

MEMORIES

*The Bergen County High School
of Jewish Studies*

Class of 2019/5779



May 21, 2019 / 16 Iyar 5779

This booklet contains memories and reflections from our twenty-two graduates on their learning experiences and friendships cultivated at BCHSJS over their years here.

We congratulate our graduating seniors for their commitment to Jewish study throughout their middle school and high school years. I am sure you join me in wishing them all the best in their future endeavors. We say *lehitra'ot b'karov* (see you soon) - not goodbye.

Graduates, may you continue to grow and pursue more Hebrew and Jewish learning in your college years and beyond. Mazal tov v'b'hatzlacha!

Fondly,
Fred Nagler and the entire BCHSJS Family

*Joshua ben Perahia would say: Make for yourself a Rav (teacher),
and acquire for yourself a colleague, and give all individuals the benefit of the doubt.
Pirkei Avot 1:6*

BCHSJS Administration

Fred Nagler, Principal-Director
Chanan Strassman, Guidance Counselor
Sue Daniele, Administrator
Marie Reich, Bookkeeper
Galeet Lipke, Student Activities Coordinator
Mike Katz, Sunday Support Staff

BCHSJS Faculty

Yardena Bannett, Rabbi Dr. David Fine, Barnett Goldman, Rivka Herzfeld,
Rabbi Gary Hoffman, Avital Moss, Bruce Prince, Dr. Daniel Rynhold,
Dr. Mark Silk, Tova Sklar, Deborah Stack

BCHSJS Board of Directors

Sy Blechman, President
Elayne Kalina, Immediate Past President
Shari Haber, Vice President
Rabbi Dr. David Fine, Treasurer
Marcia Kagedan, Secretary

Manny Genn, David Goodman, Rabbi Dr. Wallace Greene,
Steven Prystowsky, Heidi Seigel-Laddy,
Alexandra Sobelman, Mel Solomon, Connie Stack



Elisabeth Bloom

My fondest memory during BCHSJS was the spring Shabbaton in 2018. It was the first time I really got to know all of my peers and I had a blast. I had the pleasure of rooming with three amazing girls, one of whom happened to be a childhood friend that I hadn't seen in ten years! We all had so much fun throughout the weekend and I made friends of all different ages. I love the strong community and family values that BCHSJS has instilled in me. I now have a new appreciation for Judaism that I would never have expected before. Now, I will definitely be joining Hillel when I attend Rutgers University.

I will be attending Rutgers University in New Brunswick in the fall.



Eila Brown

Little did I know when I signed up for BCHSJS, all that was ahead! To sum it up, BCHSJS has played a huge part in my life and taught me so many things. BCHSJS has also given me so many opportunities to explore my Judaism in lots of fun and interesting ways.

From making new friends and hanging out with them each week, from going on Shabbatons and traveling to different places in the country to help other people, from my very first class to this year's Senior Seminar, BCHSJS has provided me with so many different experiences.

I have great memories of so many classes and discussions. For instance, Mr. Prince's *That Was the Week That Was* class has opened my mind in a lot of ways as we discussed both sides to current events. Also, Dr. Dan's *The Ethicist* class has made me deeply think and understand myself better as we discussed "situations", our opinions about them and "what we would do," and Biblical interpretations.

I've also had amazing experiences on our BCHSJS trips. I never thought I'd enjoy Shabbat so much as I did on our Shabbatons! BCHSJS has also allowed me to make new friends from far away going to New Orleans where we volunteered with Habitat for Humanity.

I will miss BCHSJS very much, but I know I will continue discovering my Jewish identity and helping in community service in college and for many years to come.

I will be studying Forensic Science at West Virginia University in the fall.



Itai Epstein

Being a student at BCHSJS has led me to make friends with a group of truly incredible people. Aside from this, I found that the experiences that truly impacted me were those outside of the classroom. Exploring New Orleans on BCHSJS' Mission to New Orleans was incredible. Having never been in New Orleans before, learning its history and taking part in its culture and cuisine was incredible. In addition to this, traveling to Israel with the BCHSJS/JFNNJ's Young Leadership Program not only introduced me to new friends, but also gave me a new way to experience Israel. Sitting in on multiple classes in an Israeli school, spending Shabbat with my host family, and touring the Knesset all breathed new life into Israel for me. If not for my time at BCHSJS, I never imagined I would have done the things I have done while I was a student here.



