



INSIDE ULPANAT OROT

2023-2024 • 5784



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Ulpanat Orot is to inculcate within our students an appreciation for and a commitment to Torah observance and values. Ulpanat Orot, founded in 1975, was established in Toronto with several specific goals in mind:

- To create an environment where religiously committed girls will be able to grow intellectually, socially, emotionally, and religiously in a vibrant Jewish setting.
- To offer a dual curriculum of Judaic and General Studies that will arm our students with the methodological tools needed to become self-reliant in classical Jewish texts and give them a broad-based secular grounding in the classical world disciplines.
- To deepen and strengthen the centrality of Eretz Yisrael and Medinat Yisrael as a fundamental element of our Torah beliefs and, to this end, to stress the importance of lashon hakodesh as a manner of achieving these goals.
- To encourage and fervently support the notion of our students continuing their Judaic studies at seminaries in Eretz Yisrael and in other institutions of higher Jewish learning.



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SCHOOL HISTORY

For five decades, Bnei Akiva Schools has been developing outstanding Bnei and Bnot Torah who are immersed in *Ahavat Yisrael*, *Derech Eretz*, and social responsibility towards the Jewish and secular communities in Canada and around the world.

Whether Yeshivat Or Chaim or Ulpanat Orot, the schools are places where boys and girls can grow intellectually, emotionally and religiously in a vibrant Jewish setting. In keeping with the maxim of the worldwide Bnei Akiva organization, *Am Yisrael b'Eretz Yisrael al pi Torat Yisrael* (the Nation of Israel living in the Land of Israel according to the Torah of Israel), Zionism is an integral part of the school's philosophy and is deeply rooted in the curriculum.

Back in the early 1970s, all this was just a dream. At the time, parents in Toronto's Religious Zionist community had just two options for their children entering high school: a co-ed Jewish high school comprised of students from varying backgrounds and levels of religious observance, or a traditional dormitory-style yeshiva for boys with Judaic studies taught in English.

Among those parents were Saul and Mira ז"ל Koschitzky. With Saul's eldest son about to graduate elementary school, he discussed the idea of starting a high school based on Bnei Akiva principles with his neighbour Phil Schwartz, Nachman "Mr. Mizrachi" Sokol ז"ל and Aron Frankel ז"ל.

The old Torah V'Avodah building on Vaughan Road became the first home for the school. The founders hired Rabbi Yehuda Felix as Rosh Yeshiva and Dr. Sol Burack as Principal of General Studies.

"Our goal was not to create rabbis, but *baalei batim* who go to university, who stand on their own feet, and who have responsibility for Klal Yisrael," recalls Saul. "We wanted them to connect to Israel."

The next important step was fundraising. The Orfus family donated \$100,000 in memory of their patriarch Chaim Orfus – hence the name, Or Chaim – and the other founding members jointly matched the donation. Once the school established

itself as a vital institution within the community, important funding came from UJA.

Yeshivat Or Chaim officially opened in September 1973 with 29 students in Grades 10, 11 and 12. Two years later, the boys and their teachers headed north to the school's current location on Almore Avenue. In 1993, the community celebrated the addition of a new Beit Midrash with a Hachnasat Sefer Torah and the building was renamed the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Torah Centre to honour Saul and Henry's parents. Recent additions include a state-of-the-art gym built in 2006 featuring a regulation-sized basketball court, a new multi-purpose room and a remodelled twenty-first century science lab. In 2017, a new Sephardic Beit Midrash was dedicated. A Fitness Centre was added in 2019.

But what about the girls? Shortly after Yeshivat Or Chaim opened its doors, Phil Schwartz began yearning for a similar version to accommodate his eldest daughter, Adrienne. So did Aron Frankel, whose daughter Esty was also about to enter high school.

"I couldn't envision my sons getting a Religious Zionist education while my daughters would have to go to a high school where secular studies were an afterthought," says Phil. "That's why Aron and I began pushing for a girls' school similar to Or Chaim's model."

Ulpanat Orot opened its doors in September 1974 in a house in Thornhill with 23 girls enrolled in grades 10 and 11. The girls – many of them now parents and grandparents – still laugh about davening in the living room and attending classes in the master bedroom with its sunken bathtub. Two years later, the girls moved to the school's current location on Canyon Avenue. In 1980, a new wing was built, featuring additional classrooms and a gym. Recently, the science lab has been remodelled, as has the Beit Midrash.

As word spread of Toronto's new Religious Zionist high school, parents and students from across Canada and the United States started to take notice of the schools' important role beyond

the Toronto community. Bnei Akiva Schools is a private school, inspected by the Ontario Ministry of Education, and affiliated with UJA Federation's Centre for Jewish Education. Combined enrolment currently stands at over 285 students, including children of early graduating classes.

After graduating Bnei Akiva Schools, our over 2,500 graduates have continued to thrive. Almost all graduates choose to spend a year or more studying in Israel after high school, with most attending yeshiva or seminary to solidify the Jewish education they received in Toronto. Some of these students enlist in the Israel Defense Forces or volunteer for Sherut Leumi where they devote a year or more of service to *Am Yisrael b'Eretz Yisrael*.

All of our graduates apply to university or college and are accepted into one of their top choices. Graduates are successfully employed as rabbis, teachers, accountants, architects, doctors, entrepreneurs, fitness trainers, journalists, lawyers, nurses, paramedics, real estate agents, social workers, and a

host of other professions. One in four graduates – about 600 students – have made aliyah.

Rabbi Dr. Seth Grauer holds the role of Rosh Yeshiva and Head of School. Rabbi Grauer joined our schools after over a decade as a distinguished educator in New York. He previously served as teacher and Rav at Ramaz Upper School, Assistant Principal at Yeshiva University High School for Girls and Associate Rabbi at the prestigious Fifth Avenue Synagogue.

"Bnei Akiva Schools has a rich tradition of Roshei Yeshiva in whose footsteps I now have the honour of following," says Rabbi Grauer. "The buildings are filled with excellent, hard-working educators who use their unique talents and strengths to excite and enrich their students daily. The rabbanim and Judaic Studies faculty strive to find new ways to encourage positive religious growth towards living lives of learning Torah and observance of mitzvot, with a strong emphasis and unwavering commitment to our founding principles of instilling within our students a love for Religious Zionism."

Rabbi Grauer works with his team of administrators and teachers with a keen focus on professionalism, current educational practices and academic excellence, while simultaneously ensuring that Bnei Akiva Schools maintains its warm and welcoming environment.

