



Columbus Torah Academy

# CTA Dateline

## *Special Pesach Edition*

School Highlights and Updates

April 2025/Nissan 5785

As the hustle and bustle of Pesach preparations swirl about and in the midst of the chaos in our world, we can find sweet moments of learning, growing, and hope in what our children are experiencing at CTA. They will bring home with them packets of Divrei Torah, memories of model Seders, melodies of new and old songs, projects ranging from kiddush cups to leaning pillows, seder plates to matzah boxes and so much more. Their optimism and excitement for the first taste of matzah at the seder table will remind each of us of memories at our parents and Bubbie and Zaide's tables with aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends. These are the foundational moments that



the Jewish future are being built upon. In the face of rising anti-semitism, hatred to Israel, constant threats to a way of life that we are used to, your commitment to a CTA education perpetuates our community's collective destiny.

Passover - it is the greatest story ever told in the continuing chronicles of the Jewish people. For 3,000 years Jews around the world have shared the critical lessons related to the story of the Jewish people being freed from Egypt. The essence of the seder is our reflection that regardless of how bleak our circumstances are, Hashem can save us in a blink of an eye. The inner joy that surfaces during the seder is the realization that we are fortunate to have our creator who ultimately protects us in every generation. As reflected upon over the thousands of years of Jewish history the various world powers who were fixated on our destruction have ultimately dissolved. Meanwhile, there are more Jewish people connected today to learning Torah, and Jewish education than ever before.

CTA is a link in the chain called the mesorah, the sharing of our traditions and purpose as a nation with our children. A Seder with a CTA student at the table it is a richer experience. Through these pages you will get a glimpse into Passover preparations throughout the grades and a chance to add some of the excitement from our students to your holiday celebration.



**Saturday Night, April 12 - 1<sup>st</sup> Seder**

**Sunday Night, April 13 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Seder**

Monday, April 14 - Pesach Yom Tov Day 2

Tuesday - Friday, April 15-18 - Chol HaMoed Pesach

Shabbat, April 19 - Sunday, April 20 - Pesach Yom Tov Days 7 & 8



## Columbus Torah Academy

181 Noe Bixby Road  
Columbus, OH 43213  
(614) 864-0299

[info@torahacademy.org](mailto:info@torahacademy.org)  
[www.torahacademy.org](http://www.torahacademy.org)

Rabbi Avrohom Drandoff  
Head of School Ext. 228

Constance Borro  
Lower School Principal Ext. 215

Debbie Grashin  
Upper School Principal Ext. 220

Rabbi Yisroel Weiner  
Judaic Studies Principal Ext. 213

Shirly Benatar  
Hebrew Language Curriculum  
Chair Ext. 229

### Board of Trustees 2024-2025

Naomi Myers, MD (President)  
Yoni Zofan (Vice-President)  
Meredith Weprin (Treasurer)  
Rabbi Benyomin Weinschneider (Secretary)  
Buddy Adler (Board Development Chair)  
Jonathan Schottenstein (Finance Chair)  
Meir Perlmutter (Fundraising Chair)  
Beth Binsky (Marketing and Admissions Chair)

Terri Barnett  
Howie Beigelman  
Maxx Blank  
John Frank, MD  
Ben Kozberg  
Stephen Lessnick, MD  
Sam Nutis  
Raanan Lefkovitz, Immediate Past President  
Bob Wolf, MD, Past President  
Aaryn Rubin, PTO President  
Congregational Rabbis

Accredited by: ISACS Independent Schools  
Association of the Central States Member  
of: Torah Umesorah Association of Modern  
Orthodox Day School & Yeshiva High  
Schools (AMODS)

## Dvar Torah

### מה נשתנה

The מה נשתנה, as we all know, is the part during מגיד in which all of the children ask 4 famous questions all revolving around the central question of why is this night different from all other nights?

There is an interesting question that can arise from the basic idea of saying the מה נשתנה. If we do these supposedly "strange" actions during the seder that are mentioned in the מה נשתנה partially in order to inspire children to ask questions, why do we seemingly spoon feed them questions to be asked? Why are we not supposed to just let them observe and ask these questions on their own?

