



MOUNT SINAI COLLEGE

CREATING LEARNERS FOR LIFE

April 2019 ■ www.mountsinai.nsw.edu.au


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 JCA Member Organisation

 Distinguished School
 Recognised by Apple as a distinguished school for innovation, leadership and educational excellence.

- Well-being at MSC is integral to our philosophy - we need to consider all facets of the student: educational, physical, emotional and social.
- We take a whole school approach and we are proud to be a KidsMatter school.
- KidsMatter is a flexible, whole-school approach to improving children’s mental health and wellbeing. It promotes social and emotional learning by working authentically with teachers, parents, carers and families.
- We have a KidsMatter Action Team consisting of teachers that meet regularly (representing all stages of learning), as well as a broader action team that includes parents at the school.
- Our brief is very broad – we are concerned with developing a positive school community founded on respectful relationships and a sense of belonging and inclusion.

There are two aspects of well-being at Mount Sinai: the formal and the informal.

The Formal Includes:

- SEL (SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING) LESSON TIMETABLED FOR EVERY CHILD IN EVERY CLASS IN EVERY WEEK. Our school uses the Bounce Back programme which focuses on issues such as resilience, emotions, relationships, courage, bullying and being positive.
- 6 Kinds of Best Values Programme (Kind to Others, Environment, Self, Community, Learning, Achieving).
- Providing a wide range of lunchtime clubs and societies to encourage students’ interests and passions and provide structured contexts for those students who need this. Examples include Art Club, Tech Club, Public Speaking, Israeli Dancing, Science Club and Chess.
- Focus days such as Harmony Day and RUOK? Day
- Sporting opportunities before and after school e.g. tennis and touch football.
- Buddy programmes (Year 6 and Year K; Year 5 and Prep).
- Ability to consult with the School Psychologist.

The Informal Includes:

- Having a “mensch bench” for students to go if they are alone at lunch.
- Teachers responding to issues that arise in the classroom through conversations and by developing lessons targeting particular social issues eg through social stories.
- Focus on improving students’ social appropriateness and manners.
- Consultations with other staff members involved in the care of a child.
- Liaising with other professionals involved in the care of the student.

FOCUSSING ON CHILDREN’S WELL-BEING BENEFITS THEIR LEARNING AND ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT. THIS IS CENTRAL TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF MOUNT SINAI.





Phil Roberts

It is almost too clichéd to say that we have ‘hit the ground running’ but in truth that’s exactly how we began. After a year of building, many of our kids moved seamlessly into a new section of the school. One of our fathers shared with me the notion of ‘restorative environments’ – the study of the interactions between people and their environment. I know the staff feel uplifted in the new classrooms and are looking forward to the completion of the upstairs.

Teachers who are working with the Blue Sky program (children with talents in many academic areas) and staff who support children who need extra scaffolding have spaces to work that are light, more functional and certainly more conducive to learning.

Term 1 is defined by the commemorative Purim and the ritual narrative of our Pesach sederim. The joint school / shule Purim event was a reminder of the unique, historic relationship that the school and synagogue enjoys. Rozanna Pleshet (Jewish Studies and Infants Coordinator), our Jewish Studies staff and Elana Shatari (without whom they’d be no meaningful Jewish tunes resonating through the school) truly do a marvellous job in preparing the foundational base for rich, meaningful Jewish learning. They remind us that Jewish ‘education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel’ as Socrates once noted. Rabbi Yossi shares a lot with the children each week and now shares his time over a coffee with a group of parents one morning a week.



Whilst the pace of change seems relentless and endless I think we have become very adept at keeping our 'eyes on the headland not the choppy water'. We enjoy setting those goals for the school that are just out of reach but not out of sight. Being focussed on what matters, where we are going, and how we get there still preoccupies us and to this end, we have started the year working with Dr Frances Whelan from the Association of Independent Schools on developing our biennium School Improvement Plan.

