

LEIBLER  
YAVNEH  
COLLEGE



*Give me*  
**yavneh**  
תן לי יבנה וחכמיה



תורה ומדע. ציונות. דרך ארץ

# EDUCATING for the future



**This term has been hectic! And wonderfully so. Term 3 is Zio camp time, and our students are full of energy and ruach. My heart is full, watching them as they sing new songs and relive 'aha' moments of Jewish learning and connection. For elderly teachers like me, camp is as exhausting as it is exhilarating and thus I'm hurtling into Rosh Hashana with a soul filled with delight and a body that is pretty spent.**

Given the exhaustion, I thought I'd try and sneak in a writing short cut for this Ten Li piece. I turned to the dark side of ChatGPT; alas, it did not deliver! I tried all sort of prompts ("write a 600-word essay on Rosh Hashana and education", "what are three ideas linking education, Yom Kippur and religious Zionism", "do me a solid and write my ten li Yavneh piece") but the result was not worthy of our illustrious readership.

This is an outcome I should have expected. Last year, when ChatGPT hit our screens, our Year 12 media teacher, Mr Michael Daskalou, fed it questions from past VCE Media exams. The answers he got were, in kids' language, 'meh'. Daska used this as a teaching opportunity, showing his students how the answers were mediocre and what needed to be changed or added to get the top marks to which our students aspire.

But we all know that while ChatGPT can't always give us exactly what we are looking for, artificial intelligence is incredibly powerful. We are living in one of those watershed moments. Soon we will start to classify things and time as before AI, (or BAI), and after AI, (or AAI).

Five years ago, when my eldest son was studying to be a data scientist, that was the 'it' job. Data was going to be big! Guaranteed employment. Guaranteed good salary. And that still is the case, for now. But if you google the job that is most likely going to be gobbled up by AI it is a data scientist. My son is one of many who is going to have to pivot; pivot quickly, starting yesterday.

Our new careers advisor, Fiona Hall, has a tough job ahead; not only does she have to work out what vocations combine a student's interests and strengths, but she also needs to be a Navi (prophet), anticipating and predicting the jobs of the future. And that last bit is almost impossible in a world of rapidly accelerating change.

So, how do we educate for the future when we don't know what the future will bring?

There are three skills and attributes that stand firm, regardless of changing technology, regardless of AI and ChatGPT. And not coincidentally, they are the three pillars of a Yavneh education.

The first is literacy. Regardless of technological advances, our children need to be able to read. And by reading I don't just mean decoding and barking at text. Children need to comprehend what is read (or listened to in the case of voice to text), understand context, nuance, argument and instruction. It is a fallacy that by Grade 2 students switch from learning to read to reading to learn. Students need to learn how to read up until and including Year 12. (As you read this, Ms Muddapah and Ms Hall are schooling our Year 12s on how to read editorials for the language analysis section on the VCE exam. Bring back memories? Or should I say nightmares????)

While students are learning to read, they are simultaneously reading to learn too. Being a reader, a discerning reader, means the world of knowledge is open and accessible. Knowledge is power. At Yavneh, we teach Torah U'Maddah, Jewish knowledge and General knowledge. We encourage and inspire our students to be readers so that they are learners. Reading and learning enables our students to pivot when necessary; they are equipped to further their education in both breadth and depth, knowledge and increasing skills needed..

The second pillar is a sense of belonging. The more the world changes, the more important it is to be grounded and surrounded. For our kids, this belonging is found in their Jewish heritage and love of Israel. Daily tefillah, while sometimes a slog, allows students to sing in the choral symphony of prayer that has accompanied our people for millennia. A Yavneh graduate can walk into any shule in the world and be part of that minyan, be part of that community. The Shabbat experience of a Yavneh student is both familial and communal. Most students move from a Friday night dinner with family to a class oneg at someone's house. Shabbat is a constant that is honoured and shared.



All our Israel education, Zionist camps and sessions with our young Shlichim, cultivate such a love for Israel that the highest rate of Aliyah per capita in Australia comes from 2 Nagle Ave. Our children know they belong to the Jewish people, to Jewish practice, to the Jewish homeland. They know and appreciate their Jewish heritage and joyfully anticipate their Jewish future. Torah and Tziyonut will ground them, embrace them, guide them, no matter what the future holds.

The third pillar is that of kindness and Derech Eretz. In Thomas Friedman's book 'Thank you for being late', written in 2017 BAI, he considers the phenomenon of cyberspace and the way it transformed everything in our lives. Friedman states that the rise of the internet has bestowed the individual with previously unimagined power and reach. Technology has allowed human beings to become 'BeTzelem Elokim', almost G-d like, in our ability and freedom to do virtually anything we want; to come together, to imagine and realise solutions to world hunger and disease, or alternatively to succumb to the power that could be used by the few to obliterate the many.

To counterbalance this unprecedented human power, Thomas Friedman brings in a lesson from Hillel that he would have learnt at his Hebrew School in Minnesota.