Before answering this question we must consider another basic idea about the מה נשתנה. In this section we again bring up the fact that we were enslaved by talking about matzah and maror, and then about how we were set free by Hashem by talking about dipping foods and reclining. By bringing up this contrast we are able to appreciate a bit more just how much we owe Hashem for allowing that freedom to occur.

Now, back to the question. Why do we spoon feed children the questions? Rav Yechiel Epstein says that really, we are misinterpreting what the מה נשתנה is.

The מה נשתנה is meant to be said not in an inquisitive manner, but rather in a tone of wonderment as if to say "Wow, look how different this night is and look at what we do differently." We are in fact not spoon feeding questions to the children to "ask" and instead we are setting the stage for the children to ask questions about our strange actions on their own. If you take a look at the wording of the מה נשתנה you may notice that the supposed "questions" the children ask are really statements. The only question is the first sentence of the מה נשתנה.

The children state the unusual actions we do during the seder, highlighting the contrast between our slavery and our freedom and through these declarations we hope the children will be able to ask even a simple question on their own: "Why?"

It is important to learn from these statements made in a tone of wonderment. We have to acknowledge in awe the power of Hashem. He has gotten us to where we are now and will get us to wherever He chooses. Personally, I'm going to be going off to college or yeshiva after next year. I don't know where I'll be going or what I'll be doing but wherever I end up, whatever I see or experience, and whoever I meet, I know Hashem will be guiding me along my journey.

Columbus Torah Academy is proud to be a beneficiary agency of JewishColumbus.  
We are an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.



Yitzy Cooper,  
11<sup>th</sup> grade student



## A Passover Experience - Kindergarten Style

Nestled in the warmth and care of the kindergarten classroom is the epitome of Pesach learning, experiencing and celebrating at CTA. In the older grades the learning becomes more developed and deeper, but it all harkens back to the beginning. Morah Jamie shared with us what Pesach preparations have been looking like:

Kindergarten has been working on all kinds of fun and exciting projects to share at the seder table on Pesach. We learned all about the items on the seder plate and what they stand for and each student can tell our families about each using our own seder plate as the display.

We made a kiddush cup with jewels to use for the four cups of grape juice that everyone is excited to be able to drink, and we will lean while drinking to be like a king with our own decorated pillowcase to make it more comfortable to do so.

We made a saltwater dish to dip our karpas in and learned that families have different customs for which vegetable gets used for this part of the seder. Some customs were parsley, celery, and potatoes. We shared that we know a family who uses bananas because the bracha for bananas is ha'adama so it is a good learning experience for people to learn that bracha goes with bananas.

We learned about eating marror and how bitter the lives of the Jews were in Egypt and how lucky we are now to be free people.

We made a matzah box to hold extra matzot for the table and decorated it with a picture of the Jews walking through the splitting of the sea.

The students really enjoyed learning about the afikomen, hiding it, and searching for it in our classroom. We made a bag that the afikomen could go in so it stays clean while being hidden around the house, sometimes being found and hidden multiple times throughout the seder.:

We made a beautiful haggadah for all the different parts of the seder, learned the Ma Nishtanah, parts of Dayeinu and the song for the order of the seder to be able to participate even further.

The students of kindergarten are so excited to share their knowledge and bring joy to their own tables over this wonderful holiday. We wish everyone a special and meaningful Pesach!

Thank you Morah Jamie and the entire faculty and staff at CTA for your time and talents to bring learning to life in all disciplines so that our students have a rounded view of the world which is steeped in Jewish knowledge and traditions.





## Maror - Straight from the CTA Garden

Master CTA Gardener, Norm Leist, has successfully harvested another season of horseradish to make appearances at Seder tables in our community. Luckily he had incoming CFO Daryl Binsky with him for the harvest to snap these pictures. Kindergartener, Rosie, shared what she thinks of maror, but we all have our opinions.

