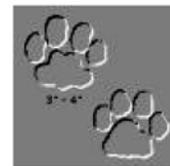


The

# Cougar Claw



Melvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy  
Middle School

13300 Arctic Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20853

## Eighth Grade Retrospective

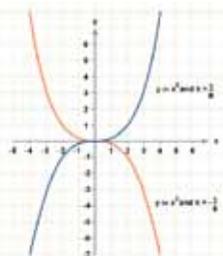
By Natan Rabinowitz

Our middle school experience was really terrific, we made new friends, did (or in some cases didn't) do our work, we all had ups and downs.

In terms of our writing abilities, let's take a moment to look back. If this was written on our first day in Middle School it would look something like this:

*Middle school is good. We write good. We learned alot. We had a good time. Our teachers are good.*

Luckily for us, we had English teachers who, despite our best efforts of resistance, were able to improve our writing at least marginally. For three whole years we spent our lives centered on the one hallway and a half of classrooms that we call the Middle School. It was in this hallway that we learned many skills and acquired much knowledge. We went from learning what "x" was in 6th grade Math to complex graphs with square roots in 8th. Our ability to write an essay gradually improved (*maybe?*). We were given the ability to read a page of Gemara, and learned a lot about a number of other fascinating topics.



To initiate the beginning of our terrific year we always set out to a team building program, where, despite the fun we had, some minute amount of team building ability may actually have rubbed off, thus allowing us to work together to achieve various goals throughout the rest of the year. Then, after an interspersion of long holiday

breaks (it was nice of God to think of us so long ago when He planned the calendar), we finally settled into the regular school routine.

Slowly, after a month or two of real work, we are once more ready for a well deserved (or at least we think so) break. Chanukah comes, and with it, one of the best events of the year: **Maccabia**. Rabbi Shields announces the scores (sometimes anyway when he doesn't feel incumbent upon himself to preserve the feelings of the "not quite first teams"), and we are free, uh, um, forcibly prevented from going to school, yeah, that's what we meant. (If not anything else during our three years here, we certainly learned political correctness.)

After our refreshing (provided our kind teachers didn't decide to overburden us with work) break, we return to school in January to the realization that the school year is actually half over! The next two months are generally spent desperately hoping for snow, rejoicing when it comes, and in between, getting some real learning done.

Finally, the temperature rises, spring is almost here and we begin the festive month of Adar in which pranks are planned (and often badly executed, though occasionally not, ahem, balloons), and fun activities abound.



Upon the completion of Adar we go straight to Pesach (another wonderful break given the same provisions as before) after which the school year is just about done. With Mr. Trams we are soon filming the end

of year video (hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes are never so much fun in real life), our tests and projects are usually done after one final cram in mid May (though I did notice a significant shift from mid May to early June this year), and the entire year winds down then, we're free, and very happy too until we realize that we actually are going to miss Middle school. (The Cougar Claw understands that the duration of this sad period varies for different people between about two minutes to twenty years.)

## Middle School Happenings

Julia Book

After coming back from a nice Pesach break (albeit one with very little *Chol Hamoed*), teachers jumped right into action, giving students essays, research papers, and projects. However, students were still excited about the *Yom Ha'atzmaut* tekes, *Lag Ba'omer*, and *Shavuot*. In addition to the exciting events and programs to go to, there was still more excitement. The middle school welcomed four students mid-year! Bruchim Habaim to **Amitai Landy, Leora Landy, Avi Pear, and Max Myers**. As the end of the year nears, it's time to say goodbye to some old teachers, and hello to new ones, who are sure to be at least as awesome as their predecessors. We at the Cougar Claw would like to extend our gratitude and well wishes to **Rabbi Klugerman, Ms. McLean, Moreh Sharly, Mrs. Shinensky and Mr. Trams** (see inside). Programs are nearing to a close, such as all the Chesed activities and our 'electives.' Student Council meetings are slowing, the Cougar Claw has put out its last issue, and it's time to wish you all an **AWESOME SUMMER!!!!**

# L'HITRAOT MORIM

## Mrs. Hochner

Aaron Feld and Anna Rose Osofsky



**Cougar Claw:** Why are you leaving MJBHA?

**Mrs. Hochner:** When I came here from Israel, I knew it would only be for 3 years because that was how long my husband had

arranged to work at the Embassy.