דעלך סני לחברך לא תעביד - זו היא כל התורה כולה.  
*"that which is hateful to you, don't do to others, that is the entire Torah".*  
Or, as my mother would say in the words of Adam Lindsay Gordon,  
*"In this world of froth and bubble, two things stand like stone.*  
*Kindness in another's trouble, courage in one's own".*

The greater our power, the greater our responsibility to be kind to others. We must find the courage needed to stay true to this kindness, even in the face of great power. And, no matter how far we advance as a race, the fundamental truth of the centuries-old Torah still rings true.

*So there is our answer to AI.*  
**Literacy, Belonging, Kindness.**

*Or as we say at Yavneh,*  
**Torah UMaddah, Tziyonut Ve Derech Eretz.**

May the year ahead be one of health of the body, serenity of the soul, ignition of the spirit and warmth of the heart. May our children continue to give nachas to their parents, our community and all of Klal Yisrael.

*Wishing the Yavneh family a Kativa ve Chatimah Tova, a Shana Tova UMetukah!*

**SHULA LAZAR**  
Principal

# EMBRACING new beginnings

עולם  
חדש  
יבנה



historical event; it's an ongoing process that invites us to partake in the act of creation through our actions, intentions, and decisions.

Yavneh echoes this sentiment through our vision to educate, inspire, and advance the intellect and character of Torah and Israel-inspired youth.

Just as the world was brought into being anew, so too do we all have the power to shape and reshape the lives we lead. Our students and teachers, the Yavneh family are not merely passive observers; we are active participants in the unfolding of our own narratives.

Rosh Hashanah reminds us that the past need not define us, that we can improve and elevate. We can reflect and commit, as individuals and as members of our vibrant community.

Returning to school after the break, students are presented with a golden opportunity to put this newfound sense of purpose into action. The blank pages of a new term offer a chance to set academic goals, embrace kindness, and cultivate character. As Yeshayahu said: אל־תִּזְכְּרוּ רֵאשֹׁנוֹת וּקְדַמְנִיּוֹת אֶל־תִּבְנֶנּוּ הַנְּנִי עֲשֵׂה חֲדָשָׁה "Don't remember the former things, or consider the things of old." "I am about to do something new".

As we celebrate the Yamim Tovim, let's find the courage to embrace the concept of new beginnings, to rededicate ourselves to achieving everything we can, to walk the path of purpose, and to uphold the vision of Leibler Yavneh College as a haven for intellect, character, and Torah values.

*Let's step into the future with hope, determination, confidence and pride.*

**Wishing our entire Yavneh Family a Shana Tova u'Metuka, and Ketiva v'Chatima Tova.**

**GERARD MAX AND ARI SCHACHNA**  
Co-Chairs

## Embracing New Beginnings: A Reflection for the High Holidays

As we stand here in Elul on the threshold of the Yamim Tovim, a season of deep introspection and renewal, we find ourselves enveloped in the embrace of a profound and timeless message: the power of new beginnings. Rosh Hashanah, which marks בריאת העולם, the creation of the world, provides all of us with an opportunity to reflect on our past, realign our aspirations, and set a course for a brighter future. In the spirit of this season, let's look into the significance of fresh starts and how they resonate within the heart of Leibler Yavneh College's vision.

In the tapestry of Yahadut, Rosh Hashanah holds pre-eminence. It's a time when the Shofar's clarion call awakens our souls to a state of mindfulness and reminds us that every year, every month, every moment, is an opportunity for renewal. The Torah instructs us in Vayikra 23:24, דבר אל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם שְׁבֹתוֹן זִכְרוֹן תְּרוּעָה מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ

"In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts." This day is a reminder that the creation of the world wasn't just a



# OUR PLAY SPACES... putting back the love



## Respecting our indoor and outdoor environment

Young children are naturally curious about the world around them. But how do we nurture this curiosity into

kindness towards the natural world; respect for their personal belongings and an appreciation for the space in which they play?

Respecting the environment is a hot topic throughout the world and a large component of teaching in the early years. Through rich discussions and hands on learning, we create a sense of respect for and understanding of just how precious our planet is. Our children are quick learners and more often than not, are the ones reminding their Morahs about recycling plastics, using our fruit skins for compost and re-using pieces of paper for drawing or collage.



Our rooms are a beautiful balance between synthetic toys and natural resources and our children are well-versed in the importance of trees and flowers and all of Hashem's natural creations. Turning to our Torah as the most valuable resource, we use morals from Torah stories and ideas from our weekly Parshiot to talk about saving water, not wasting electricity, not throwing food away unnecessarily and recycling that which can be broken down and re-used. At our ELC, we take pride in offering a range of experiences designed to enhance learning and understanding about environmental awareness and sustainability. We foster children's capacity to understand and respect the natural environment and the knowledge of "why" and "how" to be sustainable. As Educators we use a range of strategies to assist children to develop critical thinking and new environmental behaviours.

It's important to teach children about sustainability through hands-on experiences, for them to grasp an understanding of what it involves, to become socially aware, show respect for the environment and be environmentally responsible. By emphasizing the importance of maintaining a sustainable environment, we are promoting the idea of children as partners and collaborators in their learning. Our learning spaces have the potential to support children's understanding of the environment, sustainable practices and their inherent responsibilities as global citizens.

