

Sunday May 22nd was the last day of Temple Emanu-El Religious School classes for 5782. We celebrate our teachers, faculty assistants, and students. I am so grateful to all of them, for their energy, enthusiasm, and commitment all year long. I feel good about all that we accomplished together.

After special presentations to our staff, we continued the tradition of recognizing perfect and excellent attendance among our students (as we know, successful learning and good attendance go hand in hand). We also started a new end of year tradition. After two years of accumulating tzedakah, we were able to give each class \$200 to donate to a cause of their choice. The teachers spent time educating our students on the support services our community is so lucky to have and, in the end, each class voted on where they would donate their class portion. I am thrilled that Safe Futures, Camp Hope, Homeless Hospitality Center, Start Fresh, New London Meal Center and The World Union for Progressive Judaism Ukraine Crisis Fund will all be receiving a donation from TERS. We wrapped up our last day of school with a school picture and enjoyed a lovely barbecue picnic outside on the grass where staff, parents and children enjoyed socializing and saying their goodbyes till the Fall. It was a perfect way to cap off a great year.

Amidst a pandemic, many of the staff members, including myself, were new to our roles this year, and we also welcomed 12 new students to our community! This past year required a strong willingness on everyone's part to jump into the unknown, to be flexible, to learn to ask for help, to tap into resources around us, to live with the discomfort of not always knowing all the answers right away, and to simply trust our instincts on the spot.

This year, we introduced some new activities such as Sunday Family Funday and Share Shabbat, both of which were successful in bringing our community together. The students also enjoyed their Chanukah, Purim and Passover programming and celebrations. I would appreciate any constructive feedback you may have so please keep your eyes open for a school survey that will be coming your way. I will be sharing the survey with the Religious School Committee so that we, as a team, can continue to work together to improve the school and to address the needs and concerns of our students and their families.

Please mark your calendars for a very special evening on Saturday, June 4th at 6pm. Rabbi Marc and Hazzan Barnes will lead us in a special Shavout service to honor TERS educators. Please join us to show your appreciation for all the hard work, time, and dedication our educators bring to our school. Working at TERS is a labor of love and nothing more. I hope we can all come out and show our staff how much we love and appreciate them.

Many thanks again for the consistent support of Rabbi Ekstrand and Sherry Barnes, the Religious School Committee, all our dedicated teachers, faculty assistants and substitute teachers and to those parents who volunteered their time and energy when called upon. We hope you will all return in your roles next year.

Religious School parents will soon receive their 2022/2023 school registration packets with their Temple membership packets. Please fill out that paperwork and submit it at your earliest convenience so we can plan for the school staffing and resources accordingly.

Wishing you all a great summer!
Rachel