Though the founders originally thought small, they are extremely proud of how far the school has come and are delighted that the next generation of parents and students are committed to taking Bnei Akiva Schools from strength to strength.

"The school has achieved everything we dreamed about," says Saul. "Our graduates have remained *dati*, excelled at university, succeeded in their professions, and many have made aliyah. Bnei Akiva Schools has strengthened Modern Orthodoxy in Toronto. Though it wasn't easy getting a new school off the ground 50 years ago, one look at our graduates and there is no doubt that we made the right decision. Henry, Phil and I are so very proud of them, and I know that Aron ז"ל and Nachman ז"ל would feel the same."



ADMINISTRATION



RABBI DR. SETH N. GRAUER

Rosh Yeshiva & Head of School

Rabbi Seth Grauer has been the Rosh Yeshiva and Head of School since 2013. Since joining Bnei Akiva Schools, Rabbi Grauer has overseen increased enrollment, significant building improvements, the creation of a mega endowment, and the growth of our educational offerings and religious programming. He also serves as the Honourary President of Mizrahi Canada. Rabbi Grauer previously served as the Assistant Principal at Yeshiva University High School for Girls ("Central") in New York and was a leading educator for nine years at Ramaz Upper School in Manhattan. Rabbi Grauer worked with teenagers at various summer camps for eight years, and served for five years as the Associate Rabbi at the Fifth Avenue Synagogue in Manhattan. Rabbi Grauer studied at Yeshivat Har Etzion in Israel for two years, served as their Director of Alumni Affairs for nearly five years, is a member of their Board of Directors and is the current Chair of their Rabbinic Committee. He was honoured as their Alumnus of the Year in 2010. Rabbi Grauer received his B.A. in History (honours) from Yeshiva University, his semicha from Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) of Yeshiva University, and his doctorate in Education from the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration at Yeshiva University. He also earned a J.D. from Fordham Law School and served as editor of the Environmental Law Journal. Rabbi Grauer was a Rabbinic Court Intern at the Beth Din of America and a Legal Intern at the New York State Supreme Court and the New York State Office of the Attorney General. He belongs to the inaugural cohort of Sacks Scholars, a premier Jewish educational and leadership initiative utilizing the teachings of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l to address emerging challenges facing the Jewish world and society as a whole. Rabbi Grauer and his wife Leba have four children: Yonina ('21), Yosef ('23), Gila (Grade 10) and JJ (Grade 1 at Netivot).



MR. HILLEL RAPP

Principal

Mr. Hillel Rapp joined the Bnei Akiva Schools administration in 2016 with an extensive background in both Jewish education and finance. Previously in education, Mr. Rapp was the Dean of Students at Ramaz Upper School where he oversaw co-curricular programming featuring more than 80 after-school activities. He also designed curricula and taught courses in Economics, Business, History and Philosophy. In finance, Mr. Rapp managed business development and investor relations, specializing in hedge fund and private equity investments, at Dunbar Capital Management in New York City and Exigent Alternative Capital in Israel. Mr. Rapp holds a B.A. in Psychology from Yeshiva University where he also worked as a Project Manager for YU's Center for the Jewish Future. Mr. Rapp and his wife, Racheli (Meister '01), have three children, Jack, Keira and Aiden.

**MRS. SHARON FIXLER***Assistant Principal*

Mrs. Sharon Fixler has been working at Bnei Akiva Schools since 2005, first as a teacher and then in an administrative capacity since 2017. In addition to teaching English and Writer's Craft, Mrs. Fixler has also been active in initiating and leading programs in the school over the years, such as the annual speech contest, intergenerational book club, and the warm clothing drive to benefit United Chessed. Beyond her involvement with Bnei Akiva Schools, Mrs. Fixler has been privileged to speak at various women's learning programs in the city for the past fifteen years. Mrs. Fixler is a proud graduate of Ulpanat Orot, Michlalah Jerusalem College for Women, and York University, where she earned a Bachelor's Degree in Education and a Master's Degree in English. Most recently, she completed YU Lead, a year-long leadership program run through Yeshiva University.

**MRS. EMMA TAYLOR***Mechanechet*

Hailing from London, UK, Mrs. Emma Taylor moved to Toronto in 2022 with her husband, Rabbi Sam Taylor, Senior Rabbi at Shaarei Shomayim, and their four children. Mrs. Taylor has a degree in History from Kings College London and a Master's in Education and Special Education from Touro College, New York. She has taught History in schools in London, most recently in Hasmonean High School, where she was also the Director of Jewish Living and the Head of PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education). Mrs. Taylor has also been an active rebbetzin in the Marble Arch Synagogue in central London and Borehamwood & Elstree Synagogue, the largest Orthodox shul in Europe. After completing the Chief Rabbi's Ma'ayan program, she has been a Torah educator in many shuls across London. As Mechanechet, Mrs. Taylor will manage, guide and lead all student programming at Ulpana.

**MRS. SHIRA LIPNER***Director of Judaic Studies*

Mrs. Shira Lipner has been working since 2018 as Director of Judaic Studies at Ulpanat Orot, and has been involved in Jewish education for the past 20 years. She has taught almost every Limudei Kodesh subject and has created curricula for several courses that are currently being taught in both institutions, as well as coordinating the Yimei Iyun for Tiferes. After graduating from Ulpana, Mrs. Lipner attended Michlelet Orot, and then obtained her BA (Hon.) in Psychology from York University and her MA in Child Study and Education from OISE/UT. She currently serves as the Rebbetzin of Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, where she coordinates and runs the Bat Mitzvah Program, as well as gives guidance and shiurim to women and is a kallah teacher. Notwithstanding her professional experience, her greatest educational challenge continues to take place in her home with her husband and eight beautiful children.



MRS. SHARI WEINBERG

Director of Guidance

Mrs. Shari Weinberg has been a vital part of Ulpanat Orot over the past 30 years. She has held an administrative role for the last 14 years while continuing to teach Physical Education. At Ulpana, Mrs. Weinberg provides guidance to our girls on a daily basis and especially in advance of their post-secondary academic decisions. Mrs. Weinberg has also been instrumental in the introduction and success of alumni and career days. Mrs. Weinberg has principal certification and is a Specialist in Guidance Education. Her door is always open, as students and staff alike seek her guidance and level-headed decision-making skills.