I think it is evident that our ELC provides opportunities for our children to show kindness towards the natural world, but what about an appreciation for the spaces that they play-in i.e understanding that we should treat toys, personal belongings and physical spaces with that same level of respect and appreciation. At Yavneh, we work to create an environment that promotes each child's sense of agency. Our physical spaces should allow children to be active contributors and have an influence in their world. This involves children contributing to make the environment safe, for example, using equipment and resources in an appropriate way. Learning environments engage and foster a sense of ownership and respect when they are aesthetically pleasing, reflect the identity and culture of children and families, and encourage a connection to place. As such, the physical environment is never simply a backdrop to the curriculum; it is an integral part of the curriculum. An environment with rich and built-in learning opportunities also frees educators to interact with children meaningfully and purposefully.

As educators, we are constantly reflecting on our practices, on our environment, on our successes and areas that need improvement and of course, whether we are meeting the needs of our children and their families. One of the areas that we have reflected upon that needs some support, is in maintaining neat and inviting spaces for children to engage with. We are constantly changing areas of learning, modifying experiences and re-arranging equipment, that sometimes we don't take heed of the "clutter" or "over-resourced" spaces around us. The approved learning frameworks brings to light that the concept of belonging is linked to a



strong sense of identity. The physical environment plays a major role in contributing to both identity and belonging by reflecting the lives of children through materials, equipment, decorations and pictures to respectfully give a sense of community and culture in our service. We need to create a comfortable 'lived-in' feeling. This often means having a mix of found objects, purchased equipment and materials and ensuring that our environment reflects inclusive practice and facilitates children's agency and learning.



So with all this in mind, a big focus of 2023 thus far, has been putting back the love and energy into our indoor play spaces. If we, as educators, role-model appreciation for our play areas, then naturally our children will develop and come to appreciate the very same space. Over each of the holiday periods, we have spent time de-cluttering, organising and minimizing our rooms to create open, inviting and aesthetically pleasing learning spaces.

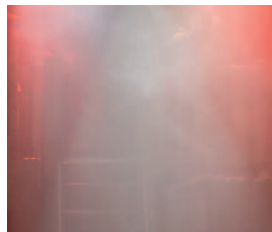
Balancing sameness and change, the familiar and the novel, responds to children's need for both. Often small changes in the environment can be enough to ensure the environment is interesting and engaging, especially for our young children. Environments that are respectful of children's emerging skills and competencies provide opportunities for them to make their own decisions and to act independently. Our room changes have been slow and steady to support our children and our educators, but nonetheless, our room change is significant, valuable and vital in supporting the respect mentioned at the start of this article.



Children are developing their identities, learning social patterns, and building a foundation of learning and socialization that will shape the rest of their lives. Adults should respect both the places within and around the child, in terms of allowing opportunity for play, imagination, and socialization.

At Yavneh ELC we pledge to never lose sight of these needs and to work continually at providing environments that teach a love for and an appreciation of the world in which we all live.

**CHARLENE ORWIN**  
Head of ELC



# BECOMING A COMMUNITY WHO VALUES restorative practice



## Feeling Bad can be Good!

Humans are both individuals and members of a larger community.

The current emphasis placed on pursuing individual happiness and that of those we value, has skewed our perspective and made it harder for us to sincerely consider the needs of others. There are times when human beings act and react emotionally, demonstrate low empathy, and behave unkindly. At these times, most people would experience a feeling of immediate or delayed shame and that is to be expected. This feeling of shame happens because we feel bad that we have behaved inappropriately. Feeling shame can lead to defensive behaviour. When we feel shame rational thinking shuts down and the limbic part of the brain takes over and we withdraw or go on the attack verbally and sometimes physically.

## Restorative culture

At Yavneh, in 2023, as mentioned in previous Keshar articles, we have taken the next significant step in enhancing school culture in working with RealSchools to embed **Restorative Practice 2.0**. Restorative culture is very important to us **BECAUSE**

- We want to raise good citizens and support children to be their best.
- We want students to learn and to feel motivated to do their best.

In May all Yavneh parents were invited to an information night where Cassie, our RealSchools mentor, presented an overview of restorative culture and why it is the way forward for schools in 2023. She explained the role of parents in partnering with their



child's school to develop a restorative culture.

Parents play a crucial role in us becoming a community who values restorative practice and who embodies it in our language, conduct and mindset. **Establishing a community defined by care for one another through RP 2.0 involves all of us working together.** Each of us needs to do the work required so that each of us can engage restoratively when feelings, including that of shame, arise.

## Types of Shame

There are two types of shame that individuals can experience: reintegrative and stigmatising.



## Versus



**Reintegrative shame** is a positive type of shame as it indicates to us that we have done something wrong and need to make reparations.

**Stigmatising shame** tends to result in unresolved feelings of shame in the offender, lying to cover up and blaming, it's disintegrative which often leads to further breaches of societal norms.