Many parents working in a world of data will recognise and understand that schools too have to grapple with the volume of data, make sense of and interpret it in ways that inform good teaching practice and in ways that lead to student improvement.

Just on a daily level alone, Daniel Levitan (The Organised Mind) says we are taking in 5 – 6 times the amount of information (on average) per day than we did in 1986 – the equivalent of 175 newspapers read cover to cover. In leisure time alone we are taking in 34 gigabytes of data. We have created more information in the past two years than in all of history before us. I think we all feel that we are being swallowed up by data and schools are no different.

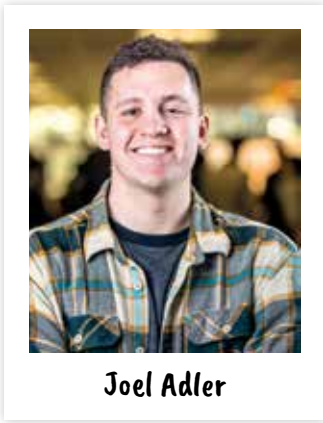
We gather a great deal of data in the school. Data on children's performance and wellbeing. We need to find ways to marry data up and use it even more effectively whilst taking stock on what data we are gathering and why. This 2-3 year School Improvement project will concomitantly lead to a continued improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in Jewish and secular studies.

Our relationship with Apple Australia continues to be a mutually beneficial one. The quality of the professional learning and the support we receive as an Apple Distinguished School is second to none. We recently hosted a number of educators from the public schools who were very keen to learn from many of our outstanding staff including Arianne Burnie and Hazel Gruskin (kindergarten), Natalia Fester (Year 1) and Jesse Black (Blue Sky). They spoke to colleagues about coding, student management systems, creating podcasts and much more. It certainly speaks volumes for the competency of the team.

As part of the 'headland' focus, our Kidsmatter team – who work on Social and Emotional Wellbeing – has driven a number of initiatives most of which relate to the Personal Development and Health curriculum. We all feel our focus is as much on this aspect as it is on academic learning. As part of this, we will be introducing The Fathering Project – an initiative designed to help and encourage fathers to positively engage with their children. This is now a federally funded, national project and we look forward to partnering with the Fathering initiative and our dads and their children to create unique, enjoyable days.

Finally, I will be joining a number of principals in the independent school sector who will be travelling to China in the forthcoming holidays to take part in conferences, visit schools and experience an educational cultural tour to explore STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Maths) projects and ideas. I look forward to reporting back on a fascinating culture that has been driven by an educational revolution.

Phil Roberts
College Principal



Joel Adler

Mount Sinai College set out on a mission: to create a large symbolic sculpture that characterises and embodies the school’s values and ethos. The sculpture would need to represent the strength and vitality of what the school describes as a growing and thriving Jewish community.

Industrial designer Joel Adler felt he could deliver on such an important request, and single handedly develop a piece of art from concept into reality. The sculpture, named Tree of Life, marked the end to a year-long staged process of renovations to rebuild a College campus with state-of-the-art facilities and classrooms.

Joel graduated from UNSW with a Bachelor of Industrial Design and continued his passion by working at his father’s metal factory, Ogis Engineering, as an Industrial Designer and Draftsperson. Gaining experience in metal fabrication and design, Joel

was ready to take on his first large scale project for Mount Sinai College. He created several concepts for this brief however his 3D interpretation of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life was the obvious choice.

“From the onset I wanted to imbue the sculpture with Jewish symbolism without the use of text. The Magen David motif is created using overlapping metal latticework and the resulting shadows on the wall and floor of the building created a wonderful Magen David pattern,” says Joel.

Before construction began, Joel built a 10:1 scale model to check that all dimensions and construction methods were appropriate. Construction of the final sculpture began in December 2018 and Tree of Life was installed at the school in 2 parts, the base (trunk) and the top half. These parts were fused together on site using a temporary scaffold.