MS. MIRIAM BESSIN

Dean of Students

Ms. Miriam Bessin was born and raised in Toronto. After graduating from Ulpana, Miriam spent a year pursuing Judaic Studies in Midreshet HaRova in Jerusalem. She returned to Toronto where she completed her B.A. (Honours) in Religious Studies as well as a B.Ed. in Education at York University. Most recently, she obtained her certificate in Experiential Jewish Education from Yeshiva University. Lovingly referred to as “Prof” by her students, she has been teaching Tanach and Physical Education at Bnei Akiva Schools since 2009.



RABBI YOSEF KURTZ

Mashgiach Ruchani and Director of Israel Guidance

Rabbi Yosef Kurtz is a graduate of Yeshivat Or Chaim and has been teaching at Bnei Akiva Schools since 2015. After graduating from Yeshivat Or Chaim, Rabbi Kurtz studied at Yeshivat Hakotel for two years and completed his degree at York University. While at York, he discovered his passion for Jewish education and began working with NCSY Canada. Previously, Rabbi Kurtz taught Jewish Philosophy, Religious Studies and Jewish Ethics at Torah High. While working for NCSY, he completed an MBA at the Schulich School of Business, specializing in Marketing and Finance. In addition to teaching and managing religious programming, Rabbi Kurtz supervises the school’s JUMP team and oversees Israel Guidance. Rabbi Kurtz lives in Toronto with his wife Stephanie and daughters.



MRS. MIRIAM KLEIN

Director of Educational Support

Mrs. Miriam Klein has worked as a teacher and student support staff member for over 15 years. Prior to joining Bnei Akiva Schools, she worked in Netivot HaTorah Day School in various grades, both in General and Judaic Studies. Mrs. Klein received her degree in Education and Special Education from the University of Toronto and is an active member of the Ontario College of Teachers. She believes strongly in student support and ensuring the students can meet with success academically, socially and emotionally. Mrs. Klein works closely with the students, parents and faculty at Bnei Akiva Schools to ensure an inclusive environment for all types of learners.

SHLICHIM AND SHLICHOT



TALIA BERGER

Shlichah

Talia Berger is a student at Herzog College, specializing in Tanach and Special Education. A Toronto native, she made aliyah with her family at age six to Chispin, a community in the Golan Heights. During her first year of National Service, Talia held the position of Komonarit in a Bnei Akiva Snif. For her second year of service, she worked with Shalva's special needs kids. She is looking forward to contributing and instilling love for Israel, in the classroom and beyond. Talia enjoys hiking in Israel and spending time with friends and family. She can't wait to start the year at Ulpana!



RABBI AVISHAI KHARILKAR

Judaic Studies

Born and raised in Yavne, Israel, Rabbi Avishai Kharilkar has dedicated the past seven years to the field of education. He spent five years studying in Yeshivat Hameeiri, and Machon Meir in Jerusalem. He has his B.Ed from Lifshitz College and his M.Ed from Orot College in Education Management and Administration. He subsequently assumed the role of a specialist teacher in Bat Yam. For the past three years, he has been fulfilling the role of a mechanech, guiding Grade 12 teens at risk in Sanhedria. Avishai's commitment to personal growth is evident in his recent accomplishments. In anticipation of his forthcoming shlichut, he successfully completed World Mizrahi's two-year Shalhevet program, and is actively engaged in its rabbinical semicha program, Musmachim. Beyond his profound dedication to the realm of education, Avishai finds joy in surfing, playing basketball, and spending quality time with his wife and daughters.



MRS. ALEEZA KHARILKAR

Shlichah

A Toronto native and Ulpana alumna, Aleeza Kharilkar made aliyah a decade ago, finding her home in Jerusalem alongside her husband Avishai and their two daughters. Aleeza pursued her undergraduate studies at Reichman University, majoring in Psychology with a minor in Biology. She furthered her academic pursuits, earning a Master's degree in Organizational Behaviour and Development. In addition to her scholarly achievements, Aleeza serves as a dedicated Kallah teacher. Notably, she recently completed the two-year Shalhevet program facilitated by World Mizrahi, in anticipation of her forthcoming shlichut. Her impactful contributions extend to her role at Onward Israel, where she has been instrumental in facilitating the journey of university and post-university students to Israel. Aleeza's extensive experience in working with youth on a global scale has kindled a profound passion and commitment for the realm of informal education.



RABBI AVISHAI LAX

Judaic Studies

Rabbi Avishai Lax joins us on Shlichut from Beit El, with his wife Esther and their four children. An enthusiastic educator and compelling lecturer, Rabbi Lax has taught Torah, Mathematics and English at yeshivot and high schools. He served in the IDF Rabbinate, received semicha from Yeshivat Beit El, and for the past several years, has been a fellow in Ohr Torah-Stone's Straus-Amiel Rabbinical Emissary Program. Rabbi Lax holds a B.A. in Education and Teaching Diploma, specializing in Mathematics and Talmud from Moreshet Ya'akov College, and looks forward to building relationships with the BAS family.



RABBI IDAN RAKOVSKY

Judaic Studies and Technology

Rabbi Idan Rakovsky was born in Israel and grew up in Montreal. He has first-hand experience in North American Jewish communities and synagogues, and has worked with children and teens in many youth movements. Rabbi Rakovsky served for four years as a commander in the IDF Intelligence Unit 8200. A graduate of Yeshivat Givat Shmuel and Yeshivat Ma'ale Gilboa, he strongly believes that Torah study must derive from an honest position, in which inherent human morality meets Darchah Shel Torah ("the path of Torah") and creates a meaningful discourse in the process. Rabbi Rakovsky and his wife Prielle lived in Kibbutz Massuot Yitzchak, located in southern Israel, before coming to Toronto, where he serves as Rabbinic Assistant at Shaarei Tefillah. After spending two years as an avreich at BMZD, Rabbi Rakovsky is excited to teach at BAS.



MRS. PRIELLE RAKOVSKY

Judaic Studies

Mrs. Prielle Rakovsky (Tordjman) grew up in Kibbutz Massuot Yitzhak. Her family is originally from Bordeaux, France, and she is the first of her family to be born in Israel. Prielle served as a tutor in the "Na'ale" project for the first year of her national service, and for her second year, served as a children's guide at Yad Vashem. She recently graduated from Beit Midrash Migdal Oz, where she thoroughly enjoyed engaging in Talmud and Torah study. Prielle served as Madricha in Bnei Akiva for four years, and is a graduate of Ulpamat Bnei Akiva Even Shmuel.



During my four years at Ulpana I've been privileged to learn from the school's incredible staff. I've forged such amazing relationships inside and outside of the classroom. Each of the staff members exemplifies such empathy, kindness and genuine care for every student.