**CC:** Where will you live in Israel?

**Mrs. H:** I will be returning to the Moshav where I lived before I came to the USA. It is near Netanya.

**CC:** How do you feel about returning?

**Mrs. H:** I am happy because my life is in Israel, but I am also sad to be leaving the students and all my friends here. I will miss teaching Hebrew at MJBHA.

*Mrs. Hochner is a positive, generous, courageous and intelligent person. During the years she has been with us, we have learned a lot about Hebrew and Israel. Her smile made us all happy. She will be sorely missed. In the coming years, may we all be in Israel and then she can continue to brighten our day.*

## Mr. Trams

Uri Farber



This is the second time Mr. Trams is leaving the Academy to spend time in Israel. He has been with us this time for 3 years, teaching Life Science and Physical Science.

Mr. Trams has left an imprint on many students with his journals, portfolios, pictures and videos. His labs are a lot of fun (especially when they involve candy) and have taught us so much. He never fails to keep his lesson on track, but is always flexible about due dates.

In addition to being kind to students, Mr. Trams helps other teachers as well. He has the school's largest collection of stuff! If you ever need a pencil, glue stick, pair of scissors, calculator or ruler, he is happy to lend it to you.

Mr. Trams has coached girls' basketball, baseball and softball. His team meetings are always stocked with soda. Overall, he has definitely left his mark on the Middle School and we will all miss him!

## Moreh Sharly

Eli Jaffe and Agnes Goldrich



**Cougar Claw:** What did you like about working here?

**Moreh Sharly:** I enjoyed getting to know and teaching the students.

**CC:** How did you feel about coming to work here and how does this school compare to others you've worked at in the past?

**MS:** The students here know more about Judaism and are more committed than in other schools I've worked at. I will miss that, but I look forward to the challenge of bringing Torah and Ahavat Eretz Yisrael and Ahavat Am Yisrael to a place where it is weak.

**CC:** Will you miss us when you go to Allentown, Pennsylvania?

**MS:** Yes, very much. I hope to see you all again.

*Moreh Sharly made learning fun. In addition, he added a humorous remark to every class. We will miss him, but wish him and his family much Hatzlacha in Allentown and hope he keeps in touch.*

## Ms. McLean

Aliza Mintz



**Cougar Claw:** How long have you taught here?

**Ms. McLean:** I have taught at MJBHA for a total of 6 years, but not consecutively.

**CC:** Where are you going to grad school and what will you be studying?

**Ms. M:** I am going to go to the University of San Diego to study counseling and I plan to counsel children.

**CC:** When did you decide to go back to school? And why now?

**Ms. M:** It was always a dream of mine to be a child counselor. I want to make sure I follow my dreams.

**CC:** Do you regret not being able to teach next year's 7th graders?

**Ms. M:** Yes, I'm very sad to leave.

**CC:** Will you stay in touch?

**Ms. M:** For sure!

**CC:** What will you miss the most?

**Ms. M:** Grading papers. Wait, I thought the question was what I won't miss.

I will definitely miss everyone.

*We will definitely miss Ms. McLean. We wish her well in her studies and hope to see her soon.*

## Mrs. Shinensky

Pazit Rabinowitz



Mrs. Shinensky, longtime Middle School Art Teacher, will be leaving us next year. I am especially sad about this because, as a 6th Grader, I have only had Mrs. Shinensky for 1 year. I

love art, and I love the way Mrs. Shinensky teaches art. The 6th Grade Girls also had her for a davening leader, and I know that my davening has improved a lot since she came.

Whether it's baking rugalach with the girls she davens with, or teaching a new technique in art, Mrs. Shinensky is always ready to help kids have fun. We'll miss you, Mrs. Shinensky!



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# We'll Miss You, Rabbi Klugerman



## Ten Things You Might Not Know...

Julia Book

Everyone knows about Rabbi Klugerman's famous 'My first job is to keep you safe' speech. We all know how great a principal he is. However, there are some things we don't know. So, here are ten things you might not know about Rabbi Klugerman.