I will be attending McGill University in the fall.

Matthew Fishman

When I first arrived at BCHSJS, I immediately fell in love with the classes and the teachers, especially Dr. Dan and his *Ethicist* class. There, I learned that I loved talking about the kinds of things not discussed in a typical Hebrew school and I realized that I had a lot to contribute to the conversations.



I will be attending Bergen Community College in the fall.



Sabrina Fried

I have spent the past five years attending the Bergen County High School of Jewish Studies. That is five years, ten semesters of classes, or sixty months of memories soon coming to an end. I am now looking back at all of this and even before, marveling at what I have accomplished and become. I can say for certain that I would not be the person I am today without the experiences I had through BCHSJS. From community service trips to global leadership opportunities to exploring who I am, BCHSJS provided and continues to provide such great opportunities. But as much as I thank BCHSJS for all these fun activities, I must also thank them for introducing me to a very special group of people.



When I entered BCHSJS, I was the only kid in my grade from my town attending. I did not know anyone in my classes. Luckily that was not the case by the end of my first day. During eighth grade orientation I met two other girls that I would spend the next five years (and the rest of my life) with. The three of us have grown extremely close over these years, from Shabbatons and overnights to trips to Israel. Throughout the years, this small group has grown immensely. We have taken dozens of classes together and created a close-knit family of friends, peers, and teachers. Even out of class we make time to spend together and always have a fun time. I know that I will always be able to count on these people for kindness, friendship, support, and a good time no matter how long it will have been since we attended BCHSJS together. I am sure that these are bonds that will last a lifetime.

I will be attending Tufts University in the fall.

Miri Goodman

When I came to BCHSJS in ninth grade the only person I knew going in was my cousin. I had heard about how much fun he had with his friends on Sundays and I was excited to see that for myself. I had many friends from Solomon Schechter coming with me, but others were going off to Jewish high schools and were already finding ways to continue their Jewish education. I wanted to find the same thing at BCHSJS.

Ninth grade at BCHSJS went by in a blur. I hardly went to any trips (besides Six Flags) and I didn't go on any Shabbatons. By tenth grade, I knew that one of the best ways to really engage in the community was to participate more. I spoke more in my classes and I talked more and more to new people that I met along the way. I was ready and willing to learn about moral dilemmas in Dr. Dan's class, *The Ethicist*, and I was excited to connect Judaism to shows on Netflix with Avital. It was so nice to see how much the teachers really cared about how their students were doing and how they checked up on them from time to time. I really appreciated having those encouraging words spoken to me on Sunday mornings when it was already so hard to wake up early on the weekends.



It's not just the teachers who are so welcoming. The students understood that being new is hard and they welcomed me into their friend group that they had made the year before. We went to Israel together, and we went on scavenger hunts together. Our grade has become a connected group and I hope that it stays that way. I want to thank everyone for being so wonderful to me for the last four years.

I want to thank BCHSJS and all of the people who made my Sunday mornings possible. It was truly an unforgettable experience. Thank you BCHSJS!

I will be attending Washington University in St. Louis in the fall.

Dasi Grimaldi

BCHSJS has been a great educational experience for me. I enjoy picking the subjects that interest me the most. My favorite classes were Jewish women and Jewish history. What a nice bonus to get college credit too! I also enjoyed some of the other activities. One experience that I really enjoyed was volunteering at the nursing home doing crafts and playing games with the residents.

I will be attending New York State University - Binghamton this coming fall.



Julia Holzsager

People can really make or break an experience, so I'm glad I came to BCHSJS in eighth grade to join the graduating class of 2019. When I first joined the school, I came with my close friend Ariel. We were attached at the hip, always taking the same classes. Once entering freshman year, he became committed to marching band which left me almost friendless.