CHAVI ZIELENIEC ('22)



RABBI BENTZI SHOR

Judaic Studies

Rabbi Bentzi Shor joins us on shlichut from Ma'ale Adumim, with his wife Esther and their four children. For six years, he has been a fellow in the Manhigut Toranit Program, a joint venture of World Mizrahi and Eretz Hemdah, where he studied for and received semicha and advanced semicha from the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. During his army service in the IDF, he served as a platoon sergeant in the Netzach Yehuda Battalion of the Kfir Infantry Brigade.



MRS. ESTHER SHOR

Judaic Studies

Originally from Geneva, Switzerland, Mrs. Esther Shor made aliyah together with her family when she was eleven years old. She has a B.Ed. in History and Tanach, and taught for seven years at the Amit Ma'ale Adumim High School. Mrs. Shor was a Madricha and later a Komonarit at her hometown Snif in Ramat Beit Shemesh, and served as Komonarit of Moshav Berchia Snif (near Ashkelon) for her Sherut Leumi. For the past six years, Mrs. Shor has been part of the World Mizrahi / Eretz Hemdah Manhigut Toranit Program, where she completed courses in preparation for the shlichut, including Hadrachot Kalot of the Puah Institute.



SHIRA SIESEL

Shlichah

A Jerusalem native, Shira is currently studying Tanach and Special Education at Herzog College. Shira spent her first year of National Service working with at-risk youth who were unable to live with their families. During her second year of service she volunteered for Zichron Menachem, helping children who were dealing with cancer and their families. Shira has a special love for Eretz Yisrael and Am Yisrael, likes being around people, playing musical instruments and can't wait to start the year at Ulpana!

FACILITIES STAFF



MR. MORRIS BRAND

Information Technology Manager



MR. STEVE HYTEK

Building Maintenance



MS. LOSANA NICKA

Custodian

BUSINESS AND EDUCATIONAL OFFICES



MRS. ESTHER MENDLOWITZ

Manager, Business Administration

Mrs. Esther Mendlowitz has a Bachelor of Science and a Master's of Business Administration. Her previous work experience was in the financial industry in insurance and financial management. Since June 2013, Esther has served as the Manager of Business Administration at Bnei Akiva Schools. In that capacity, she manages the operations of the school, overseeing the business office, general operations, tuition and subsidy matters.



MRS. GEOULA OSIPOV

Controller

Mrs. Geoula Osipov graduated with honours from business schools both in Israel and in Canada. Bringing over twenty years of experience in the accounting field, she joined Bnei Akiva Schools' business office as controller in the spring of 2011. Mrs. Osipov lives in Thornhill with her husband, is the mother of two adult children, and is a proud grandmother of four!



MR. DANIEL STERNFELS

Operations Associate

Daniel Sternfels is our Operations Associate responsible for maintenance, IT, and custodial services at Bnei Akiva Schools. Daniel has a B.Sc. (Honours) in Hotel Administration from Cornell University as well as an MBA. He brings to BAS an operations and management background in the hospitality, airline, and educational fields, having worked in Canada, the US, and Latin America. Since joining Bnei Akiva Schools, Daniel has overseen renovation, security, and lease-hold improvement projects, and chairs the government-mandated Joint Health and Safety Committee. Daniel's goal is to create and maintain a proactive, safe, and responsive environment where staff, faculty, and students can fulfill their roles effectively. He is married to Nancy and has two adult daughters and two grandchildren.



MS. NOMI BARANCIK

Administrative Assistant



MS. JULIE HO

Bookkeeper



MRS. ASNETTE OSIPOV

Office Manager



MS. LIANA UZANI

Bookkeeper

DEVELOPMENT OFFICE



RABBI GAVRY MANDEL

Managing Director and Judaic Studies

Rabbi Gavry Mandel studied at Aish HaTorah College of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem for five years. While there, he developed a very close relationship with its founder, Rabbi Noah Weinberg, of blessed memory. Rabbi Mandel has been involved in Jewish education for over ten years, working with a number of organizations. For three years, he served as a campus rabbi for the students of the University of Western Ontario, in London, Ontario. Rabbi Mandel was the Associate Director of NCSY Canada for five years. In that position, he managed a staff of 40, running programs across Canada which reached over 3,000 teens annually. Rabbi Mandel is also the author of the acclaimed *Judaism Unravelled*, published by Feldheim Publishers in 2016. Rabbi Mandel and his wife, Deena (a medical student at McMaster University), have three children, Yissy, Nava and David.



MS. RONIT BENDAYAN

Development Associate, BMZD

Ms. Ronit Bendayan was born and raised in Montreal. She graduated from Beth Rivka Academy and upon graduation went to Midreshet Eshel Seminary in the heart of the Old City of Jerusalem. After her year in Seminary, Ronit enrolled into John Molson School of Business at Concordia University in Montreal and received her Bachelor of Finance in 2019. Upon obtaining her degree, she began a position at Canadian National Railway, until moving to Toronto to join her husband and settle in Thornhill's vibrant and flourishing Jewish community. Ronit has been working at Bnei Akiva Schools as a Development Associate since Summer, 2020, where her role includes assisting in managing donations and fundraisers, as well as managing dedications and pledges to Beit Midrash Zichron Dov.



MS. TAMARA COLODNY

Development Coordinator

Ms. Tamara Colodny Velichover joined the Development Office in 2016. With a keen attention to detail and a passion for coordinating special events, Tamara is excited to support the generous donors of Bnei Akiva Schools. Her role includes managing fundraising events such as the IKO Charity Golf Tournament, as well as processing donations and pledges. Prior to joining Bnei Akiva Schools, Tamara worked in marketing and public relations roles for 13 years. Tamara and her husband, Lior, live in Thornhill and have two children.



MR. COREY ISENBERG

Community Engagement Coordinator

Mr. Corey Isenberg holds an Honours B.A in Professional Communication and a minor in Public Relations from Toronto Metropolitan University. His work experience background consists of various roles in communications, social media, and event marketing. During his time at TMU, Corey was on the committee for Hillel TMU's inaugural Holocaust Education Week. Corey is excited to continue as Community Engagement Coordinator and to work with the Development Team on a variety of projects.



