

MEMORIES

**THE BERGEN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL
OF JEWISH STUDIES**

**CLASS OF
2017 - 5777**



May 23, 2017

This booklet contains memories and reflections from our twelve 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. We are sure that you will join us 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

BCHSJS Faculty

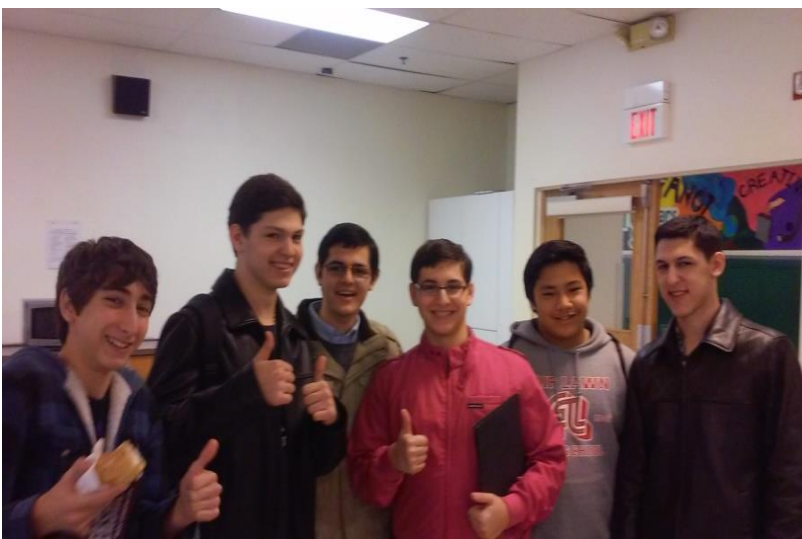
Yardena Barnett, Barnett Goldman, Rabbi Gary Hoffman,
Avital Moss, Rabbi Michael Ross, Rabbi Mark Silk,
Tova Sklar, Dr. Daniel Rynhold, Deborah Stack

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Alexandra Sobelman, Mel Solomon, Connie Stack





Jessica Baer

On any given Sunday you can spot the “Jew Crew” walking down the hall of Moriah. Contrary to popular belief, we did not come to BCHSJS as a group. On one special Shabbaton, we began our friendship. We were lonely eighth graders with no friends but the person we came with. With nowhere to go, we miraculously all went to the game room looking for something to do. It all began at one ping-pong table where two girls met two Stacks. The group eventually added two Bens and with the six of us our Crew was complete. Since then, we have created many inside jokes, pulled many pranks, given many of the teachers grey hairs, spent various holidays and Shabbat dinners together and much more. With two girls, two Stacks and two Bens our group was complete and we began to rule the school.



My favorite memory together is our eleventh grade Shabbaton. Shabbatons are the event that we look forward to the most at BCHSJS. Forty-eight hours together is a long time for the Jew Crew to spend together. Since The Jew Crew was as close as ever (some closer than others) the girls decided to have some fun. The two girls decided to thank the boys for some of the “love” they have showed us. With help from some of the staff, we definitely returned the love.

When I think of BCHSJS the word that comes to mind is family. I could not imagine my life without the Jew Crew. We may fight sometimes, but at the end of the day we always have each other’s backs. Some of us have even gotten boyfriends, girlfriends and prom dates out of it! After we graduate, the Jew Crew will always live on! Only time will tell where the next few years will take us!

I will be attending Quinnipiac University in the fall.

