



Alumni News - Summer 2020

Find out what your fellow JDS Alumni are up to!

Be inspired, laugh, connect. We want to stay in touch with you and offer a way for you to stay connected with each other. Now, think back to your times at JDS and share an update or a memory with your fellow JDS alumni community.



Mazal tov to the JDS class of 2016 students who celebrated their (virtual) high school graduations in June 2020! (not all pictured here)

JDS wants to hear from you! What are you doing? Where have you gone? What have you accomplished?

Share Your Story!



Talya Gillman (JDS '00)

**Jack J. & Charlotte Spitzer Young Leadership Award
Recipient - Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle**

Talya was recently recognized for her strong work in the Jewish community, alongside Jews of Color, to ensure that equity and a deep sense of belonging are available to everyone. To Talya this means showing up, learning about and un-learning patterns of *inequity*, healing, and making sure everyone has a seat at the table. Her powerful speech accepting this award had a few key take-aways for what leadership looks like:

"... Showing up, with deep love and appreciation for Am Yisrael, our Jewish community -- and also, taking very seriously the sacred values it has taught me about the importance of being in community, and taking care of one another.

... Carrying lessons learned through a diverse range of experiences and relationships with a diverse web of people into the room and putting them on the table. Naming what has not yet been seen, accepted, or welcome in our Jewish community -- and asking us to talk about it. Knowing that while doing so may spark discomfort or avoidance, our best hope for a vibrant, nourishing, safe Jewish American future for everyone in our community - and all of our neighbors - hinges on celebrating and nurturing the good...and also examining and uprooting the bad and the ugly."

Talya is looking positively at the turning tide, noting the recognition across the Jewish community that Black lives matter, and having conversations about concrete commitments to make that true within Jewish life. She will continue to advocate and collaborate towards these priorities within the community. Together, she wants us all to live out our Jewish and human values through learning and transformation.

Reconnect with Talya



Israel Harris (JDS '13)

Bridging Performance and Allyship

At JDS, Israel learned how to be an Upstander. He combines this lesson and his passion for performance to create dance pieces which promote anti-hate.

Israel recently graduated as an Honors Scholar from NYU Tisch School of the Arts with a BFA in Dance, and a double minor in Psychology and Hebrew and Judaic Studies. His most recent piece entitled "*CellE.K.T. SocieT.Y.*" was chosen by the Tisch Dance faculty members to be re-performed at their class's graduating concert. During his time at NYU, Israel created art for community action focused on the New York Jewish Community, and has discovered new ways to use his skills for positive change.

Israel is currently working at the July Third Foundation, a nonprofit working for reparations for those in the U.S. who suffer from the lasting effects of enslavement and racism. He has also helped with a set of donation-based classes to raise money for Black Trans Femmes in the Arts and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, through Backstage Dance Studio in Bellevue. This work aims to create a more educated and inclusive space for dance studios in the Seattle area.

Israel will continue to find new ways to be an Upstander in all communities and bridge the world of performance with allyship and anti-racism.

Reconnect with Israel



Laura Revesz Altman (JDS '98)

From Teaching to Tech

A career path is not always linear. After starting her academic journey focused on Mass Media and Communication, Laura earned her Master's in Education. She taught in the Bellevue School District, but realized her calling was elsewhere. She transitioned to advertising with Microsoft before landing in her current position of Senior Marketing Manager, Ad Programs for Amazing Digital Advertising. (Okay, there were a few roles in between). Laura used her time in the classroom to shape her into the leader she is today.

Laura, her husband Eli Altman, and their baby Dylan live in Seattle with their 2

dogs. She loves sharing the joy of Shabbat and other cultural aspects of Judaism with her family.

In 2014, Laura's mother passed away of a rare sarcoma cancer. Laura spends time partnering with the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance (SCCA) at Fred Hutch to raise awareness and funds for this disease.