- 1) Rabbi Klugerman had Dalmatians growing up.
- 2) When eating pizza, he prefers it cheeseless.
- 3) He is a gourmet cook.
- 4) He wrote the Jewish history curriculum.
- 5) Rabbi Klugerman is allergic to strawberries.
- 6) Rabbi Klugerman was a congregation Rabbi in Connecticut.
- 7) Rabbi Klugerman was a lifeguard at Moshava.
- 8) He sometimes rides a bike to school.
- 9) Rabbi Klugerman will only eat dark chocolate.
- 10) He worked for Magen David Adom in Israel.



The Middle School presented Rabbi Klugerman with a plaque signed by every student. It reads, "He who teaches Torah to young people is like a parent to them."

*I feel like I should make a list for Rabbi Klugerman about things he doesn't know about us, but that might not be possible. Rabbi Klugerman is an amazing principal and the Middle School will miss him very much. Personally, I'm glad that I got to have Rabbi Klugerman as my principal for all three years of Middle School, and I feel bad for everyone in fifth grade and below, who will never be able to be in Rabbi Klugerman's awesome Middle School. We'll miss you, Rabbi Klugerman!*



What I will miss about Rabbi Klugerman the most is the way he always has a nice word or a smile for everyone. Any time I come to school late, and go to the office to get a note, I can always count on that cheerful smile coming from Rabbi Klugerman's desk.

Pazit Rabinowitz

I remember when you taught me Zionism. It was a good experience. I will miss you being principal of the MJBHA Middle School and there is no one like you. I wish you good luck in Detroit and success in your new job as a headmaster.

Yoni Benamou

Thank you for being such a great principal, and for appreciating my strange sense of humor. I wish you many sacks of potatoes!

Shira Shamoulian

Thank you for always giving me a late note when I was sent to your office for being late and for being so understanding.

Anna Rose Osofsky

I will miss you. Thank you for tolerating me.

Rachel Tsimmerman

Rabbi Klugerman, I will miss you running the youth minyan. It will never be as great without you. You inspire everyone you meet to learn Torah.

Avrumi Linfield

I know you the best because I spent the most time in your office to ask Halachic questions and for other reasons. What will I do when I have a Halachic issue that I can't solve myself?

Uri Farber

I will miss the way you run davening and it will never be the same without you. Thank you for all the special activities that you made happen. I appreciate all that you have done for the school.

Abbie Salamon

I've loved having you as principal. You've always been helpful and positive. You never give up on anybody. I will miss you greatly.

Aaron Feld

# L'HITRAOT • L'HITRAOT • L'HITRAOT

## Adin Feder

Daniel Schopf



**Cougar Claw:** Adin, how do you feel about moving back to Sharon?

**Adin:** I am excited to see my old friends in Sharon... but I am sad to leave my wonderful friends in Silver Spring.... except for Daniel.

**CC:** What will you miss about MJBHA?

**Adin:** I'll miss the mudslides, my friends, seashell pasta, the school in general, and most of all... the math homework!

**CC:** What are you looking forward to doing in Sharon?

**Adin:** I'm looking forward to going to the lake in Sharon, being closer to Fenway Park and most of all, having awesome ski resorts (no offense, Whitetail)!

**CC:** What are your parting words for us at MJBHA?

**Adin:** Thank you all for welcoming me into the school community. I've had such a great time and I will miss each and every one of you. All of you are welcome to come to Sharon to visit me, and I'll be back to visit.

---

## Noam Klugerman

Eitan Isser



My first year of pre-school was at the MJBHA. That is when I met my friend Noam Klugerman. As I walked into our class I saw Noam. Noam was big and

strong (just as he is today). I came up to him and said "Hi" as he was playing with his toys. We started pushing each other and that's how we began our friendship.