Camryn Bolkin

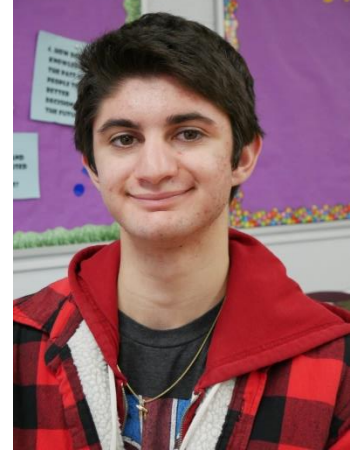
I remember so many great experiences that I had throughout my years at BCHSJS. One thing that I’ve always loved about the school was how we would always have fun activities to do for Jewish holidays. From making crafts, to food, to games, to costumes, BCHSJS never failed to make the holidays exciting and to make everyone feel festive. Overall, the breaks were awesome. Especially the bagels!!!! Fighting to the death for the last bit of cream cheese every Sunday will always be a treasured memory for me. I also remember when I first came to the school in ninth grade and they let me take a course meant for 10th-12th graders, because it taught a topic I was very interested in. It was one of Dr. Dan’s classes—he would quickly become one of my favorite teachers of all time, religious or otherwise—and it was a very serious and intense subject. I was so fascinated by the lessons every single Sunday that I never wanted to sleep in and miss a day. I will always appreciate that I was allowed to take that class so I could pursue an education that mattered to me. On the other hand, I also loved the silly things we’ve done in our classes. I remember once, we held a contest to see who could run across the room in a way that most closely matched a lemur in a video on the SMART Board. I was still laughing about it days later.



I will be attending Columbia University/List College in the fall.

Steven Grossman

It's truly an experience to walk into a classroom where a Monty Python bit about a clearly stuffed parrot is playing and wonder how in the world Dr. Dan is going to possibly relate "It's pinin' for the fields. PINING FOR THE FIELDS?!" to Judaism. Such is part of BCHSJS' charm and unique ability to create interesting classes taught by engaging teachers. I know not many people from my year at my Temple continued onto Hebrew high school but my only regret is not joining BCHSJS earlier. I would have absolutely loved another two or three years with awesome peers and amazing teachers. These past two years have shown me that through simple classroom bonding to special shared experiences on trips or at conferences how important BCHSJS really is.



I will be attending Franklin & Marshall College in the fall.

Eden Hirsch

Similar to how most other students felt, I didn't like BCHSJS at first. Waking up early on Sunday morning was just a pain. After the first semester of classes, I started to realize how different this Hebrew school was. Instead of taking the one traditional class, we had a choice of what we wanted to learn. The friendships I have made with the "Jew Crew", other students, and teachers will last me a lifetime.

My favorite BCHSJS trip was our eighth grade Shabbaton at Camp Ramah. At that time, I hadn't really made any new friends at the school. Little did I know this is where I would meet my best friends for the next four years and beyond. At the end of that Friday night, we had some free time to watch a movie or play games. When the projector wouldn't turn on, Jess and I decided to go see what was happening in the game room. Then we found other eighth graders, David and Walter, and started to talk to them. We played a few competitive games until we had to go to sleep. That was the beginning of a long friendship.



The volunteer trip to New Orleans was another incredible experience I had through BCHSJS. Ten students and two chaperones (Mom and Uncle Schribey) got together at the airport to begin our journey. Our few days there were packed with volunteer activities such as Habitat for Humanity and Green Light New Orleans, and some sightseeing. The time we spent there definitely made us closer as a group. Not only were we humbled to see the destruction Hurricane Katrina had caused, we also got to contribute to lessening the devastation.

I will be attending Binghamton University in the fall.

Melissa Knopf

Over the years at BCHSJS, I had a roller coaster ride of emotions. Between friends not deciding to go to school anymore to having my favorite teachers. Back in eighth grade, I dreaded waking up every Sunday morning and seeing people I barely knew and probably would never see again. Soon enough, I met friends and teachers, teachers that we were allowed to call by first name. It was not a typical high school. As months passed, trip flyers went out and I had a blast: Six Flags, overnights (R-rated movies), Shabbatons, snow tubing...



As I leave BCHSJS, there are a few teachers I will miss the most. Those teachers are Barnett Goldman, Rabbi Hoffman, Avital Moss and Heather Nover. They helped me get through the years. I connected immensely with Heather Nover. I was able to talk to her about problems that I have faced including everyday high school situations.

My favorite class at BCHSJS was the Jewish Volunteer Corp class with Barnett. I loved going to Daughters of Miriam and visiting the senior citizens. Years ago, my great grandmother used to live there, so it was nice visiting there and seeing some workers who knew her.

During my senior year, I decided to help my mother with the traditional bagel break. Turns out when I helped out, I met new people. I also was able to add it as a volunteer item on my resume. My most memorable moment during break was of Rabbi Hoffman. Every Sunday he would always grab a Kit-Kat bar and always payed, even though teachers got free food. When there were no Kit-Kat bars, he would complain.