The following year, I started going on trips and met some of my closest friends. I try not to miss any more opportunities to spend time with all of you, and I'm so thankful for the people I've connected to over the years. At this point, we've made countless inside jokes and memories. All the way back to my first Shabbaton- where Heather confiscated the lemonade powder I dealt to my friends - to the mannequin challenge we did on the NYC ferry, to the scavenger hunt in Nahariya, to the volleyball games, etc. each moment with my Jew Crew has made me love the Jewish community.

Guys, we all know I get pretty crazy. To Barnett, I'm known as the girl who talked about Nicholas Cage memes in an interview. To Mr. Nagler, I'm one of the seniors who is loud enough to make announcements for him without the use of a megaphone. To my friends, I'm a Nutella crazed teenage girl who wishes she could marry Ben Shapiro.

Whether you know me for randomly breaking into dance or referencing cringe-worthy memes, shortly put, BCHSJS has allowed me to meet my favorite people who somehow manage to put up with me for five years straight. Students and staff, I love all of you. Hashem planned for us to cross paths, and I'm grateful that He did. This school is the reason each of you entered my life. Let's not allow graduation to get in the way of us spending more time together in the future.

To quote a great band, "Thnks Fr th Mmrs" (Fall Out Boy). Juju, out.

I will be attending Rutgers University in the fall.



Eden Kaufman

My favorite memory of BCHSJS is not a single memory – instead, it is of all the friends I’ve made over the years. My friends have given me so many happy memories that I couldn’t have gotten if it weren’t for meeting them through BCHSJS. We have done so many fun things together, such as the Shabbaton, an Escape Room, and going to see a Broadway musical.

Everyone I have met here has been so warm and welcoming and made me feel at home. I know that we will continue to be friends for a long time, and I am grateful for my second family.

I will be attending Muhlenberg College in the fall.



Abraham Koretski

Being a freshman in high school it was a hard transition going from an all Jewish private school to a public school with a strong but small Jewish community. Being able to go every Sunday and be around people from the same religion and share similar experiences was a great thing. Sitting around the cafeteria tables talking to old friends and making new ones is one of the best experiences I had at BCHSJS. I also had great experiences with all the teachers who taught me many things I never knew and enriched my Jewish knowledge.

I will be attending Rutgers – Newark Business School in the fall.



Kosiborod

David

From Ma'ayanot to Moriah, from Adler to Nagler, from Englewood to Israel, wherever we go, BCHSJS holds a special place in my heart.

After visiting BCHSJS multiple times in seventh grade, I had finally joined in eighth grade when I was finally given the opportunity. Walking into the eighth-grade classroom, I had recognized almost nobody, and the people I did recognize, I had not talked to in years. We were essentially strangers to each other. I mostly stuck with my brother and his long-time friends, but a time came where this was not possible, so I became closer with my peers. We slowly became closer through the great trips, like the Shabbatons, the New York trips, and most of all the leadership classroom. This is where I can say I got closer with my peers and really made many of my lasting friendships. In fact, I can officially say that I came more out of my shell and am now a better person for it. Though getting to school on a Sunday morning is a bit of a drag, I can happily say that in the end, it's worth it.



The best thing that may have happened to connect me with my Jewish roots was to hear about this program back in sixth grade because without it, I wouldn't be the man I am today.

I plan on attending Drexel University this fall.

Jenny Kuriloff

In my four years at BCHSJS, I've experienced the joy of Jewish learning, and the support that stems from a tight-knit Jewish community. Reflecting on my time here, I can say with certainty that Dr. Dan and Yardená Bannett have upheld my desire to learn, and that through them, I have grown in my understanding of Jewish law, morality, and spirituality. In particular, Dr. Dan's class *The Ethicist* provided incredible insight on not just Jewish regulations, but on Jewish thinking. In *The Ethicist*, we were presented with real moral dilemmas, and after forming our own solutions, we examined the Jewish perspective. I took the class several times and found each repetition to be equally enlightening.