A restorative culture and the processes used, normalise feelings of reintegrative shame and aim to reintegrate the person / persons involved back into the group through restorative language, mindset and conduct.

At Yavneh, staff engage the children in

- reflecting on behaviours,
- developing skills to be able to view the event from multiple perspectives,
- accepting responsibility for their actions and reactions,
- understanding the harm caused and
- working together to repair the relationship.

When resolving conflict, a restorative culture focuses on a person's harmful behaviour and NOT on their character. Reasonable and fair consequences have their rightful place in a restorative culture.

When resolving conflict in a punitive culture the mindset, language and conduct can induce stigmatising shame and this is disintegrative. It is often an out-casting experience.

**Parents' potential shame triggers can be:**

- When you receive an email or phone call from a member of staff letting you know that your child behaved inappropriately, how it was addressed and request to work together to support that child to learn from it.
- When your child comes home from school and tells you about an incident that happened, and that they were made to feel upset by the member of staff holding them accountable.
- When your child comes home upset and tells you they did nothing wrong in a disagreement or conflict situation with their peers / friends and were also blamed.

When parents blindly defend a child, this is usually because we don't want them to feel bad or feel any shame at all. In doing so, we are teaching our child not to take responsibility for their behaviour, deny wrongdoing and blame others. We are also denying them an opportunity to develop resilience, self-management and

## Inappropriate Behaviour

Informal approach  
Personal approach  
Engaging  
Challenging  
**Reintegrative Shaming**

Ceremony of restoration and re-acceptance

Formal approach  
Impersonal approach  
Confrontational  
Humiliating  
**Stigmatising Shaming**

Out-casting

independence and they will also look to us to absolve them from any wrongdoing and to come to their defence.

When parents experience a shame response to something that has happened at school, we make every effort to view this through the restorative mindset, which understands shame is a human response. When you communicate with us aggressively, because you feel this is advocating for your child, we do our best to listen without judgement, recognising **this is your shame response talking/ writing to us**. We do our best to respond with empathy in what is often a difficult, sensitive and complex situation. We do our best to support you to be able to activate your rational thinking part of your brain to be able to engage in conversation.

*When both parties are willing to work restoratively, there is a positive outcome for all involved.*

### Restorative role modelling

How can we show up as parents and role models in moments of conflict in our own lives and when our children are experiencing conflict with each other or with their friends and peers?

We can be a positive role model by demonstrating inclusive thinking and feelings of empathy rather than sympathy.

When we demonstrate sympathy, we tend to mirror our children's emotions and jump into the situation with them. Our responses can sound like, "S/he is a mean girl/boy! This is all his/ her fault! How dare s/he say that to you! I'm going to call his/ her mother! The school is wrong!"

When we demonstrate empathy, we look at the situation from all perspectives including our own child's. We help them to keep perspective rather than catastrophise, we support them to develop resilience, empathy, problem solving skills and independence.

### Empathy can sound like...

*"That must have been hard to go through for you and for her.*

*I want to understand what happened so I can help. Please can you tell me what happened from the beginning. Where were you, what were you doing?*

*What happened next? How did you respond? Is there anything you've left out?*

*How did you feel? How do you think s/he felt?*

*How do you think others who were there felt?*

*What could you have done instead of saying / doing ...?*

*Disagreements are a part of life. What could you try do differently next time so that you express how you feel respectfully?"*

At Yavneh we normalise experiencing the full range of emotions that are part of the human experience. We are investing time to build children's emotional vocabulary and intelligence and equip them with the knowledge and skills to notice, name and manage their feelings.

Managing one's emotions in healthy ways is not easy for the majority of children. It can be difficult for adults too. There is a quote on my office wall which serves as a daily reminder to me for how to show up. It reads: "When little people are overwhelmed with big emotions, it's out job to share our calm, not to join their chaos." (L R Knost) Being an imperfect human, I don't always get this right and when I mess up, I do the work required to repair any harm caused.

Yavneh staff appreciate and value working in partnership with our parents to continue the work required to cultivate a community culture defined by care for one another.

[If reading this article has brought up feelings of shame about a time where you behaved in a way that you are not proud of, you may feel ready to accept personal responsibility for any harm your words and actions caused. Reach out and ask that person what they need from you to be able to repair your relationship to the point where you can at the least, feel comfortable to be around each other.]

### HAILEY JOUBERT

Head of Primary

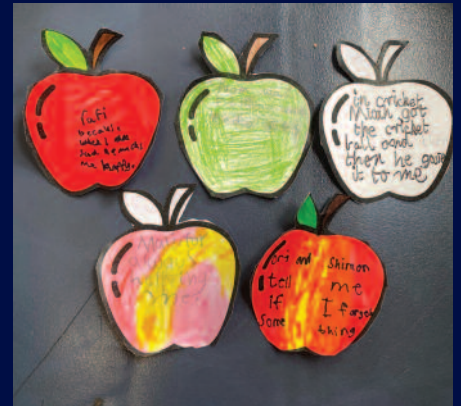


## CULTIVATING KINDNESS

Year 3 students embarked on a unique and enriching approach to cultivating kindness within our students. Commencing our journey, we initiated a Preparation Circle — an interactive session that ignited our collective imagination. Together, we delved into the realm of feelings, envisaging the ideal school experience. Among the suggestions, the consensus converged on the significance of feeling safe, respected, and happy.