Noam is a great friend to have. He is athletic, smart, fun, and has a great addiction to ketchup. Every time he came to my house I offered him food of which he had to smell

## Eitan Davidson

Max Elihan



**Cougar Claw:** Eitan, you have moved many times in your life. How do you feel about this? Where have you lived before?

**Eitan:** I have been to several countries as a child. At first, I did not notice that I was constantly moving from country to country. But as I grew older, I started to understand how it felt to move and leave friends behind. At the same time I have enjoyed the excitement of moving to a new place. I have lived in Venezuela, Chile, Brisbane and Jabaru in Australia, and Maine and Maryland in the USA. And now I am moving to Canada.

**CC:** How long have you been in Maryland?

**Eitan:** At the age of 3, I lived in Maryland and attended MJBHA. Then I went off to Maine for a year and returned to Maryland and MJBHA for kindergarten until mid second-grade. I then came back in 5th grade. I went to HDS for half the year and then came to MJBHA where I have been for two and a half years.

**CC:** What are you going to miss about Maryland?

**Eitan:** Mostly my friends and the Jewish community of Silver Spring, and MJBHA, including my teachers.

**CC:** Where exactly in Canada are you moving to?

**Eitan:** I am moving to Kingston, Ontario.

*We will all miss Eitan because of his hospitality towards the grade, having people over for Shabbos and acting warm and kind towards every single kid in this year's 7<sup>th</sup> grade and his great sense of humor. Eitan, we hope enjoy you the wilderness of Canada to remind you of the hikes we would go on Shabbos afternoons.*

it even if it didn't have a smell. Noam and I are good friends, and he makes friends very easy. Every time I have trouble with people, he backs me up, and we get closer every time.

Noam it will be hard for everyone in the grade when you leave We will miss you and your family, but we will email, text, or whatever you want to do maybe even talk

## Eitam Yavlovich

Daniel Ginsburg



**Cougar Claw:** Are you happy you are going back to Israel?

**Eitam:** Yes, I am very excited, because I am going to see my family again, but I am sad about leaving my friends.

**CC:** Where are you going to school?

**E:** I am going to Nevei Shmuel which is an all boys boarding school.

**CC:** Was it hard to adapt to America?

**E:** Yes, it was hard to get used to the new language, but all my friends helped me feel welcome.

**CC:** Do you think it's going to be hard to get used to the Israeli lifestyle again?

**E:** I think it's going to be even harder than it was to adjust to America, because Israel has changed so much since I left.

**CC:** What do you think you will miss most about America?

**E:** I think that I will miss all the snow we get here and my friends.

**CC:** Do you have any last words you would like to tell everyone before you go?

**E:** I'll really miss everyone, and I hope we can keep in touch.

We will all miss Eitam's sense of humor, intelligence, and kindness. He always brought a smile to everyone's face no matter how they were feeling. His optimistic attitude toward everything made him a truly great friend. Bye Eitam :( Good luck next year!

on the phone (the old way), if you agree to talk with me for more than a minute.

Noam, have a great time in Detroit. Be safe, happy, and healthy. Make new friends and do what you can with your ketchup. You're always the one to look up to. Thanks for a great friendship for me and everyone in the grade.

# L'HITRAOT • L'HITRAOT • L'HITRAOT

## Ilay Yavlovich

By Adin Feder and Ezra Heller



Ilay Yavlovich is a seventh grader at M.J.B.H.A. He has been living in America for the past few years. He'll be moving to Israel this summer, and he looks forward to seeing his relatives in Israel. Although he's excited for kosher McDonald's, he will miss all of his friends. His favorite memories in America include being with his friends and traveling around the country with his family.

Ilay is a special person to all of us here at MJBHA. We appreciate his reliability, his way with people, his understanding of how others feel behind their words and so much more. A great many people feel as though they haven't had enough time to talk to him and get to know him better. The worst part of him leaving now is that we can't go to his Bar-Mitzvah. So, Ilay, Mazal Tov from everyone and may you only continue to build on your accomplishments. Goodbye, we're going to miss you!