BCHSJS has also strengthened my ties to the Jewish community by allowing me to maintain old friendships while forming new ones. Several friends of mine started BCHSJS in ninth grade during the transition from a Jewish day school to a public high school. While we no longer see each other every day as we did in middle school, through BCHSJS, we've been able to reconnect each week. In addition, I strengthened friendships and experienced the joy of service on a trip to New Orleans that I took as a sophomore. This trip, sponsored by NCSY and facilitated by BCHSJS, enabled me to change lightbulbs, paint houses, and shape yards in the community of New Orleans. In addition, I listened to jazz in the French Quarter, ate beignets, and immersed myself in the New Orleans community. It was an unforgettable experience, and I couldn't have done it without BCHSJS.

As my last year as a high school student comes to an end, I've come to understand what a wonderful place BCHSJS is. My Jewish education has prospered, my friendships have flourished, and I've had a wonderful time all the while. Thank you BCHSJS!

I will be attending Washington University in St. Louis in the fall.

Brianna Leopold

I had no idea what to expect when I first enrolled in BCHSJS. My brother did not attend BCHSJS before, so I knew nothing about the school. I just knew it had a really complicated acronym (which turns out to not be as complicated as I thought). Although I knew three other students going, I was terrified. I was moving from a class of 10 students I had known my whole life to an eighth-grade class of at least 20 students, and it was a huge change.

The first Shabbaton was definitely the most memorable one. In the beginning, eighth grade me huddled into the bus trying not to be in any of the pictures the Stack brothers were taking with the school camera. But after surviving a snowstorm, ruining a bathroom with tie-dye t-shirts, witnessing Zach break a light with a gaga ball, eating smores burnt to a crisp, staying up all night watching Five Night's at Freddy's videos then being too scared to sleep, having heated screaming debates about medical marijuana use, and losing my voice, I had come out of my shell and made memories that would last me a lifetime. But who can forget about Kent?? Coo-Coo for Co-Kent am I right?? At the very end of the trip we passed around pieces of paper with everyone's name on it and we had to write something about the person whose name was on the paper. Sounded simple enough. One person wrote the acronym "SBNTP" on my paper, which of course stood for Sucks Because No Toilet Paper, one of the group names from before. After three days of getting to know my roommate, she got my paper and blurted out to the whole school "WHO'S BRIANNA??" Just thought I'd mention that.



Another one of my favorite memories is the New Orleans trip in tenth grade. The trip had a very interesting beginning for two reasons: the first being Annabelle and I getting lost in Newark Airport. The two of us ran around their airport for at least ten minutes before we found the right gate. After finally finding the group, we were off. The second reason was because, unknown at the time, I had the flu. I was sick for the entire duration of the trip and had gotten every single person on the trip sick. We dubbed the sickness, "The New Orleans Plague". Our first stop in New Orleans was a Walmart at 12:30 in the morning. We ran around the store like madmen filling an entire shopping cart with ramen, Oreos, marshmallow fluff, and just about any other junk food we could find. The guys and girls had completely different plans when we got back to the hotel; the girls made ramen with a coffee maker and the boys claimed to have made Jell-O in the bathtub. Although to this day I'm not sure if they boys actually made Jell-O (although they did buy Jell-O mix). The first night in New Orleans was also the birth of a series of videos involving lots and lots of ice machines, and creepy hallways. We spent the next four days in the beautiful city helping build houses and changing light bulbs. The trip was truly an unforgettable experience. I was able to give back to a community that really needed it. Along the way, we ruined a few pairs of shoes, ran into a few "interesting" strangers, visited a jazz club, held baby alligators,

and skipped through a parking lot near Bourbon Street. And when all else failed, we had backup plan C!!

As I said before, I had no idea what I was getting myself into when I enrolled in BCHSJS. I thought it would be a typical, boring Hebrew school I would have to be dragged to every Sunday. I was completely wrong. Thank you to the amazing teachers I've had throughout my five years, who have taught me everything from how to be a better leader to how to paint the Parshah on my nails. Thank you to my weird, awesome, amazing best friends I have made through this school. I don't know what I'm going to do without seeing you guys every Sunday. I came to BCHSJS looking for something to keep me busy on Sunday mornings and left with friends and memories I will never forget.