Horseradish is a cold-hardy perennial, meaning it can be planted in the spring and harvested in the fall or following spring. The CTA maror has made an appearance for each of the last 5 or 6 years and its spot is carefully marked for next year. We will expect Norm to harvest again!



## MafTeach Holds Pesach Boker Iyun & Jewpardy

CTA's Yeshiva University partnership continued with a fourth visit this school year from our MafTeach Fellows. These young men and women are interested in exploring Jewish education and selected CTA as the place they wanted to continue that exploration. We have been able to host them in our school and shuls for Shabbat, partner them with seasoned teachers for mentorship, see them interact with our students in formal and informal learning and all around get to know them as members of the CTA family.

Their early April visit was just in time for some Pesach prep which included Boker Iyun learning sessions for High School and Junior High as well as grade level Jeopardy style trivia.

We look forward to seeing where Baruch, Yosef, Ruthie, and Daniella's journey takes them next.





## Tales of a 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Passover Powerhouse

Morah Sarah and the 4<sup>th</sup> grade are READY! They are coming home with Seder Kits to rival any found at Artscroll or Eichlers. In the bag is:

**Slave Journal Entry:** Students learned about the slavery in mitzrayim (Egypt) by listening to a read aloud of "My Last Year in Mitzrayim" and reading through descriptions in the Katz Hagaddah. They write a journal entry from the perspective of a slave to help them internalize the mitzvah of feeling as though you were a slave in Egypt.

**Hagaddah Divrei Torah Cards:** As the class went through the hagaddah, focusing on the steps of the seder and learn divrei torah together about each section of the seder, the students wrote Divrei Torah on cards that go on a key ring so they can flip through them throughout the seder.

**Hilchot Pesach:** Students used Canva to design and print brochures on the laws of Pesach that they can share with family and friends.

**Know the Order:** The pictures that you see with kids with cards on their heads is a "headbandz" like game we do to review the steps of the seder. After singing through the seder song many times and discussing each step students are given a card with a name of a step of the seder, they have to ask their classmates questions to guess which step they are. At the end the students then play a game where they have to arrange themselves in the correct order of the seder.



## Some More Snippets from Pesach Prep

From a Red Sea Hallway to a Tower of Plagues and Kiddush Cups and Hagaddot to Seder Plates, there is lots of learning. Parents better get their memory boxes ready.





## High School Makkot Fair Educates ALL

Mrs. Rom took the lead and her fellow teachers followed suit to work with the high school girls on putting together a Makkot Fair which all student in grades 4-12 had the opportunity to peruse. Parent even popped by to enjoy the event.

Divided into 10 stations (one for each plague) the students created informative and interactive presentations about the reasons and the impact of the plague and what the result was for both the Egyptians, Pharoah, and the Jewish People.

Each group that heard a presentation, received a small treat that at the end went on an ice cream sundae - black sprinkles for the lice, strawberry sauce for blood in the Nile, gummy treats for the frogs, candy eyeballs for the death of the first born - you get the picture. Learning and tasting!



## High School Hagaddah Companion is Published

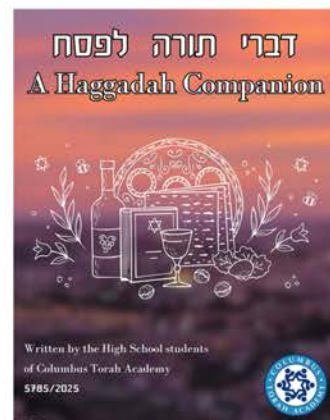
Students in grades 9-12 submitted Divrei Torah on a different aspect of the holiday. The result is a Hagaddah Companion that will be great at any seder. Best if recited by the actual author, but still good as a stand alone:)

Particularly check out these: Michael: Bedikat Chametz, Yitzy: Ma Nishtana, Josh: the 4 sons, and so many of different aspects of the Seder plate.

We are so proud to see their thoughts and reflections come to life in words.

To download it, go to [www.torahacademy.org/2025Hagaddah](http://www.torahacademy.org/2025Hagaddah)

Thanks to Rabbi Yachnes for coordinating!