Reconnect with Laura



Ariel Mizrahi (JDS '09)

From Employee to Owner, A Path to Impact

In 2019, Ariel saw an opportunity and took a risk. Now, he leads his own business as the owner of the local Subway sandwich shop in Kelsey Creek where he works to positively impact the lives of his employees and keeps his eyes on projects for the future. Ariel's dad had been involved with franchises as he was growing up, so when Subway's leadership was changing, Ariel saw this as an opportunity to take a risk and become his own boss. He took lessons learned from the classroom and his roles at Amazon to create the type of business he can be proud of. While the pandemic has hit many businesses hard, Ariel spends his time focusing on people:

"Now I'm focused on hiring good people, setting a good foundation, making it a priority to stay open and keep staff employed to help them support their families."

From his time at JDS, Ariel understands how to put values into action. He hopes to continue doing this with passion projects in the future.

Reconnect with Ariel



Faculty Highlight: Nance Adler

The coveted Rabbi Dr. William H. Greenberg z”l Master Teacher Award has been awarded by the Samis Foundation to HaMorah Nance Adler, a veteran teacher at the Jewish Day School of Metropolitan Seattle. The \$20,000 award goes to a teacher in Seattle, who has worked in a Jewish Day School for at least 10 years and whose exceptional creativity, commitment, and innovation has made a significant impact on their school and the Jewish community at large.

The Samis Foundation established the Master Teacher Award in 2011 in honor of Rabbi Dr. William Greenberg z”l, the first rabbinic trustee of the foundation. The award honors exceptional hands-on Judaic classroom teachers, who serve as charismatic role models and are known and respected by peers, parents, and pupils as masters of their craft.

“HaMorah Nance is an exemplary educator, and we are so gratified to honor her achievements and contribution to Jewish education in Seattle and beyond,” said Connie Kanter, Chief Executive Officer of Samis. “Teachers are too often the unsung heroes of our community. This award allows us to recognize the tremendous impact Judaic educators have, inspiring future generations with a strong and vibrant Jewish identity, commitment and passion for Jewish education.”

[Read more here](#)



JDS Board Member: Sarah Castoriano (JDS '96)

Sarah grew up in the Seattle area and started attending JDS in 1989. After graduating from JDS she went on to attend Mercer Island High School and then UW, graduating with a BA in Global Studies and a minor in Human Rights. She and her husband, Jeff, both work in tech and live in Bellevue with their son.

"After being away from the JDS community for over 20 years before rejoining the board in 2015, I was most impressed by JDS's ability to grow and adapt to the evolving landscape of its community while maintaining its standard of education and producing empowered community members. I credit the JDS culture of empathy, thoughtfulness and engagement as the foundation of success that I have today. I often reflect on the privilege of attending a school that was small and ensured each child was engaged and happy. The level of care that each teacher had for the students is unmatched and it brings me great gratitude to see this continue to be a cornerstone of the JDS experience. I joined the JDS board with the goal of giving back the community that I have so significantly benefited from being a part of and to ensure that same benefit and experience is available for future generations in our community - L'Dor Va-Dor.

Looking ahead, I am truly excited about the future of JDS as a key contributor to the future success of the Seattle Jewish community. As we prepare the next generation, I am hopeful and excited about the opportunities that we have ahead of us to create new connections and evolve existing partnerships within the JDS and Jewish community."

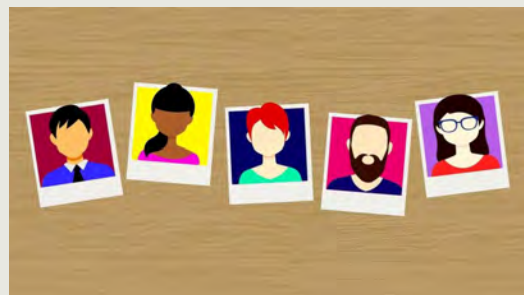
Reconnect with Sarah

Tell us what you're up to!

Fall Internships at JDS

Looking for a space to make a difference and give back to your community? Look no further! Apply your education, experience, and problem-solving skills at JDS this fall as a Teaching or Development & Marketing intern.

[Email JDS](#)





Imagine our Future

See how JDS is exploring and proposing innovative approaches to Jewish education. Read more [here](#) .

Stay Updated on All Things JDS!