MRS. SOHEILA SABETI

Executive Assistant to Rabbi Grauer and Development Associate

Mrs. Soheila Sabeti is an educational administrator with 25 years of experience in the Jewish Day School system in Toronto. Mrs. Sabeti has held senior positions in Admissions, Marketing, Operations and Educational Management and worked in both Elementary and High School levels. She joined Bnei Akiva Schools as a Development Associate in 2018, working on community outreach projects and publications. Mrs. Sabeti holds a B.Sc. and an M.D. in Family Medicine. She is married with three adult children and two grandchildren.



JUDAIC STUDIES FACULTY



RABBI JARED ANSTANDIG

Judaic Studies

Rabbi Jared Anstandig is from West Bloomfield, Michigan. He studied in Yeshivat Torat Shraga in Jerusalem for a year and a half, followed by Yeshiva College where he studied Psychology and Jewish Studies. Rabbi Anstandig completed rabbinical school at Yeshiva University, while also studying in YU's Marcos and Adina Katz Kollel. He earned a Master's Degree in Tanach from Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies (where he met his wife!). During his rabbinical training, Rabbi Anstandig held numerous rabbinic internships, and also served as an officer in the US Army Chaplain Corps. Following rabbinical school, Rabbi Anstandig lived in Teaneck, NJ and taught Tanach and Gemara at Ramaz High School. For three years he served as the rabbi of the Orthodox community for the University of Michigan Hillel. In Toronto, Rabbi Anstandig served as Sgan Rosh Beit Midrash of Beit Midrash Zichron Dov for two years, and rabbinic leader at Shaarei Shomayim. Rabbi Anstandig, Sarit, and their three children, Batya, Aryeh and Shira, are excited to be on the faculty at BAS.



MRS. SARIT ANSTANDIG

Judaic Studies

Mrs. Sarit Anstandig teaches Judaic Studies at Ulpana. Originally from Teaneck, NJ, Sarit studied in Beit Midrash Migdal Oz. She completed undergraduate and graduate degrees from Yeshiva University and taught Judaic Studies at Yeshivat Frisch in New Jersey, where she also served as Freshmen Grade Dean. For the past three years, Mrs. Anstandig has taught Talmud to the Girl's Beit Midrash Program at Farber Hebrew Day School. She is currently studying to complete her training in Nishmat's Yoetzet Halacha program as well as an M.A. in Teaching and Learning from University of Michigan. She is the proud mother of Batya, Aryeh and Shira.



RABBI AKIVA DANZINGER

Ivrit, Media Arts, and Director of Educational Development

Rabbi Akiva Danzinger was raised in both Israel and Toronto. He attended yeshivot in France, Israel, and the United States. He received his rabbinical ordination in Venice, Italy. Rabbi Danzinger has a Masters of Education from Brandeis University and is a Legacy Heritage Teacher Leader Fellow. He has taught a range of Judaic subjects in a number of Toronto Jewish day schools, including The Toronto Heschel School, Associated Hebrew Schools and TanenbaumCHAT. Rabbi Danzinger promotes the advantages of a chevruta-style of learning and is passionate about fostering his students' higher-order and critical thinking. When not analyzing arcane Jewish legal responsa of contemporary rabbinic sages, Rabbi Danzinger enjoys camping, scuba-diving and horseback riding. He lives in Toronto with his wife and their three children.



MRS. RINA DEUTSCH

Judaic Studies

Mrs. Rina Deutsch was born and raised in Toronto and was a founding member of the BAYT Youth when she moved to Thornhill at the age of four. She has been the director of the NCSY Jewish Family Experience and is involved in informal education in different areas of the Jewish community. Rina has led four groups of women to Israel with the JWRP over the past three years, introducing them to Judaism and the land of Israel in a whole new light. She attended Eitz Chaim and Ulpanat Orot before spending a year in Israel at Midreshet HaRova. After receiving an Honours BA in English Literature from York University and having four children, Rina returned to school and gained a certificate in makeup artistry. In addition to her role at NCSY, she runs her own makeup business, Eizeh Yofi, doing makeup for simchas and events. Rina lives with her five children, and way too much laundry, in Thornhill.



MRS. SARA ERLICH

Ivrit

Mrs. Sara Erlich graduated from Telma Yelin School with a degree in Musical Studies, and obtained her bachelor's degree in Hebrew Literature and Philosophy from Tel Aviv University after completing her military service. Prior to working at Bnei Akiva Schools, Mrs. Erlich taught literature and language to Grades 7–10 in Israel. Mrs. Erlich has been teaching Ivrit at Bnei Akiva Schools since 2006. Over the past few years, Mrs. Erlich has further developed the Ivrit curriculum. Mrs. Erlich has a great passion and devotion for the Hebrew language which she enjoys passing on to her pupils, emphasizing the language to be a fundamental requirement at Bnei Akiva Schools. She has had many students contact her from Israel thanking her for the level of Hebrew mastery that she has been able to instill.



MRS. SHYNDEE KESTENBAUM

Judaic Studies, Arts and Technology

Mrs. Shyndee Kestenbaum has been working in the field of formal and informal Jewish education for the last 10 years. She worked at NCSY and Torah High, as a city director for Toronto NCSY and teacher of Jewish Philosophy, Jewish Ethics, Religious Studies and Israel Advocacy. She also spent many summers as an assistant director of Camp Etz Chaim in Moscow, Russia as well as Director of Jewish Programming in Camp Northland Bnai Brith. Mrs. Kestenbaum manages a graphic and media company and is in middle of completing her MBA in marketing. She lives in Toronto with her five sons.



RABBI SHLOMO MANDEL

Judaic Studies

Rabbi Shlomo Mandel joined the Judaic Studies faculty in 2021. In addition to his teaching duties, Rabbi Mandel is Director of NCSY Canada's Jewish Student Union, overseeing the organization's public-school programming, having previously served as City Director for NCSY Toronto. Rabbi Mandel also teaches classes for NCSY's Torah High program and is Rabbi of 147 Elder Street, a local Jewish senior care residence. He completed his undergraduate degree in 2016, graduating summa cum laude from Touro University. Rabbi Mandel received his rabbinic ordination from the Orthodox Union in 2019 and most recently, in March 2021, received his MBA from the Quantic School of Business & Technology.