# Graphic Design Pesach Poster Challenge

Mrs. Binsky challenged her High School Graphic Design class to use creative skills and design tools to create posters about the plagues. The rubric required Hebrew and English names, a visual symbol about the plague, a brief description about the plague, and to create each poster like a family, taking into account color, font choices, shapes and over all visual themes. Beautiful!



## Pre-Pesach Yom Iyun

GHSP students were able to learn at a Pre-Pesach Yom Iyun with Rabbi Teichman who spoke about about the life-lessons learned from the mitzvah of matzah. Following was a workshop-style lesson exploring the meaning of freedom as it applies to Jewish people.



## Bigson and Seresh: Unmasked

Congratulations to the GHSP at their performance of Bigson and Seresh:Unmasked. The students created an original script and song lyrics that was enjoyed by all. (Again, not Pesach, but a really exciting student initiated project). Thank you to Mrs. Beigelman and Mrs. Deutsch who took the lead on supporting the students.





# Kindergarten Shares - What is the first thing you would do once freed from Egypt?

There are no wrong answers, but our kindergarteners definitely tickle our funny bones with their responses.



## What is the first thing you would do once freed from Egypt?

Yosef B.- I would color for 3 hours.

Chaviva- Have a big party

Adi- Eat a cake

Rosie- Lots of cartwheels-people would join me once they saw how fun it was.

Eden- Go to the zoo to play with the animals

Yosef K.- Play with toys and buy something with money...maybe candy

Efraim- I would have a geshmak cupcake party.

Sammy- Eat what I want to eat (Pharoah can't tell me not to anymore)

Sadie- Go to Target

Shummy- Sing and dance and throw party like at a Bar Mitzvah

Danny- I would build a rocket to go to Mars so I could be far from Egypt. I would make friends there and have a party around my rocket ship.

Mayer Simcha- Go on the fastest airplane so I could see every city

Ella- Go with my family to my house

Naftali- Go gem mining and go jump out of an airplane with a parachute

Ayelet- Cabo and Canada to the waterpark

Sophie- I would eat a popsicle.

Yaeli- Go to Cabo

Yosef T.- I would go straight to Israel.

Gila- I would throw a party.





## Model Seders Full of Laughs and Learning

Literally LOVE a model seder. It's great practice and with a different seder table crowd than typical. Students can show off to each other, but also learn about traditions that may be different than the ones at their own homes. There were lots of laughs and learning in classroom settings for Lower School Model Seders. Morah Savage dressed up and parade to some of the other sederim as Pharoah and Batya bringing the story to life even more. The kindergarteners are more than ready with Ma Nishtana and everyone taste maror, charoset, and karpas, even if they KNEW they didn't like it. And yes, just like at a family seder, there were spills of grape juice, but everyone left full of new ways to look at the seder, the holiday, and the story of the Jewish people. Thank you PTO for sponsoring the Chicken Cutlet seudah and Mrs. Tanenbaum for preparing all of the seder foods and seudah lunch.





## 1st Grade Shines at Chag HaSiddur

While not part of Pesach Prep, the first graders, their teachers, parents, and a few grandparents, celebrated a significant milestone at Chag HaSiddur when the students received their first prayer book.

Our hearts were bursting with pride and joy as we watched how much they have grown this year. The words on the pages will be their key to a life of inspiration and gratitude to Hashem.

A video recap can be found on our YouTube Channel. Hours of Chol HaMoed watching fun!



## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Shakespeare is a Wrap!

7th grade culminated their study of William Shakespeare with a performance of excerpts from many of his works. The Class of 2030 now joins the ranks of their fellow upper school students and SIX decades of CTA Shakespeare performers. The annual Shakespeare Festival is a big part of the CTA Junior High experience - supporting creativity, confidence, teamwork, problem solving, leadership, resilience, and more.