## Maya Bickel

Anna Rose Osofsky



**Cougar Claw:** Why are you going to Israel?

**Maya:** My mom got a fellowship there.

**CC:** Where are you going to be living?

**Maya:** Arnona, Yerushalaim.

**CC:** What are you most excited about?

**Maya:** I don't know, its Israel! The Hebrew, the trips, and the candy!

**CC:** What are you least excited about?

**Maya:** I'm really going to miss my friends.

**CC:** Are you very excited/ nervous?

**Maya:** Yes, I'm very excited and a little nervous.

## Noa Bogen

Karen Shapiro



**Cougar Claw:** What are the most exciting and least exciting aspects of moving back to Israel?

**Noa:** I am most excited about seeing the familiar places that I have lived in, the Chagim, and seeing

my family friends and my old friends. I am least excited about saying goodbye to my friends here.

**CC:** Are you still in contact with your friends in Israel?

**Noa:** Some. The ones that I was really close with are the ones that email at least once a day and the ones that I was just friends with email me once every two months.

**CC:** Are you more or less excited to move back then you were to move here?

**Noa:** More Excited. I am going back to somewhere familiar and I know at least one person in every city we are considering.

**CC:** Is your family excited to move back?

**Noa:** Mixed feelings. We like it here but we haven't been there for three years!

**CC:** Do you have any tips for us if we were to move to or visit Israel?

**Noa:** • The ice cream is not good unless it's home-made and McDonalds is the best restaurant.

• Never cross a road without looking because the drivers there are crazy!

• Never take a car anywhere! Walk in groups of friends to school or take a bus with some friends.

• Go to Bnei Akiva. When it is a nice day, finish your homework, take a popsicle and go to the park with some friends or take a walk.



## Rana Bickel

Tali Kosowsky



**Cougar Claw:** How do you feel about going to Israel?

**RB:** I am excited, a little nervous, but it will be fun and a wonderful experience.

**CC:** What are you going to miss about MJBHA?

**RB:** All of my friends, and my teachers, especially Ms. McLean.

**CC:** Where in Israel are you going to be living?

**RB:** I'm going to live in Yerushalayim, in Arnona, which is near Talpiot.

**CC:** Why are you moving?

**RB:** My mom got a fellowship at Yad Vashem for a year.

**CC:** What else are you going to miss?

**RB:** My community, my shul, my friends from outside of school, my house, the excitement of the bus every day, and speaking English.

**CC:** How do you feel about speaking Hebrew?

**RB:** Well, I'm in the Israeli Hebrew group, and I went to Israel for summer camp a few years ago, and I learned a ton of Hebrew, so it's not going to be as hard as going to Israel with no Hebrew. I think I'll have some trouble, but it's going to be a great learning experience.

**CC:** Do you have anything else to say?

**RB:** I'll miss everyone, and Leshana Habaa B'Yerushalayim Habenuya! Keep in touch and have a great year!



Continued on page 6

# L'HITRAOT

## Molly Franco

Rebecca Askarinam and Eliana Tuchman



When you see Molly's adorable smile, and awesome dance moves, it is hard to resist smiling at her great personality. Molly brings pleasure to everyone she is around and she loves everyone

for who they are. Molly is a good person, and can never do anything that is even slightly "wrong" without feeling guilty, and apologizing. Molly is a big participant in Chesed activities, and is always thinking of ways to lend a helping hand. Miss Drama Queen is an amazing person who we all love to be around. She is friendly to everyone and is fun to be with. She is also an amazing friend who is always there for us. Whenever someone is sad or looks upset, she goes over to them and comforts them.

When her friends were asked to describe her, they said *awesome personality, Syrian, outgoing, hilarious, good person, sweet, stylish, crazy, pretty, exciting, fun, lovable, bubbly, hyper, hilarious, funny, amazing, rocks, great friend, honest, loving, friendly, and the best friend that anyone can ever dream of having.*

Hopefully even though she is leaving for high school in Deal, New Jersey, she will come home to her 'second family' at the Hebrew Academy. We will definitely miss our Renaissance Girl! Bye Molz, we love and will miss you so much, Insanco!