RABBI YEHUDA MANN

Rosh Beit Midrash, Beit Midrash Zichron Dov, and Judaic Studies

Rabbi Yehuda Mann grew up in Ra'anana, Israel. As a youth he was a counselor in Bnei Akiva and a volunteer at the Loewenstein Hospital where he taught and arranged chavrutot for rehabilitating patients. After high school he learned at Jerusalem's Chevron Yeshiva under the guidance of some of the greatest Torah scholars of our time, and received the highest level of ordination given in Israel – "Rav Ha'ir" (City Rabbi). Rabbi Mann completed the seven-year dayyanut (rabbinical judge) program at the Harry Fischel Institute and has recently been interning in Gittin at the Jerusalem Beth Din, and in monetary law at the distinguished Beth Din of Rabbi Asher Weiss. Before coming to Toronto, Rabbi Mann served as rabbi of the Achdut Yisrael synagogue in Jerusalem, taught in several yeshivot and delivered seven weekly classes, including one on Israel radio. Rabbi Mann is married to Shulamit, a banker and finance advisor; together they have 4 adorable children. Rabbi Mann serves as the Rosh Beit Midrash of the Beit Midrash Zichron Dov, and as Assistant Rabbi at the Clanton Park Synagogue.



RABBI NOAH SONENBERG

Dean, Beit Midrash Zichron Dov, and Judaic Studies

Rabbi Noah Sonenberg has been teaching Limudei Kodesh at Bnei Akiva Schools since 2003. Rabbi Sonenberg was an administrator at the school from 2017 until 2023, when he took the position of Dean of Beit Midrash Zichron Dov. He is an alumnus of Yeshivat Bircas Hatorah in Israel, where he studied upon earning his Bachelor of Science in Biology with a focus on genetics from York University. Rabbi Sonenberg is passionate about learning and teaching Gemara, and expanding students' ability to engage with the text independently. Along with a number of courses in educational philosophy and leadership that he has taken in the US and Israel, Rabbi Sonenberg is a current participant in the Lifnei v'Lifnim program, an educational methodology designed to create community and build deep connections to Jewish texts. He is also a member of the Rabbi Sacks Legacy cohort which works to bring Rabbi Sacks' unique perspective to school curricula. Rabbi Sonenberg is married to Mrs. Rifka Sonenberg, a yoetzet halacha and Director of the Canadian Yoatzot Initiative, who also teaches at Ulpanat Orot. Together they have three children, two of whom live in Israel.



GENERAL STUDIES FACULTY



MRS. RACHEL BELZBERG

Science and Mathematics

Mrs. Rachel Belzberg has been teaching Science and Math at Bnei Akiva Schools since 2011. After earning an Honours Bachelors of Science from York University, she went on to complete a Masters of Science in Education. Outside of the classroom, Mrs. Belzberg enjoys cooking and various outdoor activities. Mrs. Belzberg's calm and caring nature combine with her high expectations to help students achieve success in the classroom and after high school.



MS. ALLISON BEULA

Dance and Drama

Allison Beula holds an Honours B.A.A. in film and is a recipient of the "Norman Jewison Filmmaker" Award. She furthered her training at The Randolph College For The Performing Arts, for whom she currently Directs, Choreographs, and Instructs. She is also on faculty for The Avenue Road Arts School and VIBE Arts. She has lead workshops and classes for dozens of institutions including: Mirvish (Lion King), The Toronto and Catholic School Board, OISE, and The Ontario School of Ballet, to name a few. She trained with Upright Citizens Brigade and Dance Manhattan (NYC), and is a graduate of the Second City Conservatory Program. Allison is a two-time recipient of an Ontario Arts Council grant for "Artists in Education". Her choreography can be seen in the video "Hypnotized" (Jeffery Straker) which hit the "MMM" Top 10. She also choreographed for "CBC-CBC Days Live" and she continues to direct and choreograph multiple productions across the city every year. She recently made her television series debut as a principal lead, performing "DURP-E" the loveable robot, in Season One of "Oh Yuck!" which debuted this past year in Australia and will be airing in North America imminently.



MRS. MONICA CHOCRON

Science

Mrs. Monica Chocron earned a summa cum laude Licentiate of Education degree from the University Andres Bello (Caracas, Venezuela) with a specialization in Physics and Mathematics. For the first 14 years of her teaching career, Mrs. Chocron taught at the Colegio Moral y Luces Herzl-Bialik in Caracas (where she studied) teaching in the classroom and working as the Physics Department Chair. She received a special recognition for uninterrupted service and a prize for excellent teacher's performance given by Keren Chinuch Caracas. In 2002, she and her family moved to Canada, and she worked for seven years at Associated Hebrew Schools. Since 2009, Mrs. Chocron has been teaching Science, Physics, and Mathematics at both Yeshivat Or Chaim and Ulpamat Orot. Over the past five years, her Physics students won the Weizmann Safe Competition in Canada three times and competed in the finals in Israel.

**MR. EZER DIENA***Judaic Studies, Science, and Mathematics*

A local Torontonian, Mr. Ezer Diena attended Ner Yisrael Yeshiva for high school, and studied in Israel for two years at Yeshivas Toras Moshe under Rabbi Michel Shurkin, a premier student of Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik. Mr. Diena returned to Toronto to study at York University, where he received his B.Sc. (Honours Chemistry) and B.Ed., and obtained OCT certification to teach Math and Science at the high school level. Upon graduation, while teaching part-time at Yeshivat Or Chaim, Mr. Diena joined Beit Midrash Zichron Dov, where he served as an avreich, as well as BAYT, where he served as Rabbinic Assistant. He is married to Thornhill native Chaya (Benmergui), and they have a daughter, Hudi, and son, Zev.

**MS. ATARA ENGLISH***Social Worker*

Ms. Atara English is an Ulpanat Orot alumna and holds an MSW degree from Wurzweiler School of Social Work. After graduating Ulpana she completed her year in Israel and then attended York University where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities. She has experience working with children and youth in schools and community agencies throughout Toronto. She builds on students' strengths and believes in empowering them to reach their full potential. Atara enjoys meeting with students, creating therapeutic relationships and promoting mental wellness within the school culture!

**MRS. NADIA GLICK***Mathematics Department Head and Social Sciences*

Mrs. Nadia Glick studied Mathematics and Business at the University of Western Ontario and later pursued a teaching degree at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. Prior to joining Bnei Akiva Schools, she taught a variety of Math, Business and Science courses at TanenbaumCHAT and Associated Hebrew Schools. Mrs. Glick aims to create a classroom that is inclusive, well-structured and inviting. She likes to challenge her students to their full potential and aims to meet the needs of various types of learners.