Thank you to English teacher Ms. Fried and Drama teacher, Angela Barch-Shamell for leading this project for the students. Thanks to Michael Solomon and Eva Golden at the JCC Columbus for helping to bring the stage alive. To see the full performance check out our YouTube channel at Friday morning's extra performance at CTA was met with lots of laughs from the students in grades 1-6 (and some nostalgic high school students).





# Purim 2025/5785

Learning, Experiencing, Celebrating = Purim was a TON of fun even if it was a superquick day to get it all in before Shabbat! We covered all four mitzvot!





## A snapshot from the Gan Gazette

CTA's partnership with Gan Ephraim Preschool continues to flourish and now we are readying to see the Zahav students come visit in April for Kindergarten Preview Day! Here's how Pesach is shaping up at Gan! Matza Factory too from Rabbi Yitzi! Way to go Morah Miriam and your amazing teachers! We are also excited for Gan's summer camp. Just a few spots left for ages 2 1/2-4.



## Just a Few More Days

### OHIO TAX CREDITS BENEFIT CTA SCHOLARSHIPS



Make a qualifying contribution to a Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) and receive a tax credit\*! No cost! Now until April 15!

Individuals up to \$750  
Joint filers up to \$1500



Scan to Apply for Ohio Tax Credit

Apply now at [www.torahacademy.org/ohiotaxcredit](http://www.torahacademy.org/ohiotaxcredit)

Questions to [info@torahacademy.org](mailto:info@torahacademy.org)

\*Talk with your tax preparer about eligibility.





# Mazel Tovs

March 11-April 1, 2025. Includes current and former families, faculty members, and supporters of CTA. Alumni graduates are listed by graduation year. Apologies in advance for any omissions or errors. Thank you for submissions and updates which can be sent to [info@torahacademy.org](mailto:info@torahacademy.org)

Anne Shindel on the Bar Mitzvah of her son Jakey and to grandparents Elaine and Harold Shindel

Rabbi Aryeh and Esther Kaltmann on the engagement of their son Shea to Sarah Wuensch

## 1990s

Tonia (Shatz) Class of 1998 and Jeff Levison on the Bar Mitzvah of their son Reuven and to grandparents Sara and Allan Shatz and Laurie and Michael Levison

## 2000s

Chana (Schottenstein) (8<sup>th</sup> grade class of 2005) and Ari Marinovsky on the birth of a son and to grandparents Lea and Tuvia Schottenstein

Sam (Class of 2006) and Esti Schmelzer on the birth of daughter Ayalah Chedva and to grandparents Dr. Victor and Susan Schmelzer

David (Class of 2008) and Jordana Schmelzer on the birth of a daughter, Abigail Lily and to grandparents Dr. Victor and Susan Schmelzer

## 2010s

Harry Bernzweig (Class of 2018) on his marriage to Leora Hazan (Class of 2022) and to parents David and Esther Bernzweig and Arie and Shana Hazan

Kira Lessnick (8th grade class of 2019) on her marriage to Aryeh Schwartz and to parents Drs Stephen and Michelle Lessnick

Penina Weitz (8th grade class of 2019) on her marriage to Eliezer Nemani and to parents Rabbi Zechariah and Leah Weitz

## 2020s

Areah Goldstein (Class of 2024) on making his first ever siyum on Megilah which took place in Poland and to mother, Dina Goldstein

# Tzedakah

Since March 11-April 1, 2025. Does not include donations to special projects or the Spring Fundraiser. Submit any updates or errors to [info@torahacademy.org](mailto:info@torahacademy.org). Make a donation at [www.torahacademy.org/give](http://www.torahacademy.org/give)

## Annual Fund

- Beth Dolinger in memory of Esther Pessin, AH
- Adam and Jill Eisenberg in memory of Francine Greff
- Chad Friedman in honor of Yoni and Allison Zofan and Robbie and Tali Friedman
- Mark Epstein in memory of Bart Epstein
- Mark Epstein in memory of Joy Epstein
- Mark Epstein in memory of Jean Epstein