The students were encouraged to embrace kindness not only as a virtue but as a way of life, fostering a school and community culture that embodies empathy, respect, tolerance and the joy of connection.

Students have been tasked with documenting instances of kindness they've experienced from their peers on apple-shaped templates. These apples, adorned with heartfelt descriptions of the acts of kindness, are finding a home on our shared kindness tree. This display not only acknowledges and celebrates kindness within our community, but also serves as a visual reminder and representation of the positive connections we forge with one another through our language.



We look forward to seeing our tree blossom when fed by the children's kind gestures and acts of friendship.



Mel Adelist & Leigh Roncon, Primary GS Teachers

# yom ha'atzmaut





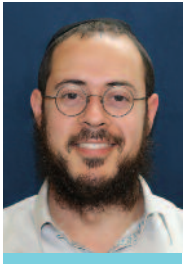


**עולם  
חדש  
יבנה**

#75YEARS  
Leibler Yavneh College

# A LEARNING INITIATIVE

## scholar in residence



### THE PROFESSOR AND THE RABBI

A highlight of the past term was the visit of Rabbi Professor Sam Lebens to Yavneh. Sam

is an accomplished philosopher and a student of Rabbi Sacks ob”m. His busy schedule saw Sam provide multiple sessions to students of Years 6-12, run tisches for our senior students, lead professional development for staff, present to families and foundation members, deliver drashot and run a Shabbat meal for VCE students and recent alumni of the College.

The presentations were meaningful and uplifting, but more than that, Sam connected to our students as individuals. He remembered their names, altered his topics to match areas of student interest and offered any remaining time in his schedule to meet with students 1:1 to hear the challenges they are facing, respond as best he could, and invite them to correspond with him down the line. Student demand for these slots was incredible: we opened 17 slots, and more than double that number of students requested them. A testament to the relationships that he had successfully built in a short 8 days at Yavneh.

Sam’s messages were many and varied but a few themes stood out. He promoted the importance of faith (which embraces uncertainty) over belief (which doesn’t). He spoke of the importance of cultivating one’s imagination-faculty so that one doesn’t merely embrace certain religious values, but attempts to live every moment with them at the forefront of the mind. He shared his relationship with Rabbi Sacks as an exemplar of the importance of finding, and then having deference to, a role model. And he exemplified the aphorism, ‘people don’t care what you know, unless they know that you care,’ in his every interaction.

The goals of the scholar in residence initiative, which was generously funded by donors to our MyCause campaign in 2021, was to bring to Yavneh a world-class scholar with whom our students could enjoy an immersive learning experience and develop a relationship with a role model whom they could emulate and seek guidance from into the future. While the chemistry between a given scholar and the students of Yavneh could never be predicted in a failsafe way, baruch HaShem our initial foray into this initiative succeeded beyond our wildest dreams.

At the conclusion of his stay, the students presented a booklet of ‘thank you’ notes to Sam, which best sum up his incredible impact. A few select examples of these comments included:

“Thanks so much, really helpful, was a very fresh perspective on life and Judaism, really impactful.”

“Everyone time you gave a speech, I was sitting at the edge of my seat in awe, in the way you conduct yourself, how clever every word that comes out of your mouth sounds and how inspiring u are. Thank you for your belief in me, for remembering my name from the second I met you.”

“Even though I only knew you for a short period of time, I really enjoyed your presence. You came to teach me on Monday in the first lesson, in the Year 9 girls Gemara. You taught us about the Mishna and metaphors. You were very funny and I walked out of that class happy.”

“You are seriously an awesome person and will be dearly missed. Having a celebrity roaming our school halls is not something that is taken for granted... I, along with my cohort appreciate you and have loved your upbeat approach to everything and cool accent. I will never forget you, maybe I will read one of your books sometime.”

“Thank you so much for your time with me! I am so so inspired and never been so interested in these things. thank you so much!”

### RABBI CHAIM COWEN

Deputy Principal and Head of Jewish Studies



# MAKING A difference



**Tefillah is a central theme of the Yamim Noraim, as we read in the Machzor, ותשובה ותפילה וצדקה מעבירין את רוע הגזירה – Through Teshuvah, Tefillah and Tzedakah, we can overturn the harshness of the verdict.**

Even more inspiring is the depth and strength of women's davening highlighted on Rosh Hashanah in the moving story we read in the Haftarah of Chana. Chana, the mother of Shmuel, faced years of painful infertility – and in a pilgrimage to the Mishkan beseeched Hashem for a child. From Chana we learn to appreciate the transformative power of prayer for her heartfelt supplications for a child were answered, leading to the birth of Shmuel Hanavi.