**MRS. TAMARA GRUNBERGER***Mathematics*

Mrs. Tamara Grunberger has worked for 20 years as a school director, principal, educator and mentor for teachers and school leaders. She holds an M.S. Ed in Curriculum and Assessment, and additional certifications in leadership and education. In recent years, Tamara has worked with a variety of institutions offering school and educational consulting services in the areas of improvement, teaching and learning, mentoring and curriculum development. She began her career teaching Mathematics to Middle and High School students and has continued to do so throughout. Tamara's core belief that drives her work in education, is that students are the centre of the educational process and have incredible potential. She looks forward to empowering her students as she returns to BAS.



MRS. FAIGY GRUNFELD

History

As a high school history teacher and an adult lecturer in Jewish history, Mrs. Faigy Grunfeld has always been intrigued by the narrative of humanity in general and of the Jewish people in particular. With a strong emphasis on primary source material ranging from rabbinic responsa to personal letters and journals to legal documents, she has designed curricula which explore the social history of Ashkenazic Jewry and lectured on the topic for Partners in Torah Detroit. She holds a BA in History from LCW (Manhattan) and is a feature writer for Hamodia, as well as a freelance writer for Jewish Action and The Jewish Press. One of her greatest passions is awakening in her students a curiosity and enthusiasm for the gravity-defying story of Jewish survival through its astonishing, millennia-long saga.



MRS. HEATHER HENDEL

English

Mrs. Heather Hendel grew up in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and graduated from the University of Michigan with a B.A. in English and Northwestern University with an M.S. in Secondary English Education. Prior to moving to Toronto this summer, she lived in Manhattan, and taught high school English in Queens, New York for the past 20 years and middle school for two years in Long Island, NY. She just got married in May to a Torontonian. In her free time, she's enjoying exploring Toronto, matchmaking, reading and exercising. She's really excited to teach at Bnei Akiva Schools!



MRS. ILANA HEYMAN

Development Associate, Health, and Physical Education

Mrs. Ilana Heymann joined BAS in September, 2020. A graduate of the Concurrent Education program at York University, Ilana holds a B.A. in Sociology and a B.Ed in Intermediate/Senior Education. She has qualifications in French, Social Sciences, Special Education and Junior Education and is an active member of Ontario College of Teachers. During her time at York, Ilana was actively involved in her campus Hillel and with OU-JLIC where she worked to strengthen the campus Jewish community through holiday events, chess and community outreach. She was elected to represent the undergraduate students on the University Board of Governors and interacted with leaders from all parts of the York community. Ilana is very excited to bring her energy and experiences to the Bnei Akiva Schools family.



MRS. NATHALIE KATZ

Mathematics

Born in Moscow, Mrs. Nathalie Katz moved to Israel as a teen, and then to Canada. She attended high school and university in Toronto, graduating with a BSc majoring in Computer Science with a Certificate in Business and Accounting. Mrs. Katz worked in computer engineering at IBM before taking her computer and finance skills to for- and not-for-profit companies. Her interest in education inspired her to begin teaching high school Mathematics and Sciences at various levels for the last 15 years. She particularly enjoys developing her female students' passions for the traditionally male-dominated fields of Engineering and Physics. In addition to running extracurriculars like Engineering and Coding clubs, and Waterloo Math Contest preparation groups, Mrs. Katz enjoys spending time with her kids, watching comedies, and reading.

**MR. DANIEL LERMAN***Student Support*

A Philadelphia native, Mr. Daniel Lerman has been living in Edison, NJ for the past several years and has experience tutoring and mentoring students privately. He holds a B.Sc. with a major in Supply Chain Management from Pennsylvania State University, focusing on entrepreneurship. When he's not at work, Dan enjoys an active lifestyle outdoors, camping and travelling, as well as singing and playing guitar.

**DR. SHLOMIT LEVY***Science*

Dr. Shlomit Levy has taught Science at BAS since 2008 and has passionately engaged in science education for the last twenty years. Prior to her move to Toronto, she taught Pathology and Anatomy in the New York/ American Program at the Sackler Faculty of Medicine in Tel Aviv University. Dr. Levy received her B.Sc. with honours from Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Honours M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Anatomy and Pathology from Tel Aviv University, M.B.A. with distinction from Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh, and authored articles in peer reviewed journals. During her postdoctoral studies at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital, she was the recipient of the Samuel Lunenfeld Award and The Kidney Foundation Award. Dr. Levy aims to inspire the next generation of scientists by making science exciting, relevant and fun.

**MRS. NAOMI LIDSKY***English and Learning Strategies*

Born and raised in Toronto, Mrs. Naomi Lidsky is an alumna of Ulpana, and studied at York University before earning her Masters of Teaching from OISE at the University of Toronto. For 13 years prior to joining Bnei Akiva Schools, Naomi worked as a special education teacher, as well as a learning support coordinator and advisor. When she is not teaching, she is busy taking care of her amazing and energetic children, and volunteering in the community.

**MRS. ROCHELLE LIPSON***Arts*

Mrs. Rochelle Lipson has been teaching Visual Arts at Bnei Akiva Schools since 2007. She received her Specialized Honours Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from York University. Mrs. Lipson has also taught various courses at Eitz Chaim Schools. She initiated and has continued to organize the BAS Celebration of the Arts since 2009. Mrs. Lipson has also overseen joint creative projects with other schools. She continues to educate herself and works with various art media in order to grow artistically and pass that knowledge and creativity on to her students.

**MRS. Yael LIPSON***History Department Head and Coordinator of Educational Development and Coaching*

Mrs. Yael Lipson has been working in education since 2013. Born and raised in Toronto, she is a product of the Jewish Day School system, and is passionate about the continuity of Jewish education and community. Yael graduated summa cum laude from York University with an Hons. B.A. in History. She then received her Bachelor of Education from OISE, University of Toronto. She has been teaching subjects ranging from English to Jewish History in the Jewish Day School system. Mrs. Lipson and her husband Michael ('08), have four children.



DR. JANNA NADLER

English

Dr. Janna Nadler teaches English at Bnei Akiva Schools and is also the Staff Yearbook Advisor. She has a Ph.D. in English from McMaster University and a B.Ed., Honours B.A., and M.A. from York University; all degrees were supported by merit-based scholarships. Before teaching at Bnei Akiva Schools, Dr. Nadler taught Canadian Literature and Children's Literature at McMaster University and the University of Toronto. Dr. Nadler is also a well-known speaker and book reviewer for book club groups throughout the GTA. She is the creator/director of Book Clubs by Janna (www.bookclubsbyjanna.com). Dr. Nadler and her husband, Michael, have three children, Maya, Jordan and Aliza.