## Matanot Levyonim

- Roman and Victoria Ilin
- Dr. Ephraim Hollander and Aaryn Rubin
- Dr. John and Edith Frank
- Tamar Becker and Sam Weisbrod
- Matan and Alison Gutwaks
- Dr. Robert Chaykin and Ofra Scherer
- Robin and Larry Garvin
- Mark and Lana Kirshteyn
- Daniel Newman and Ilana Klamka
- Elliot and Rachael Fineberg
- Ron and Laurie Reitman
- David and Arava Weller
- Tamara Bugatti
- Steven and Smadar Import
- Rabbi Yitzi and Sara Kaltmann
- Jacob and Gilat Emsallem
- Dr. Cynthia and David Zimm
- Chiyya and Chagit Smason

## Days of Learning

March 11-April 1, 2025)

To see a full list or choose a day to sponsor, go to [www.torahacademy.org/daysoflearning](http://www.torahacademy.org/daysoflearning)

March 12/the 12th of Adar in memory of Kenneth Scott Garlikov, son and brother of Don, Eydie, and Jennifer Garlikov on his yartzheit.

Friday, March 28, is sponsored by Shari and Dotan Herszage and Family in memory of Moishe Herszage, z"l (Moshe Yehuda ben Pinchas). The 32nd anniversary of his yartzheit on the 29th of Adar.



### Sponsor

*a day of learning*

**Show your support of our school, students and teachers!**

Days of learning can be dedicated in memory or honor of a loved one or to celebrate a birthday, anniversary, b'nai mitzvah, for a speedy recovery or other life cycle event.

A Day of Learning is a \$180 donation and dedications are listed on Fridays in the CTA Weekly Communicator and each month in the CTA Dateline. All proceeds directly support CTA.

Contact Shari Herszage to reserve your date.



## Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars and get involved for these fall events at CTA. Check out updates and details at

[www.torahacademy.org/calendar](http://www.torahacademy.org/calendar)

April 10-21: Pesach Break

April 15: Ohio Tax Credit Deadline

April 24: Yom HaShoah

April 25: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Workshop Share Program

April 27: PTO Floral Design Workshop

April 30: Yom HaZikaron

May 1: Yom HaAtzmaut

May 5: Tuition Assistance and Ohio EdChoice Scholarship Forms Due

May 5-9: Teacher Appreciation Week

May 16: Lag BaOmer/K-8 Field Day

May 18-20: Columbus Baseball Invitational

May 21-22: Spring Fundraiser

May 27: Annual Board Meeting

May 28: 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Fairytale Skits

May 29: High School Graduation

June 2-3: Shavuot Break

June 5: Class of 2029 Freshman Speech

June 6: Upper School Awards Assembly

June 6: Last Day of School

August 21: First Day of School 2025-2026

## Candlelighting

Times based on zip code 43209

Apr	11	Tzav	7:48
Apr	18	Shabbat Pesach	7:55
Apr	25	Shemini	8:02
May	2	Tazria-Metzora	8:09
May	9	Achrei Mos-Kedoshim	8:16
May	16	Emor	8:23
May	23	Behar-Bechukosai	8:29
May	30	Bamidbar	8:35

Full Calendar at [www.torahacademy.org/calendar](http://www.torahacademy.org/calendar)

## More Pesach Prep

Jr. High and High School Yom Iyun with Alumni - Esthy Wolfson (Class of 2024) and Saul Myers (Class of 2021) (and Roni Delman (Class of 2024) popping by for minyan) plus cute first graders.





# CTA GIVING DAY

## EVERY DONATION MATCHED!

MAY 21-22, 2025



SAVE THE DATES

YOUR SCHOOL. YOUR CHILDREN. YOUR COMMUNITY.  
[WWW.CHARIDY.COM/CTA](http://WWW.CHARIDY.COM/CTA)

## Columbus Baseball Invitational Judith Weintraub Tournament



**May 18-19-20, 2025**

**Largest Field Ever!**  
**20 Teams from Across the Country hosted by CTA!**



All Games at Berliner Sports Park | More info at [www.columbusinvitational.com](http://www.columbusinvitational.com)