To match the name of the sculpture (Tree of Life) and overall aesthetics of the school, Mount Sinai plan on intertwining vines around and in-between the sculpture.

“The new developments at Mount Sinai are jaw dropping and I feel very honoured to be asked to contribute. I’m very excited to come back in a couple years and see the vines established,” says Joel.

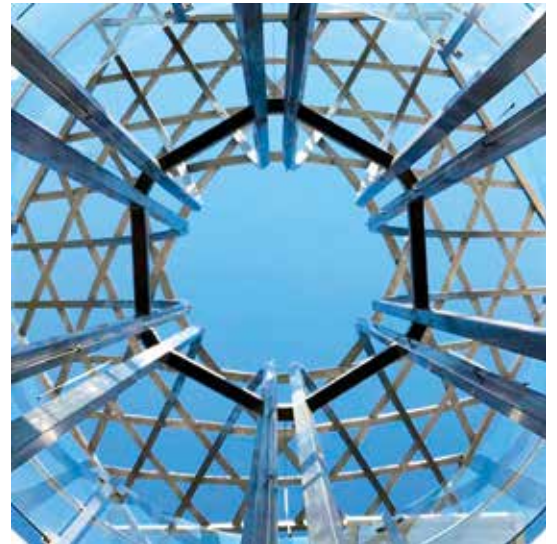


Photo credit: Ofer Levy





Rabbi Yossi

A Pesach reflection following the Christchurch Massacre

On Passover in the year 1312 BCE the Jews were liberated from the shackles of Egyptian bondage. Historically this event formed the basis of Jewish independence and nationhood, and, at the same time, served to teach the nations of the world one of the greatest lessons in human civility. No one people should ever be enslaved by another people. No one group should ever exercise bias, bigotry or hatred towards another group. Rather, everyone must respect the dignity of every other person or race/religious group and allow them to have the freedom to live and worship as they so choose.

I write this message only days after the tragic shooting at two Mosque's in Christchurch, New Zealand by cowardly, right-wing extremists. Sadly, this event shows, as do the many other hate attacks that take place almost daily around the world, that the world hasn't learned or internalised the message of the Exodus. There is still oppression, prejudice and hatred practiced by one person or groups against others.

In fact, this threat against the Jewish people and the civilised world was foretold by our Sages. The Haggadah tells us: *"Bechol dor vador omdim aleinu lechalotenu"* - *"In every generation they rise up against us to destroy us"*.

Yet the same Haggadah also contains a message of hope and alludes to the very tools needed to combat these threats.

"Vehigadeta Levincha", says the Haggadah, *"you must tell your children"*... the story of their history and the background to their identity. You must discuss with them what values are truly important and instruct them how to be upstanders and not bystanders in this ongoing battle between truth and falsehood. In short, the secret to our future lies in our ability to inspire, educate and empower. It is specifically through telling our stories and passing on our values in a way that our children can relate to, this is how we will raise proud and passionate children who will continue upholding our values and defend our way of life.

The Seder concludes with the words *"Leshana Haba'a biyerushalayim"* - *"next year in Jerusalem"*. Interestingly, the name *"Jerusalem"* is made up of two words - *"Yira"* (he shall see) and *"Shalom"* (Peace). Thus, this declaration is not simply a statement of our hope to live in a better place, i.e., our national homeland, but also our desire to *"see"* a better world. A world where all peoples can live beside and amongst each other in *"peace"* and harmony.

It is my fervent hope and prayer that this year our Seder tables will be places of education and inspiration. Locations where we transmit our stories and values in a way that inspires our children to become stronger in their identities and empowered to bring greater goodness and peace into our world.

Chag Sameach,
Rabbi Yossi Friedman
 College Rabbi



The world is changing ever faster, and our education systems are struggling to catch up. At Mount Sinai College, we are embracing this change to pioneer a new model of education, whilst honouring and preserving the important Jewish traditions which have sustained our community for generations.