During my senior year, I took EMT classes. I did have to miss some days and a lot of overnights/Shabbatons. Even though I missed trips I really wanted to go on, I know in the end, I will become something I always wanted to be.

Among the colleges to which I got accepted, I decided to attend Stockton University. I will be attending as a Health Science major (hopefully changing to a biology major), pre- medicine interest and hopefully a minor in behavioral neuroscience.

In the end, I will miss the connections I made with everyone. I will miss seeing Marie every Sunday morning with that big smile on her face telling me to "get to class", and the different teachers who left and moved up in the world. Congratulations to the class of 2017!

I will be attending Stockton University in the fall.



Benjamin Kosiborod

My favorite memories from BCHSJS are definitely the field trips and the Shabbatons. There is so much to say about them! I distinctly remember one time when my friends and I all went to see "Big Fish" on Broadway, from the conversation with Barnett on the way there, to the many prank calls we made on the way back! I also remember going to Six Flags with BCHSJS and getting stuck at the top of the Ferris Wheel right when we were supposed to check in with the teachers. We ended up calling Heather and waving to her from the top of the Ferris Wheel - that counted as our check in! Of course, I fondly remember every Shabbaton that I've attended at BCHSJS. I remember throwing snowballs at Barnett at Surprise Lake Camp, and playing guitar with Ben London as we enjoyed indoor s'more-making together. The prank that the staff played on us during that Shabbaton was certainly memorable! I also clearly remember David Stack buying a Monster energy drink at the first Shabbaton that I had ever attended at the Holiday Inn on Route 4... We couldn't get him to go to sleep until two in the morning! Overnights are great too, especially in the spring when the yearly Israeli delegation comes to New Jersey and I get to meet new people from Israel and spend the night with them. In fact, I am still in contact with some of those Israelis that I've met over the years.



Speaking of Israelis, the Young Leadership program was another highlight of my experience at BCHSJS, especially when we were able to interact with the Israelis. I took advantage of every chance to meet with them, talk with them, pick their brains, and share some laughs. Of course, showing them around New Jersey and New York City was fun and all, but the best part of the leadership program was getting to go to Israel with Barnett. I was astounded and breath-taken by the rich history and absolute beauty of the country that I was proud to call my homeland. And although it had been my third time to Israel, I was nevertheless enriched with the unique experience of being hosted by an Israeli family, and truly getting immersed in the culture of Nahariya and Israel. I will never forget the excursions that we went on and the nights spent just having fun with our Israeli hosts. When I go back to Israel, I will be sure to keep these connections that I have made in mind. I feel that is by far the most advantageous part of the program. I can proudly say that this program will have a lasting impact on my life and is one of the main portions of BCHSJS that I will remember forever.

I will be attending Northeastern University in the fall.



Benjamin London

My fondest memories at BCHSJS were over the course of multiple Shabbatons where I got to know some of my best friends. Even though regretful and exhausted the next morning, we would stay up most of the night joking around, playing music, and even getting to know our teachers a lot better. During these weekends, we all felt a great comradery with both our peers and our teachers who we could connect with and learn from. These weekends were often also a great opportunity for teachers to take the opportunity to impart on us important life lessons that I'm sure will come in handy one day down the line.



Definitely, the most memorable memories I made at BCHSJs was during my participation in the Young Leadership class and getting to participate in the exchange program with Nahariya, Israel. I got to meet some great friends, who years later, I have still stayed in touch with very closely. We, as the Americans, were given the opportunity to show these Israeli high school students their first experiences of the US, as if we, the American students were responsible for representing the first impression that the Israeli delegation would have from their first time spent in our country.

In retrospect, the only thing I regret is not getting more involved sooner. I had spent my first years at BCHSJS not really getting socially involved and I see just what a great five years it has been as I have met my best friends, met some great teachers/mentors and still learned a lot about my Judaism along the way.

I will be attending the College of New Jersey in the fall.