The text is also explicit in sharing how Chana prayed and key Halachot of davening. Despite women having less obligations in the structures of Tefillah such as Tefillah b'Tzibbur (communal prayer), the Gemara holds Chana's prayer as a model of how the holiest Tefillah of Amidah should be recited and these Halachot are derived from the recount of her prayer. And further we learn from the iconic imagery and emotion of Shirat Chana how important it is to turn to Hashem in prayer to show gratitude for everything He bestows on us.

These lessons about Tefillah and women and Tefillah are important for all of us to be inspired by as we enter the new year. This resonates with me as I reflect on women's prayer at Yavneh.

There are moments in a day at school that are quintessentially Yavneh. One of those is Tefillah. Davening is the cornerstone of our day as a school community. Each morning our staff and students connect to Hashem in minyanim across the Elsterwick campus. We are proud to offer our students a range of Tefillah experiences that help them tap into the davening style that resonates with them.

Last year we launched Girls Growth Tefillah with a wonderful group of girls in Years 9-12 who were invested in and energised by having a girls-only davening space. We observed that the girls were really engaged and active in davening and in Term 2 we opened this Tefillah up to include Year 7 and 8 girls.

Our mornings with the new, larger Girls Tefillah group are truly inspiring. Located in the Lamm Hall and with a fantastic group of staff and student leaders, the girls are inspired by female role models of 'מתפללות' – women and girls who value davening and the unique connection that women forge in davening. Our goal is not only to get students involved in the act of davening – להתפלל, but the people we become when we daven, the מתפללות.

We are delighted that we have been able to build our girls' engagement in davening with a davening environment full of singing and girls filling the Tefillah space with their voices.

**May Hashem hear our prayers for a תיבה וחתימה טובה לשנה טובה ומתוקה for Am Yisrael and our dear Yavneh family!**

**AVIGAIL WONDER**  
Head of Secondary



# TEACHING STUDENTS to think



## NEED HELP WRITING HOMEWORK EXCUSES?

**The oldest excuse in the book, is surely the excuse about the dog eating your homework.**

**But what if students could get more creative in their construction of excuses for not submitting homework?**

Putting the following prompt into Chat GPT, elicited the response, below:

**Write an excuse for not doing homework, in a Shakespearean voice, in two sentences.**

*Prithee, noble instructor, forgive my transgression, for the fates have conspired against me, robbing me of the hours required to fulfill thy assignment. Thus, I beseech thee to pardon my lack of toil, and grant me a chance to redeem mine honour henceforth.*

Homework excuses aside, we live in an era where technology continues to reshape various aspects of our lives, and the educational landscape is no exception. AI, when harnessed effectively, has the potential to revolutionise learning and unlock new opportunities for academic growth. While it is essential to acknowledge the concerns and reservations that exist, it is important to explore the benefits of AI as a tool that students now have at their fingertips and educate them around the flaws and pitfalls of AI such as ChatGPT.



in hot water earlier this year for using AI to create articles, many of them riddled with errors. It made a factual error about the James Webb Space Telescope, misleading readers by incorrectly claiming that it had taken the first picture of an exoplanet. In a conversation on Twitter, ChatGPT claimed that the peregrine falcon is the fastest marine mammal. Anyone who has watched David Attenborough's programs could have refuted that claim, as the falcon is a bird and obviously doesn't live in the ocean. Casey Fiesler, an expert in the ethics of technology at the University of Colorado Boulder, argues that Chat GPT is 'confidently wrong'. If asked to provide sources, it will make them up and

confidently portray the citations as correct, even if they don't exist.

While some schools responded to AI as a threat that would diminish the role of the teacher and compromise academic integrity, at LYC, we have taken a more pragmatic approach. When Wikipedia first appeared on the horizon, there were similar fears that students would replace their own efforts with a cut and paste job from the internet. If we all recall our initial use of Wikipedia, we worked out from experience that Wikipedia was not necessarily a trustworthy site that would give us all the correct answers. Who amongst us today doesn't utilise google to look up information or access background information as a starting point for a speech or assignment? Just as students still learn to do basic maths even though they have calculators, once they have learned the basic math, they can use a calculator to help with more complex problem solving. Teachers at LYC are demonstrating the benefits of ChatGPT as a starting point that can provide ideas or a sense of structure that then requires student effort to flesh out and match to specific success criteria. Our Head of Arts and VCE teacher, Michael Daskalou has shown his Media students the results of ChatGPT searches, demonstrating the surface level information it provides and what students need to extend, add and explore to lift a ChatGPT response to an appropriate academic level. By demonstrating the correct use of ChatGPT to students rather than demonising it to students, we are diminishing the tantalising allure that forbidden objects or ideas so predictably elicit.

Earlier this year, The Australian published an article titled, 'AI is taking away educators' role in helping young people know themselves and the power they have to change the world', David De Carvalho, the CEO of the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), articulated the debate around AI and education and raised questions about the wider purpose of education. He recognises the threat that AI may introduce to the workforce, and its impact on the knowledge economy. However, he reminds us of the job we have as educators, 'to help young people come to know themselves and the power they have to change the world.' Rather than perceiving education as a process of acquiring skills and knowledge to make us employable, we should be endorsing an education that, as LYC's mission statement promotes, nurtures students to be of fine character, compassionate, life-long, learners inspired by their relationship with Hashem and the Torah, and responsible, committed citizens.