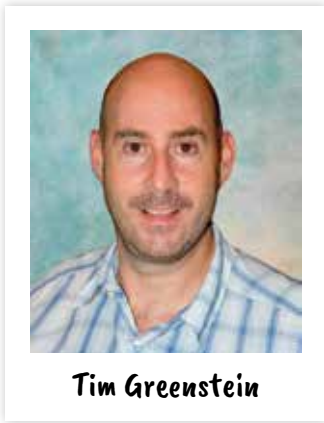
Gone are the days where a teacher sits at the front of the classroom and uniformly presents to students. If we want to produce self-directed and self-motivated scholars, then teachers must role model this in a flexible and creative environment, supported by inspirational leadership. With the construction of new classrooms and facilities in the final stages of completion, MSC teachers now have the ability to manipulate their classroom layout to suit the desired need of a learning outcome. For example, spaces can be opened up to facilitate joint learning between the classes, or keep the classrooms separate to allow for a more intimate environment.

Their specialist teachers - clinical psychologist, special education, speech/occupational therapists, gifted and talented and Feuerstein mediators - work closely and intertwine with respective grade teachers with utmost respect and mutual admiration to ensure no MSC child slips through the cracks and that every child receives the individual attention, support and challenge they need.

Importantly, MSC do not have a one-dimensional view of success that is just based on academics. They are a proud KidsMatter school, which is a flexible, whole-of-school approach aimed at improving children's mental health and wellbeing. This is done through formal and informal activities. The formal includes the 6 Kinds of Best Values Programme (Kind to Others, Environment, Self, Community, Learning, Achieving), implementing 'Bounce Back' initiatives, lunchtime clubs and societies such as Art Club, Tech Club, Public Speaking, Israeli Dancing, Science Club, Chess. The informal initiatives include a 'mensch bench' for students to go find a friend if they are alone at lunch, teachers keeping abreast of any issues they see happening in the classrooms, and so on.

Continuing to pioneer in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths) and being acknowledged as an Apple Distinguished School for a third designation, as well as the authentic way in which they embrace and cultivate a strong Jewish identity, reaffirms how they are giving children the best foundation for a successful, community oriented and blessed life. With 1.5 hours of Hebrew studies seamlessly embedded into the curriculum and Jewish culture woven into the fabric of the students' everyday experience means the flame of Judaism will burn brightly in the heart of every MSC child.





This will be my last B'Yachad and I write with mixed emotions but certainly a great sense of achievement that the vision the College has articulated is well and truly being achieved.

Did you know that Pesach is the most commonly observed and celebrated Jewish holiday? Statistics show, that even if you are a non-observant Jew, and only participate once a year, Pesach is the High Holiday that brings ALL Jews from around the world together.

It is a time where all family and friends get together for 2 nights over the Seder table and our young children ask questions and sing wholeheartedly the Manishtana. It is when we aspire to truly relive what our ancestors had to sacrifice and overcome in the early years to make the Jewish people what we are today.

Recent, devastating events abroad give us pause and I for one take this opportunity to reflect. With right-wing nationalism on the rise both at home and abroad, it is more important than ever that we come together as a community to support each other and show strength to sustain our way of life. We will not be cowed by those who may seek to do harm. I'd like to express my deep gratitude to the CSG and those men and woman who do a great community service to keep our school and community safe.

It is notable that the story of Pesach begins with an attempt to destroy a people. All too often we have been in this position and understand that in challenging times we will remain true to our core values of peace, kindness and empathy and extend a sympathetic and helping hand to peaceful Muslim communities who are suffering.

As I write this I'm overwhelmed with emotion that my 3 children were fortunate enough to learn about their Judaism and heritage at a Jewish day school like Mount Sinai College. The teachings and the traditions that our children and teachers embrace with joy is to be admired. Children are so curious and impressionable at this age and this is when we have the opportunity to create true excitement and a love of learning about Judaism.

