

Additions to the Shir Shalom Hebrew School Faculty

As we look forward to the beginning of the Jewish Year 5770 our Hebrew School looks forward to an exciting year. Our returning faculty, Jennifer Flaster, 6th/7th grade; Rebecca Griggs, 2nd/3rd grade; Sandy Marmar, 4th/5th grade and Cindy Weinberger, 6th/7th grade will be joined by three new teachers. Gordon Weinberger, Cindy's husband, will be co-teaching with her, and Cara Fischer and Jesse Vazzano will also be teaching with us this year. We are thrilled to welcome them into our learning community and look forward to a rich and rewarding year working with them.

We are also pleased that our four super *madrichim* are returning; Dustin Finer, Emily Weinberger, Paige Crickard, and Abby Levison. They make such a valuable contribution to our school as both role models and teachers. Here is a little about two of our new teachers in their own words:

Cara Fischer writes: "My family and I moved to Vermont two years ago from Florida. We wanted a safe environment to raise our children and a place where parents and educators come together to create a positive educational experience. Since being back in the North, my children have taken to skiing and all of the wonderful outdoor winter activities. My children also attended Shir Shalom last year and had such a great time that they are looking forward to the start of Hebrew School this year. I look forward to learning about Jewish values and holidays along with the class and am very excited that I will have the opportunity to work with the pre-school class every Sunday this year. I know we will have a school year filled with learning and fun!"

Jesse Vazzano writes: "I am very excited to be teaching Hebrew School for the first time. I grew up in a Reform Jewish home in Columbia, MD but have never really felt a part of the Jewish community until moving to Vermont. I have moved 10 times in just as many years, but feel like living in Vermont is "coming home." I enjoy living here and feeling part of a community and family. I now commute back and forth twice a week for my job at the Veteran's Administration in Massachusetts, where I work with homeless veterans. I look forward to an exciting year and getting to know more people and families in the Shir Shalom community."

A Nice Jewish Girl in the Arab World

— Friday, October 30, Speaker and Community Potluck —

Orly Halpern is a Jewish American Israeli war correspondent. An Arabic speaker, she lived in Baghdad and reported for a year during the Iraq war and she covered the second Intifada driving her sedan across the West Bank. After leaving Iraq, she became the Middle East correspondent for *The Jerusalem Post*, traveling across the Muslim world learning about the politics, the people and their views on Jews and Israel. She developed a particular interest in Jewish communities in Arab countries. She has spent Passover with the last Afghan Jew in Kabul, with Bahraini Jews in Manama, and with US soldiers in Baghdad.



Today Ms. Halpern is a freelance journalist and a reporter for Canada's *Globe and Mail*. She has contributed to numerous newspapers and magazines, including *US News and World Report*, *Dallas Morning News*, *The Forward*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Ha'aretz*, *Hadassah* magazine, and *Homemakers* (Canada). During the Second Lebanon War, she reported for *US News* and was an analyst on Fox News. In 2007 she traveled to Rwanda to write about the empowerment of women since the genocide. She learned that many Tutsis identify with Jews.

Ms. Halpern joined *Twitter* this year and quickly became one of the most influential Jewish Twitters (#8 out of the top 100, according to the Jewish Telegraph Agency.) She's at <http://www.twitter.com/JerusalemBureau>.

Ms. Halpern is also working on a book about her year in Iraq reporting for the *Globe and Mail*, *US News and World Report*, *The New York Sun*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *The Dallas Morning News*, all the while hiding her Jewish Israeli identity from the locals she met across the country in order to get them to share their stories (and stay out of harm's way)—Shiites in Sadr City, Sunnis in Falluja, or Saddam's extended family in Tikrit.

Orly will speak at Shir Shalom on Friday evening, October 30th, following a community *Kabbalat Shabbat* potluck dinner 6:30. Her subject will be: How a nice Jewish girl who grew up in the U.S. Southwest attended a Lubavitch elementary school and served in the Israeli military, became a war reporter living and traveling in the Arab world. What surprised her? What did she discover?

— Following her presentation, there will be ample time for questions. —
Bring your friends, a dish for potluck or a dessert to share after the presentation.