I will be attending Lafayette College this coming fall.

William Milun

BCHSJS will always have a special place in my heart. When the Principal of BCHSJS at the time, Bess Adler, first came to my Hebrew school in seventh grade, I secretly thought that it sounded awesome, even though to that day I had always hated having to go to learn about Judaism every Sunday morning for a bunch of boring classes. Coming from Solomon Schechter, I never wanted to abandon my Jewish identity, but I never felt like I belonged at all these "boring" Sunday schools. I hesitantly told my parents that I was interested in willingly going to *another* Hebrew school, and after they managed to close their jaws after they had dropped to the ground, I was registered. Coming to BCHSJS was my own decision and my own hope to continue my Jewish education.



The friendships that I have made here are *the* strongest friendships I have ever had and I will never forget. I was kind of terrified meeting all these new people, but I luckily had two of my great friends there with me to throw me into the deep end. I quickly found out that there was nothing to be worried about. On the bus on my first trip in eighth grade I met one of my closest friends to this day. There was also a great deal of other friends that I am thrilled to see every week, as well as those who have come and gone over the years. It has been so easy to meet new people and become great friends with them.

For each Shabbaton that has happened over the last five years, I have cherished and will remember each and every one of them forever. At the eighth grade Shabbaton in the "haunted hotel", I bonded so much with my grade and became much closer friends with all of them. Roasting marshmallows in the fireplace, breaking the light, "freshman fresh out of the oven", the sessions that I went to with Deborah, Heather, and Barnett, and all my roommates - this Shabbaton means so much to me that I remember every detail. And each Havdalah, meditation, prayer, meal, and second that I spent with all of my friends over the Shabbatonim I will treasure.

Another memory that I will always remember is the BCHSJS trip where we worked with Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans. This is where I've had some of my best memories in my five years of BCHSJS. Having the experience of going to New Orleans with friends that I had already become very close with while having fun and feeling like

I had accomplished such a great mitzvah is one of the best experiences I have ever had. The group of ten people that went on this trip, I will never forget, and we will always have a very strong friendship no matter where we each end up later in life.

Of course, BCHSJS also includes spending time with your friends in classes themselves. Being a part of BCHSJS is so important to me and I will always be grateful for being a part of it. Having classes with the same people for so many years lets you become so close to every single one of those people. Not being able to see them every week and getting even closer with them is going to be one of the hardest things about going off to college next year.

I will be attending Pace University this fall.

Aliza Novogroder



The things I remember most from my two years at BCHSJS were the Shabbatons, the fun events and the awesome classes. The Shabbatons were a great way to meet people. I know I came a few years late to BCHSJS, but I'm glad I decided to come. The fun events were another great set of memories. The trip that I will never forget was going to High Exposure Rock Climbing. I remember I never wanted to leave because I was having too much fun. Last but not least, the classes. The classes were taught by such amazing teachers, I could not complain. The subjects were really interesting to me, and I'm glad that I chose the classes that I did.

I will be attending Bergen Community College in the fall.

Michael Orman

The best memory I have of the four years I have spent at the Bergen County High School of Jewish Studies (BCHSJS) is the spring Shabbaton of 2019. My favorite parts were the lip-sync battle and a costume contest. I wore the costume of a matador because the song I chose for my part in the battle was an aria from *Carmen: The Toreador Song*. Since I was a torero, I needed at *toro*, a bull. So, I asked one of my roommates to play the part of the bull. When I lifted my cape while singing, he ran through the cape, using his fingers as the bull horns. It was one of the best times of my life.

I will be attending Adelphi University in the fall.

Abigail Pomeranz



My favorite memories from BCHSJS are actually from the *Senior Seminar*. In that class, all the seniors were able to bond in a friendly and welcoming environment, focused on just our class. Sitting in a big circle, sharing and talking, helped us all to feel closer to one another.

I plan on attending Wesleyan University this fall.