There are many occasions where a Mount Sinai parent (or grandparent) mentions how much nachas and emotion they receive when their child recites Hebrew from the siddur, or confidently sings the Manishtana at the Seder table and knows the answer to these 4 central questions, or can recite by heart the 10 plagues. There is such passion and gusto you cannot put this on paper or in an advert. You need to experience it yourselves.





If you are a fellow Alumni or grandparent receiving this B'Yachad Pesach edition I encourage you to come and see our new College facilities and classrooms. The Stage 1 renovations - now complete, are truly exceptional and a sight to take in.

Here you will see the flexible school classrooms that allow for teachers to change the landscape of their learning spaces to suit the task at hand and support better immersion and learning outcomes. They can open the space to allow for interaction, socialisation and the free flow of ideas, or close spaces to facilitate quiet and focus.



The optimum place for a library is in the centre of everything, where people can easily access it. But, it is not uncommon to have library rooms distant from classrooms and foot traffic. The central positioning of MSC's new library is purposeful and designed to be in the direct pathway of students, parents and faculty moving around the campus. Parents now have access to the library in the morning when they bring their children in or at pick-up.

The furnishing lends itself to a reading environment with lots of places to sit and read. My hope is that our children immerse themselves in the library. We will always aim to nurture a love of reading so that they improve their knowledge, become much more worldly and literate.

Wishing you and your families a Chag Sameach.

Tim Greenstein
College President



Photo credit: Ofer Levy



MSC Early Learning Centre 21 Apsley Avenue, Kingsford

NOW ACCEPTING 2 YEAR OLDS

2 year olds



- Social competence
- Emotional wellbeing
- Emerging autonomy
- Sense of belonging
- Resilience

3 year olds



- Fine motor development
- Communication expansion
- Mastering cognitive skills
- Developing a disposition for learning

4 year olds



- School readiness /pre writing skills
- Becoming capable and independent learners
- Developing a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry and experimentation



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For Enrolment enquiries please contact
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SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH US!

Whether it's a wedding, engagement, birth or achievement – we'd love to know!

Email: reception@mountsinai.nsw.edu.au



Gila Friedgut and Ryan Snoyman

Alumni Engagements

- Ryan Snoyman 2008 to Gila Friedgut.
- Ben Platt to Rachelle Newman 2001

Alumni Weddings

- Natalie Boas 2000 to Greg Rubin (South Africa)
- Michi Hayman 2000 to Chana

Alumni Births

- Vered Topelberg (nee Moses) 1995 – a boy
- Jessica Segail (nee Weiss) 2000 – a boy, Ethan (now teacher at MSC)
- Sarah Zinman (nee Meyerowitz) 2000 - a girl, Evie
- Keren Lipschitz (nee Tuch) 1995 – a girl, Talia.
- Lorraine Wirkerman (nee Lipson) 1996 - a boy
- Ronny Schnapp 1991 – a girl, Aimee
- Lianne Zimble 1998 – girl, Drew.



Baby Talia and her Grandmother Cheryl Tuch – MSC librarian before 1997



Baby boy Ethan Segail, son of Jessica Segail who is a current teacher at MSC

Alumni now parents at MSC

Three sisters who are all alumni, all have children who commenced in Year K this year. Ronit Geller, Justine Goldbach & Simonne Hammerman (all nee Turner) with children Joshua Geller, Tate Goldbach and Mika Hammerman

Also, Tamarah Katz and Daniela Meinrath (nee Katz) – sisters who were both Alumni have boys in Year K – Finn Stern and Jacob Meinrath.



Justine Goldbach, Ronit Geller, and Simonne Hammerman (all nee Turner) with children Tate Goldbach, Joshua Geller and Mika Hammerman



Daniela Meinrath and Tamarah Katz (nee Katz) – sisters who were both Alumni have boys in Year K – Jacob Meinrath and Finn Stern.



A blast from the past- Year K class of 1984! Five children from this year group are now parents at the College.



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