director **Gary Lerner**. Mirowitz students compete against other independent schools in floor hockey, baseball, basketball and volleyball. Next year, we will add golf and cross country to our lineup.

Mazel Tov to our girls basketball team! They finished with a record season of 11 wins and 2 losses.

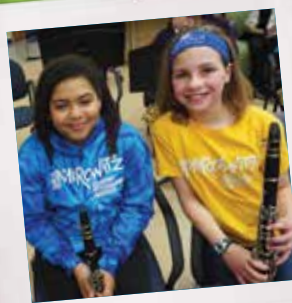
After School...

Mirowitz students choose from Tae Kwon Do, yoga, fencing, coding and other activities that build strength, skills and community.



Inspiring Artists

Like a muscle, creativity grows stronger with practice and exercise. That is one of many reasons Mirowitz is committed to the arts — offered as stand-alone classes and integrated into general and Judaic studies lessons. Every Mirowitz student participates in art, music, drama and dance. In fourth grade, band is a required component of the arts curriculum. At Mirowitz, STEM is called STEAM because we integrate art along with science, technology, engineering and math.



Carol Rubin Day of Jewish Study, Music and the Arts

Each year, we spend a full day connecting to Jewish texts through pottery, fiber arts, cooking, music, poetry, songwriting, ceramics and dance. This year, we were inspired by the musical fuel of visiting guest artist **Mikey Pauker**. The annual day of arts immersion is a lasting legacy of Carol Rubin, our beloved former director of Jewish life.



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Nature Play

A row of muddy rain boots sits outside the kindergarten classroom, each pair telling the story of the time our youngest students spend in the woods each week. In every grade, learning at Mirowitz includes time connecting with nature. Why? Research shows that active, outdoor free play leads to improved academic performance, greater attention to cognitive tasks and opportunities to exercise leadership.

At Mirowitz... we collect eggs.

It's not like buying eggs at the grocery store because we actually know the chickens these eggs came from and how they were treated. We love our chickens, and I'm pretty sure they love us, too!

Zahava Kiernan, 5th grade



At Mirowitz... we restore the prairie.

My class is adding wildflowers to our school prairie. They are little now, but soon they will tower over me.

Eliana Wax, 3rd grade



At Mirowitz... we take care of amphibians.

Our class cleans the pond to get the algae out. We want the water to be a healthy place for tadpoles and little frogs that hop around on the rocks outside our kindergarten window.

Hayden Simoneau, kindergarten



At Mirowitz... children engage in nature play.

Thanks to a gift from **Michael and Carol Staenberg**, Mirowitz is building a new nature playscape. Research shows that the textures and physical obstacles of natural materials stimulate problem solving skills, creativity and even vocabulary growth.



At Mirowitz... we compost.

I feel like I am playing a role in taking care of the earth. Over time, all of those scraps become loam, and we use it for our school garden.

Jenna Wasserman,
4th grade



Building a Kinder, Safer World

by Max Lagoy

For 17 minutes, we stood silently on Ladue Road holding signs with the names of kids and teachers who died in Parkland, Florida. People driving by honked and waved to show their support, and I was thinking that kids shouldn't have to feel unsafe in their own schools.

It was cool to be a part of something so much bigger than our small school, yet our walkout was very "Mirowitz". That day was the *Shloshim* (the end of the 30 days of mourning) for those who were killed, so we recited the Mourners' Kaddish and sang a Hebrew song about building a world of kindness before we marched down Mason Road holding signs with messages about gun violence.

I'm so glad that I go to a school that encourages me to boldly stand up for what I believe. I'm also glad that my classmates who chose not to walk out felt comfortable with



their decision, too. We may be afraid of gun violence, but my classmates and I are not afraid of people who have views that are different from ours. Everyone at this school can do what feels right without fear of judgement. I feel proud that my generation is going to be the one to make the world kinder and safer. ★

All Eyes on the Sky

It was our goal on the day of the solar eclipse that Mirowitz students would go home with their eyesight intact and a robust understanding of our place on the map of the universe. In class, they learned about orbits and rotations, light and shadow. They scaled diameters of the sun and moon, measured how the eclipse impacts temperature on Earth and learned how early civilizations responded to the phenomenon.

It was our unique privilege and responsibility to also create a Jewish context for the eclipse. Hundreds of people from throughout the community joined our students for the awe-inspiring moment that included music led by Jewish musician (and Mirowitz dad) Rick Recht and lessons by Rabbi Scott Slarskey that encouraged the crowd to think about traditional morning prayers

that recognize God as "the shaper of light and creator of darkness."

If you watch the video (posted to our Facebook page), you can hear a collective gasp from the 500 people who shared the moment at Mirowitz. "Often, lessons have measurable outcomes. This one — the ultimate integration of science and Judaism — had power beyond measure," says Rabbi Slarskey. ★



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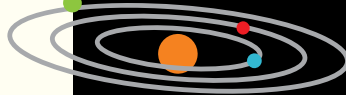
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Full STEAM Ahead

Mirowitz supporters celebrated "Full STEAM Ahead" at our 2017 annual gala and raised \$250,000 to provide our students with a world-class education.