MR. EFI PALVANOV

Science Department Head

Mr. Efi Palvanov studied Biology and Chemistry at York University, earned his Bachelor of Education at the University of Toronto, and learned at Aish HaTorah Yeshiva in Jerusalem. Before joining Bnei Akiva Schools, Mr. Palvanov taught at Ner Israel Yeshiva of Toronto for seven years and was the head of its science department. Mr. Palvanov is also a curriculum developer and has built a number of unique high school courses in science, philosophy, history, and Jewish studies. He is the author of several books and two popular blogs. Mr. Palvanov has a passion for Jewish mysticism and for adventure. He has traveled extensively around the world and has served in the Canadian Armed Forces.



MRS. ARLENE RIPSMAN

Mathematics and Coding

Since 2007 Mrs. Arlene Ripsman has been a member of the faculty at Ulpana and Or Chaim, where she teaches Mathematics and Computer Science. Mrs. Ripsman earned her Honours B.Sc. in Mathematics and Statistics from the University of Toronto. Prior to joining Bnei Akiva Schools, she worked for an actuarial consulting firm for seven years before returning to university to study Computer Science. Mrs. Ripsman received her Honours B.Sc. and M.Sc. in Computer Science from York University. Over the course of her academic career, Mrs. Ripsman had an opportunity to teach at both the University of Toronto and York University. It was through these activities that Mrs. Ripsman discovered her passion for teaching. She brings this passion for teaching to her day-to-day responsibilities at Bnei Akiva Schools.



MS. ESTHER RUTLEDGE

Mathematics

Ms. Esther Rutledge has been working in the field of formal and informal education for the last 18 years. She taught in various private high schools and in administrative roles with NCSY and Torah High. She has a B.Ed and Masters in Education and has decided to return to the classroom to bring the joy of learning math to students. In her spare time she enjoys spending time with family, reading and going on vacations. She is a mother of four children, three boys and a girl.

**MR. ERIC SALTSMAN***Social Sciences and Director of Educational Technology and Advancement*

Mr. Eric Saltsman has an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Studies and Classics from Dalhousie University and a Master of Teaching degree from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at U of T. Mr. Saltsman's approach to education is centred around demonstrating how subject matter can be used in real-world application and he constantly finds ways to appeal to the interests of his students. He believes that the age-old adage, "you learn something new every day" is a remarkable understatement. Since joining in 2016, Mr. Saltsman has enjoyed exploring the nuances of the English language with the bright young minds at Bnei Akiva Schools.

**MS. SARENA SILVER***Mathematics and Social Sciences*

Ms. Sarena Silver has been working in education since 2005. She was raised in Ottawa, and before moving to Toronto in 2007, she lived in Montreal and Vancouver, where she received her BSc from McGill University and her BEd from the University of British Columbia. Ms. Silver has been teaching Math and French throughout her teaching career in Vancouver and Toronto. When not at work, she likes spending time with her puppy and enjoying the outdoors.

**MRS. RIFKA SONENBERG***Student Support*

Mrs. Rifka Sonenberg was born in Israel and grew up in Toronto. She holds an Honours B.Sc. in Chemistry from York University and a teaching certificate from Michlalah Jerusalem College for Women. She has recently added a qualification in teaching Science. Mrs. Sonenberg and her husband, Rabbi Noah Sonenberg, spent a number of years living and learning in Israel, during which she completed Nishmat's Keren Ariel (Yoatzot Halacha) program. Mrs. Sonenberg wears many hats: she serves as a resource for Ulpana students in need of additional educational support, is a beloved kallah teacher and a popular speaker, both locally and in the United States. The Sonenbergs have three children.

**MS. LEORA STERLIN***Social Sciences*

Ms. Leora Sterlin is a trained lawyer who received her law degree from the University of Western Ontario, and her Masters of Law from the London School of Economics. In 2002 she switched careers and went to York University to complete a Bachelors of Education. She taught at Bialik Hebrew Day School for many years, and then in 2012 combined her passion for law and for teaching, and moved to teach Law at TanenbaumCHAT. Ms. Sterlin has been teaching at Bnei Akiva Schools since 2016.

**MR. MICHAEL TEVERSHAM***Social Sciences*

Since 2003, Mr. Michael Teversham has been sharing his knowledge and sense of humour with students at both Yeshivat Or Chaim and Ulpanat Orot, teaching History and other Social Sciences. Educated at the University of Toronto, the University of Southern California and State University of New York, Mr. T enjoyed a screenwriting career prior to teaching, working on a variety of television shows now only found on YouTube or in Germany. Mr. T strives to instill a love of learning in his students, improve their verbal and written skills and make the classroom experience as fun as it can be. When not in the classroom, the girls enjoy discussing current events with him in the hallway, and the boys enjoy playing basketball intramurals alongside Mr. T.

**MRS. KENDRA THOMPSON***Mathematics and Social Sciences*

After 13 years physically teaching at Bnei Akiva Schools, Mrs. Thompson continues as an online instructor after returning home to New Brunswick. Prior to joining Bnei Akiva Schools in 2006, Mrs. Thompson taught for eight years in the middle school at Netivot HaTorah and one year in New Brunswick. While at Bnei Akiva Schools, Mrs. Thompson taught a variety of subjects including English, Math, Drama and History. She has a B.A. and B.Ed. with honours from the University of New Brunswick, an Honours Specialist qualification in history from OISE and an Intermediate Math qualification from York University. Mrs. Thompson created a girls' running team at Ulpanat Orot that competed in the 5K Hannukah Hustle in Hamilton and the Sporting Life 10K in Toronto.

**MS. ELI YISSAR***Writer's Craft*

An Ulpana graduate, Ms. Eli Yissar ('21) coached the Model UN team for the 2022–23 year and is looking forward to continuing her teaching at Bnei Akiva Schools with Writer's Craft this year. She is currently in her third year of undergraduate school at the University of Toronto, completing a specialist in Jewish Studies. In addition to teaching at Ulpana, Eli is working as a Research Assistant to a University of Toronto research project called European Musician Refugees in Canada 1937–1951.

**MS. SARAH ZAHAVI***Arts and Graphic Designer*

An Ulpana graduate, Sarah Zahavi is excited to be back at Bnei Akiva Schools teaching Arts and as the school's graphic designer. She has a Bachelor of Technology from Toronto Metropolitan University, with a concentration in Publishing and a minor in Communication Design. In addition to teaching at Ulpana, Ms. Zahavi is a design associate for The Canadian Jewish News and an amateur gardener and sourdough baker.



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