Andrew Shamis

BCHSJS has without a doubt, made an important impact on my life throughout high school. It's been a place where I have made so many friends and learned so much about the culture of the Jewish people. As I graduate, I am flooded with memories of the last four years, and it will be sad to leave it all behind in the transition into college. One of my best memories was the first time that I went on the Escape Room trip. I was basically locked-up in a room with fifteen other people and we had to work together to find clues and make our way out. Everyone was frantically running around from corner to corner looking for something that might be of help and people were tripping over each other to see the small bits of clues that we had located. At the end of half an hour, we had a few different keys, none of which matched the lock on the door. Even though we did not make it out of the room on time, it was a memorable activity in my first year that brought me a lot closer to people that I would become friends with for the rest of my time at BCHSJS. I also really enjoyed taking Dr. Dan's class, *The Ethicist*. It was a very thought-provoking course that allowed me to analyze situations from a moral standpoint and see how it relates to Jewish values. BCHSJS has helped me realize what it means to be Jewish and has made me proud to be part of such an incredible culture and religion.



I will be attending Stevens Institute of Technology this coming fall.

Annabelle Simhon

This year will mark my fifth and final year as a student at BCHSJS. As I look back to where I began (as a shy, little eighth grader in an unfamiliar place), to where I am now, I can say that I have changed immensely. Notably, I found the confidence to showcase my Judaism and have made friendships that will last me a lifetime. For much of this, I have BCHSJS to thank, as Hebrew high school truly made me proud to be Jewish.



I still remember my first day of class. I was overwhelmed by a new building, herds of older children, and brand-new classes. I would be lying if I said that I didn't get lost that first day (I honestly still do sometimes), but I figured everything out after some trial and error. There were girls who sat next to me in my first class that looked about my age, but I was too shy to introduce myself. One of them had a huge smile on her face. She leaned closer to me and asked if we could sit together at eighth grade core, and I said "sure!", happy that that conversation was a success. Her name was Brianna Leopold and together, we helped each other through that first year as we navigated that new atmosphere. Five years later, I'm so thankful to have met her, as we are closer than ever and she is one of my best friends.

Quickly, our group expanded, until we were a comfortable 15 kids who moved as a unit through the semesters. We tried everything from nail art classes, to cooking, to yoga, to after school trips, to even travelling to Israel together. On top of this, we also plan things outside of Hebrew high school at least once a month, which is always a great time.

All of my friends have been there as a sort of Jewish foundation for me, allowing me to feel at home and comfortable with my Jewish identity. The differing degrees of faith and practice have shown me how diverse the Jewish world can be and has taught me to be open to all types of people.

I have loved every minute of my BCHSJS experience, but notably, my favorite memories of BCHSJS all stem from the same yearly event that we wouldn't miss for anything — our spring Shabbaton. These large gatherings for extended weekends gave us the freedom to bond, try new things, step out of our comfort zones, and most importantly — have a great time. Our first one consisted of hallway adventures, broken chandeliers, and midnight dance raves. The next year, we camped out in log cabins, tried to touch the tempting lake, and played our favorite card game. The next two years, we were in a creepy hotel filled with jump scares, midnight explorations, and haunted adventures. Finally, this last year we spent our time cracking backs, exploring even more, and spending an iconic night under the stars.

I will never forget the memories that I made during my years at BCHSJS, but more importantly, I will never forget how much I grew as a Jewish individual. Although my time has come to a close, this is not the end of my journey. I hope that in the future, I continue to follow the Jewish path formed for me and I hope to remain a proud Jew with an open mind.

I will be attending Rutgers University - Engineering program in the Honors College.

Zachary Sobelman

BCHSJS probably means a lot more to me than a lot of other kids in the school. I met a lot of really kewl dudes and dudettes that I'm sure I will say 'hello' to on snapchat every once in a while, for the years to come. The teachers are great and actually put passion into their teaching. I also took a lot of great classes throughout the years like *South Park*, *Improv*, and *Jews and Jedis*. I didn't learn that much, but it was fun. A lot of my friends left but I made new friends, so it was all good. The trips were so much fun, even the boring ones still gave me lots of positive memories. The Shabbatons especially were a blast, lots of memories coming from those weekends. I'll never forget about the fun I had from BCBSJS and will surely come back to visit in the future.