◀ **Barbara Mirowitz**, left, and **Cheryl Maayan**, right, surround our Honorees: **Betsy Gallop Dennis**, recipient of the Community Service Award and **Michael and Carol Staenberg**, recipients of the Meyer and Marcelle Krantzberg Visionary Award.



▲ **Gala Co-Chair** Rick Lerner and Susie Knopf (not pictured)



▲ Our speakers, Mirowitz 6th grader **Benjie Thimangu** and his mom **Rachel Thimangu**

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 Visionary Award

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..And these teachers and faculty who are celebrating 15, 10 and 5 years at Mirowitz.

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Mazel Tov Graduates



Class of 2017

Pictured at left: Back row:

**Alana Fulsom, Ido Beigelman,
Lucas Bernstein, Ori Birka,
Isaac Ohrenstein, Zoe Shacham**

*Front row: Aviva Kiernan, Danny
Sallis, Lucas Kazmierski, JJ Lerner,
Eitan Fredman, Naava
Simckes*

Off to College

Mazel tov to our alumni who graduated from high school in 2017. They received an average of 65K in merit scholarships. This academic year, Mirowitz graduates are using the skills they developed during their day school years at these institutions:



Barnard College
Boston University
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We thank these generous pioneers who sustain and strengthen Mirowitz with an endowed gift. Mirowitz's Endowment is valued at \$4,175,715 (including both cash and promised gifts).

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For additional information on how you can help sustain excellence in Jewish day school education, contact Margo Newman - mnewman@mirowitz.org or 314-576-6177.

Portrait of a Mirowitz Graduate

Confident Leaders

David Fox 8th grade

"I enjoy leading a group and speaking in front of a crowd, but those were definitely a learned skills. My teachers taught me that when you consider the perspective of the audience, they will be interested in what you have to say. David leads a weekly "Dungeons and Dragons" class in the Middle School. He will attend Whitfield School next year.

Resilient Learners

Moriah Lotsoff 8th grade

"I've learned that it's really rewarding to work hard, to persevere and finally succeed. During my years at Mirowitz, I have developed a strong work-ethic." Moriah can recite every element on the periodic table in order. She plans to enroll in honors chemistry at Clayton High School.

Change Agents

Olivia Riutcel 8th grade

"I have learned to be a change agent. When something seems wrong, I can do my part to fix it." Olivia is organizing a community-wide clean-up of Washington Park Cemetery. She will attend Webster Groves High School next year. ★



Our Board

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Mosaic is designed by
Ann Mayer Eisen, Design Annex

Our Vision

A vibrant, socially responsible and inspired Jewish community led by educated, capable, energetic, joyous, compassionate, ethical and inquisitive leaders



348 South Mason Road
St. Louis, Missouri 63141
314-576-6177



Jewish Federation
OF ST. LOUIS



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For children
ages 3 to 5
9:30-11:30 am
May 6

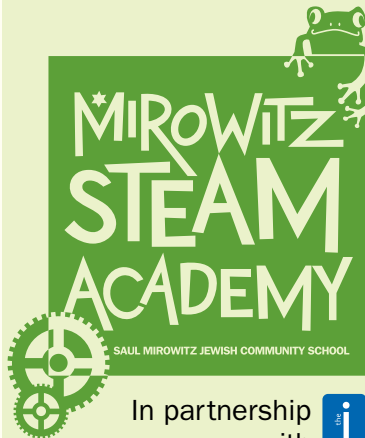
Mirowitz STEAM Studio for busy bees ages 3 - 5


Join us for a morning of BEE-themed STEAM. You and your child will participate together in hands-on discovery stations that activate critical thinking skills and transform busy bees into scientists and engineers.

Free book and explorer kit to the first 50 busy bees to RSVP.



To RSVP, visit www.mirowitz.org/steamstudio or call 314-576-6177.



In partnership with 



June 11-15 and June 18-22

(sign up for one week or both)

9 am to 3 pm* Pre-care and post-care available.

One or two weeks of experience-based inquiry and problem solving.

Age-based camps include:

STEAM Academy (pre-K-Kindergarten)
Builder's STEAM Academy (grades 1-2)
Robots and Roller Coasters (grades 3-6)
Israeli Innovations (grades 3-4)
Math in Art (grades 5-6)

To register, visit mirowitz.org/learning/steamacademy.



Social Media: A Parent's Guide @ Mirowitz

Learn about the different technologies children are using, and how you can keep your kids safe online. Presented by Julie Smith, professor of communication, Webster University. **RSVP at www.mirowitz.org.**

Presented in partnership with



For curious
parents

May 3
7 pm