**M**ore than gorgeous

**O**ut-going shopping- if you're looking for her, go to J. Crew, Zara, Forever 21, and H&M

**L**oving and lovable

**L**ikes to dance

**Y**ou're adorable



# THIS YEAR IN CHESD

## Thoughts About Chesed

Molly Franco

To me, Chesed is a growing flower that was planted at existence. It helps us through the hard times, and lifts our souls higher every time we do something nice or helpful for someone. Chesed is the base, the flower pot which holds the family, the soil in each of our hearts spreading as one creating a foundation for life. All of the different sized seeds are people in need of help all over the world. The flower is just an ongoing stem we create as one to help each and every individual in need.

I've learned a valuable lesson over the past three years being involved in the Chesed Committee: You cannot fix the world on your own. Hashem made the world with imperfection for each person to find within themselves the motivation to rise and heal the wounded souls in the world. This lesson will continue to guide me through life. The past three years have changed my life and left a mark on my heart. The Chesed Committee is an opportunity to grow and help the world and yourself. Carry this message on and remember you can never help anyone enough! Keep doing good deeds!



Chesed Committee members thank our volunteers at the Chesed breakfast.



## Reading Buddies

Leiby Smolianski

Every Monday, at breakfast and lunch, sixth graders have been reading buddies to second graders. It has been a fun experience for the second graders and a way for the sixth graders to make second graders feel special. For the sixth graders, part of the fun was saying hi to your reading buddies in the hall.



Some sixth graders brought treats for their reading buddies which made the program even more special. Sometimes, at our meetings, we did other things besides reading, like making origami or drawing



pictures together.

I hope next year's sixth graders will continue to make reading buddies a special program.



Dr. and Mrs. Cohen present a plaque to the Middle School for collecting the \$10,000 for Save a Child's Heart. The child is from Ghana, Bill Blankson's homeland.



Jacob Werbin shared his story and inspired the Middle School to raise funds for SACH.



# Hello High School

By: Yair Mordfin

Many of us 8th graders are wondering what surprises and changes await us in high school. High school comes with a lot of new changes to our school day. There are more periods, a different schedule, and most importantly, an elective.

As we were choosing electives, we began to wonder if going up into the high school would be a change for the best. Is a longer day really a better

day? That just means more school. Is a lot more homework really better? That just means getting less sleep. However, after some time, we will all get used to our new schedule and, hopefully, learn to manage our time in the new high school environment.



Yes, we will miss Maccabia, the earlier dismissal, less work, and the overall less hectic schedule of middle school, but going up into high school offers new opportunities and more independence. After a while, we will all settle into whatever clubs and committees that we want to join, and we'll always be looking

forward to "Battle of the Grades", Kollal night, the "Chagiga", and so much more.

From the minute we walked into middle school, most of us felt the burst of freedom that was held back from us in lower school. In lower school we walked in lines and had everything organized and ready for us, but in middle school, we got our liberty! In middle school, we don't stay with the same people for the whole day; each of us has a different schedule. We can walk around during our breaks, instead of being trapped in the lunchroom! However, in high school, we get independence almost at its fullest.

## Building Bridges - Find the Differences

Eli Jaffe



Once in high school, we will have to manage our time in a way that best suits us each as an individual, we will be walking through three long hallways to get to our classes, and most of all we get granted a lot of responsibility. I don't mean to sound like a teacher, but high school comes with a lot of responsibility, and so does growing up. It's definitely hard to be leaving middle school, but I, as well as many others, look forward to the new experiences and opportunities that await us in high school.

## Middle School Girls' Choir

Pazit Rabinowitz



This year was the first year of a new program for the girls in our Middle School. Every Monday at lunch, girls went to the Lower School Music Room to sing, eat lunch and have fun. I don't know how Mrs. Gottlieb is always able to pick such great songs for us to sing, but somehow, she always does. I have discovered that singing is really good for calming down, and that makes choir really good, since it is right in the middle of the school day which can be a very annoying time. We were able to learn tons of great songs in English and in Hebrew, and we even were able to have a performance, which we had not really been expecting. Middle School Girls' Choir is a great place to learn, have fun, and sing.

## Answers

- Different time on clock
- No bracelets on Lauren
- Pictures are missing
- Sprinkler has disappeared x2
- Holes in table are gone
- Extra penny
- Back wall brick lines not there
- Absent light and droopy ceiling