Bennett Rosner

Until sophomore year, BCHSJS was graced by the ever graceful and eternally nervous Dr. Bruce Ettinger. Possibly manic, and undeniably inept with his PC, Dr. Ettinger was technologically illiterate in every sense of the term. Although most students merely acted as bored bystanders to his struggles with CD drives, Ben and I used our relative “infinite knowledge” of PC’s to have a little fun at the doctor’s expense.



As a daily occurrence, Dr. Ettinger left the door to his classroom ajar, allowing us to quietly slip in during break. Cracking our fingers, and quickly getting to work, we took screenshots of the PC’s background and desktop shortcuts. We soon set this illusion of a PC as his new default portrait, and then redirected all of his desktop bookmarks to lead to increasingly disturbing photos of Nicolas Cage, rather than his default google search bar. Finally, to seal the deal, Ben and I set the settings on the mouse to act with extreme sensitivity. All that was left was for Dr. Ettinger to walk through the door with his typical fervor.

Like clockwork, Dr. Ettinger approached his computer soon after break came to a close. Placing his hand on the mouse, Dr. Ettinger’s already uncoordinated fingers expertly fell into our trap. With one succinct movement, the mouse flew off the screen in an instant and his desktop proved useless. One brave, yet blissfully ignorant, student approached the doctor to be of assistance, but the toolbar’s links to Nick Cage only acted as a deeper grave for the doctor’s already dying digital self-confidence. After ten minutes, we came to the doctor’s aid, and reverted his PC to normal, with him none the wiser. Dr. Ettinger retired that year, citing an obligation to his school system, but, who’s to say that the scars of that class and the burnt images of Nicolas Cage on his retina weren’t the reason.

On the other hand, my relationship with BCHSJS has much more to it than the surface layer lambasting on one teacher’s technological skills. I joined this school in my eighth grade year partly of my own volition, and partially because of my brother’s attendance. What I did not realize then was that BCHSJS would act as a gauge of my slow climb to maturity, not only as an individual, but also as a curious and attentive academic. While in my first year of attendance I erred towards fun, but ultimately trivial courses based around pop culture, I soon discovered my love for Rabbi Hoffman’s current events classes. More often than not, these lessons steered dangerously off course and into territory that bared little to no resemblance of what was on the syllabus; however, that was to be expected. Part of the charm of Rabbi Hoffman’s classes was the spontaneity of the discussion, the uncertainty of the topic at hand, and the always eclectic vocabulary of the teacher. The sheer madness of his courses demonstrated to me the hodge-podge of stream of consciousness that debate can be, and wet my tongue for a previously unrealized love of factually based courses. Whether this was unwittingly done or not, Rabbi Hoffman transitioned my young self slowly into recognizing that one can draw enjoyment from anything, whether it be Talmud, Torah, or television by simply being passionate during the learning of it. Through the honing of my skills of questioning and skepticism during those fifty-five minute blocks, I found how to have my own passion for higher learning. Without this, I could never have been the student I am today.



I will be attending Wesleyan University in the fall.

Daniel Siefken

When I came to BCHSJS in eighth grade, I already had a good, small group of friends from my time at the Fair Lawn Jewish Center. I made my class choices based on my friends and I ended up dissatisfied with my first semester experience. In my second semester, I took classes I wanted to take without my friends and I had a much better time. Not only was I able to focus better, but I was learning about subjects that interested me. The next year, most of the friends with whom I had come to BCHSJS had left. Fortunately, I expanded my friend group during my first year. These are the friends that are graduating with me today. My experience at BCHSJS would have been much less enjoyable and much shorter without them.



One of my best memories of BCHSJS was my eighth grade Shabbaton at Camp Ramah. My allergies were killing me, but that didn't stop me from having a great time. From the moment we arrived, there was something to do. We played Frisbee at first. Then I found the basketball court and spent time there every day. However, I spent most of my time with friends either just talking or watching a movie, or playing sports. Although this was my favorite trip, most of my favorite experiences come from overnights and Shabbatons. A couple of these would be when we watched *American Pie* at one of my first overnights and prank calls on the way home from a Broadway show. The trips at BCHSJS are great ways to make unforgettable memories.