Adam Voight from Real Schools has weighed in on this AI debate and contends that 'schools right now have a choice. Fight the

wave of ChatGPT or surf it.' And surf it we are. That's not to say we haven't changed some of our practices to protect learning at LYC. We have clarified our academic integrity processes, ensuring assessments are handwritten, planned in class or submitted via 'Turn it in'. And the nature of assessments will continue to change, so that insight, creativity, original thought, problem solving, and complexity are rewarded over knowledge acquisition. But haven't they always been rewarded? If we succumb to the fear mongering out there, we lose sight of the values and markers of excellence that have always existed.



It is essential to continue teaching students to write without AI's help because we deeply care about teaching students to think. Writing, as our learning from our whole school program, The Writing Revolution, exhorts, is a wonderful way to demonstrate thinking. While Chat GPT can help students structure their thoughts, it can't do the thinking for them. Using Chat GPT to help craft an essay or a story, is practicable. Having students prewrite or brainstorm, then using AI to generate drafts and working back and forth between drafts, will help students to revise and refine their writing. And they may have fun figuring out how to navigate the new technology, in the context of their studies.

We have learned to pivot before, as remote learning showed us. Many have begun to realise that if we utilise AI for the administrative tasks that take up our time, we can use that time developing engaging and inspiring opportunities, that as Adam Voight adds, 'might leave some room and time to... I dunno... teach.'

Concerned about AI threatening our students' abilities to create stories and texts? Catherine Gao, a doctor and medical researcher at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago, is part of one team of researchers that is putting the Chat GPT tool to the test. She reassures us that we needn't worry about AI replacing the creative arts. 'People will always want to make their voices heard'. Even if it is in a Shakespearean voice, making excuses about homework...

**SHOSHI VORCHHEIMER**

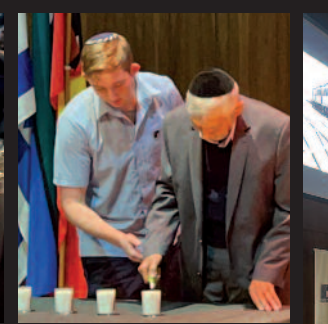
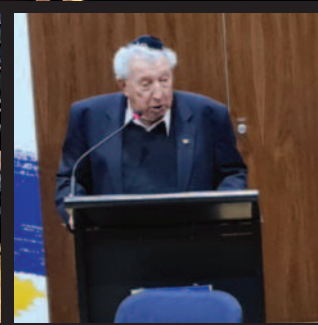
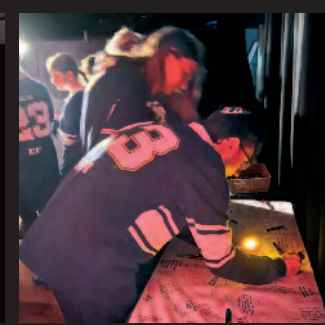
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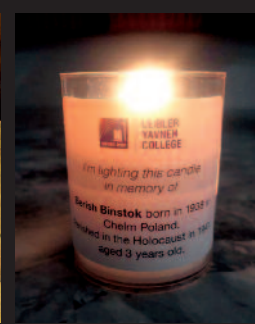
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YOM HA'ZIKARON



YOM HA'SHOA



# YAVNEH FOUNDATION updates



## YAVNEH FOUNDATION

### *Celebration & Thank You*



**We were delighted to welcome a full house to our cocktail evening at the home of Yona and Dion Epstein for a celebration of Leibler Yavneh College.**

Our College Captains, Principal Shula Lazar, Rabbi Dr Alan Kimche, talented secondary student musicians and Vonnice Coopersmith Public Speaking Competition senior winner, Goldie Feinberg, enthralled us with their moving words and performances.

We were also privileged to hear from our esteemed alumna of Yavneh, the Honourable Justice Lisa Hespe, Judge of the Federal Court of Australia. Justice Hespe shared her happy memories from her school years at Yavneh, including the unwavering support of her dedicated teachers who focussed on bringing out the best in their students. Justice Hespe credited her Tanach and Gemara studies with instilling many of the skills and lessons she continues to use each day in her impressive professional life. We celebrate and take great pride in Justice Hespe's remarkable contribution to Australian society.