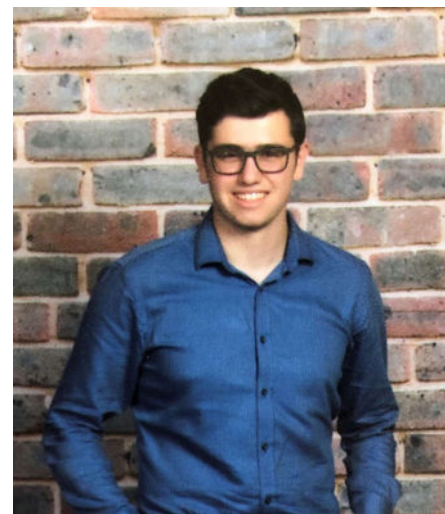
I will be attending Montclair State University in the fall.



Leo Strizhevsky

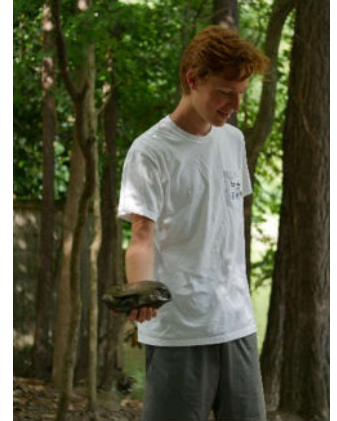
When I first started going to BCBSJS, I was certain I wouldn't like it. Who would ever like more school, especially on Sunday? What I never could have expected was the number of friendships I would make at BCBSJS and the number of fond memories I would have of the place as I begin my transition into college. One of my fondest memories of BCBSJS is just sitting at the most recent Shabbaton and reminiscing with the friends I made throughout my years of BCBSJS. We watched the beautiful sky and talked about our future, our memories together, and just connected once again. These friends I made at BCBSJS are some of my closest friends and I will remember my time at BCBSJS through them and the connections this school allowed me to make.

I will be attending the State University of New York - Binghamton this fall.



Joshua Unger

I find it difficult to attribute just a single memory to sum up my time at BCHSJS. From eighth grade until now, I have changed and grown a lot as a person both mentally and physically. I can say with confidence that I would not be the person I am today without the activities and friendships I have made during my time at BCHSJS. Of those memories, the three most notable would be my time with BCHSJS and NCSY traveling to New Orleans and Charleston. I found that I was able to get closer to my peers through these trips and also open my eyes to other strong and supportive communities across the United States.



In my sophomore year I traveled to New Orleans with BCHSJS. This was my first time in New Orleans and I was excited to see what it would be like. Throughout the next three days, we were introduced to many exciting opportunities to make a difference. We had the chance to do many things: from building a house, to installing light bulbs for disadvantaged homes. We even had the chance to tour the local area and gain an understanding of the Jewish community within New Orleans.

Due to the storms and natural disasters that struck those regions, they were in dire need to be repaired and maintained. When speaking to some of the Habitat for Humanity volunteers, they mentioned the amount of time it took for them to build a house without any help. From foundation to paint, it took months. All three of the times I had an opportunity to help Habitat for Humanity it was emphasized how great of an impact these trips made on the homeowners. It was amazing knowing that I was making a difference in someone else's life.

The most recent trip we took was to Charleston instead of New Orleans. I found that this one was the most memorable. Not only did we participate in Habitat for Humanity, but we also did a roadside cleanup and volunteered at the Ronald McDonald House. Cooking at the Ronald McDonald House was my favorite part of the trip. I enjoy cooking and it was amazing having the opportunity to make a difference doing what you enjoy.

BCHSJS has had a large impact on my life and allowed me to continue and embrace my Jewish heritage. When I attend college, hopefully I will be able to find a community and learning environment as great as BCHSJS to replace what I will have left behind.

I will be attending Worcester Polytechnic Institute in the fall.





BCHSJS

Bergen County High School of Jewish Studies



BCHSJS is a beneficiary agency of the
Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey



BCHSJS is a proud member of J Teen -
Jewish Teen Education & Engagement
Network Professionals