**We thank our College Captains, Amelie C, Lee S, Yona F and Adam G for emceeding the evening and embodying Yavneh's values of menchkeit and community contribution. The Captains acknowledged their sincerest appreciation to our donors for the significant improvements they have witnessed over their years at Yavneh:**

*"We stand before you not only as students but as grateful beneficiaries of the remarkable support we have received over the 15 years we have been at Yavneh, from junior kinder, up until Year 12. Being at Yavneh for so many*

*years, we have witnessed the numerous ways the school has been improved, which could not have been done without your ongoing support. As your college captains, we want to express how important your contributions have been to our schooling.*

*Your generosity emphasises the values of humility, unity, and communal well-being. These principles resonate as by generously investing in the school, the Foundation exemplifies humility by recognising that it takes a collective effort to make the school a better place. The Foundation's contributions promote unity among students, teachers, and parents, as the entire community rallies around the shared goal of educational excellence. By focusing on the well-being of the students and providing resources for academic and extracurricular programs, the Foundation creates an environment conducive to growth, development, and overall success. The Yavneh Foundation's generosity fosters a sense of belonging and pride, making the school a better place for all who are part of its community.*

***As students, we are privileged to benefit from your unwavering commitment, and we are deeply appreciative to have a Foundation and executive board who are driven to continuously elevate Leibler Yavneh College to its utmost potential."***

## YAVNEH FOUNDATION SERIES

### *Conversation with...* **HILLEL SOLOMON, Head of Science and**

**Rabbi Professor SAM LEBENS  
Scholar In Residence**

We were also delighted to welcome a full house to hear a conversation between our Scholar in Residence, Rabbi Professor Sam Lebens and Yavneh's Head of Science, Hillel Solomon at the home of Naomi and Alan Moss. The dialogue was rich, engaging and thought provoking – revealing the compatibility between contemporary philosophy and science with authentic Jewish tradition. Rabbi Professor Lebens and Hillel explored the foundations and boundaries of Jewish belief, the integration of faith with a scientific worldview and the effective exploration of these ideas in an

educational context. It was a wonderful showcase of the Torah and Maddah ethos to which Yavneh aspires.

Hillel Solomon said of the event "Rabbi Professor Lebens is a profound thinker who authentically engages with both Jewish and secular philosophy. Our discussion spanned from Crescas to Wittgenstein and from differing interpretations of revelation to Occam's Razor. As the Head of Science at Yavneh, I was particularly interested in his perspective on the coexistence of science and faith. Rabbi Lebens presented a compelling argument not only for the compatibility of scientific pursuit with Jewish faith, but also for the potential for faith in G-d to provide a foundational justification for the scientific enterprise, which can sometimes be lacking. When asked about fostering deep engagement with these matters in our students, Rabbi Lebens endorsed a comprehensive teaching approach that encompasses the history and philosophy of science."

The highly rewarding Scholar in our Residence program was made possible by the generous donors to Building Strong Foundations campaign in 2021. After the success of this inaugural program, Yavneh, as the foremost Modern Orthodox school in Melbourne, is looking forward to inviting more exceptional scholars to our school, becoming a hub for the meaningful exploration of important issues in modern Jewish life.

### *Thank You*

On behalf of the College, we would like to again express our heartfelt gratitude for the generous support of our donors. The continued financial support of our Foundation Members is essential in driving our community forward, ensuring its strength, resilience and vibrancy for generations to come. Your investment in a Yavneh education is an investment in the future. By continuing to support our school, you are shaping the leaders, innovators, and change-makers of tomorrow.

**TANYA SHALTIEL**

*Executive Director, Yavneh Foundation*





# Mazal Tov to the following Alumni:

## BIRTHS:

- Gidon Winter '95 and family on the birth of a **son**
- Jasmin (nee Graizman) Korbl '00 & Aaron Korbl '99 on the birth of a **son**
- Benjamin Gordon and family '05 and family on the birth of a **son**
- Alana Ramler '05 and family on the birth of a son, **Ezekiel Dor**
- Miriam (nee Syber) Polevoy '06 and family on the birth of a son, **Gavriel Tzvi** (Israel)
- Janie (nee Chaskiel) Brouze '07 and family on the birth of a **son**
- Liana (nee Kalkopf) Rubin '08 on the birth of a daughter, **Adiella Nili**
- Toby Azoulay '10 and family on the birth of a son, **Oliver Lavie Yehoshua**
- Lydia (nee Slonim) '10 and family on the birth of a daughter, **Meira Rachel**
- Ya'akov Waller '10 and family on the birth of a **son**
- Rachel (nee Elbaum) Flint '12 and family on the birth of a son, **Reuben Isaac**
- Anita (nee Zeltsman) Gordon '15 & Nushi Gordon '15 on the birth of a **daughter**

## ENGAGEMENTS:

- Romy Browne '13 to Geoff Beinart-Smolman
- Matan Slonim '15 to Rachelli Herzog
- Hanna Dorfan '18 to Mikey Lazar

## WEDDINGS:

- Shari Leibler '08 to Gary Wertheimer
- Rebecca Searle '09 to Alon Takac
- Talya Steckoll '12 to Toby Turner
- Daniella Hendler '15 to Matani Rubinstein
- Ari Goldberg '16 to Ellie Moskow

made *Aliya*

- Sigal Abbatovi
- Jordana Abeles
- Rebecca Abeles
- Sarah Abeles
- Zac Abeles
- Elaine Adler
- Solomon Apfelbaum
- David Azoulay
- Dudi Bankier
- Batsheva Barda
- Gil Barda
- Hillel Barda
- Noa Barda
- Tal Becker (Zrihan)
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