Not only did BCHSJS enrich my Jewish knowledge, it has also allowed me to make memories and friendships that will last a lifetime. I could not imagine the last five years of my life without this school. BCHSJS has taught me to be proud of my Judaism. Even though I am graduating this year, it will definitely not be the end of my Jewish education.

I will be attending Stevens Institute of Technology in the fall.



David Stack

I have had so many great memories from BCHSJS. From a trip to New Orleans sophomore year to my first trip to Israel this past winter, BCHSJS has been my way of making friends, travelling, and learning more about Judaism and life/adulthood. One of my greatest memories is sitting with my twin brother and my two best friends at a Shabbaton singing and “jamming” on a guitar in the middle of the night. I know that no matter what, for the rest of my life, BCHSJS will be with me wherever I go. I would also like to thank all of my teachers and the BCHSJS staff for allowing me to have such an incredible experience.

I will be attending Columbia University/List College in the fall.



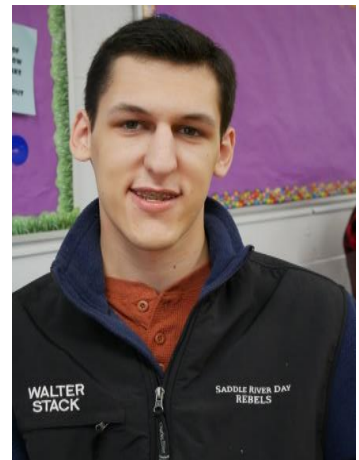
Walter Stack

Over the last five years, BCHSJS has been an awesome experience for me! I have made so many friends, and met so many great people. The education that BCHSJS provides for its students has also been exceptional in my life. Learning from great teachers every weekend has allowed for my curiosity surrounding Judaism to grow, and discussed in many other parts applicable in my life. Having the pleasure of learning from Rabbi Hoffman, Mr. Alweis, Mr. Friedman, Rabbi Ross, and Barnett is a privilege that I am very grateful for. I cannot wait to see them when I visit!

My favorite memory at BCHSJS was the Shabbaton junior year, when I got to room with the Bens and David. Being able to spend so much time with my best friends was truly a blast, and we created memories I will share with them forever. It's hard to put down one single memory though, as every week at BCHSJS has been remarkable. Other times that have a warm place in my heart are going to New Orleans on the Habitat Trip with BCHSJS and NCSY and being part of the leadership class.

As I prepare to go off to college I can look back upon BCHSJS with many fond memories. I can appreciate the passion for Judaism that BCHSJS has instilled in me and for the tools that the school has provided for defending Israel and the Jewish people.

I will be attending NYU in the fall.



Benjamin Unger

Since I attend a public school, my daily interaction with Jewish learning and people is pretty minimal. This is why BCHSJS is such a special place for me since eighth grade.

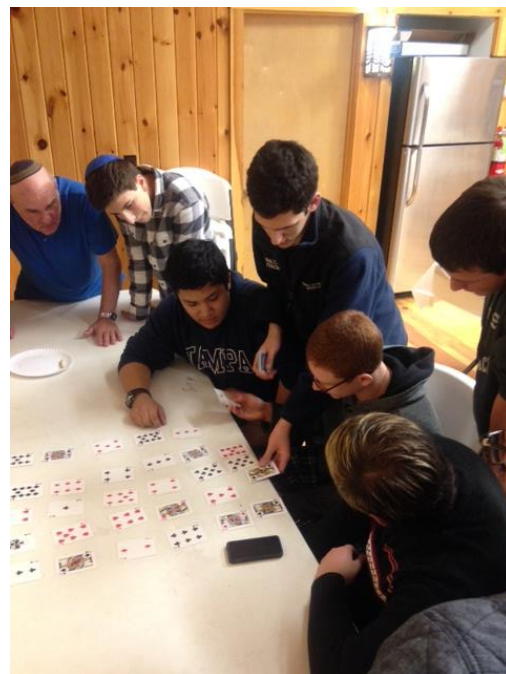
Over the years, when I have come to BCHSJS, I have had the opportunity to be around other Jews in a space where we all can learn more about our history as a people and what it means to be Jewish. I would definitely say that coming to BCHSJS has helped me keep that feeling of connection to the Jewish people that is so important for young people like myself.

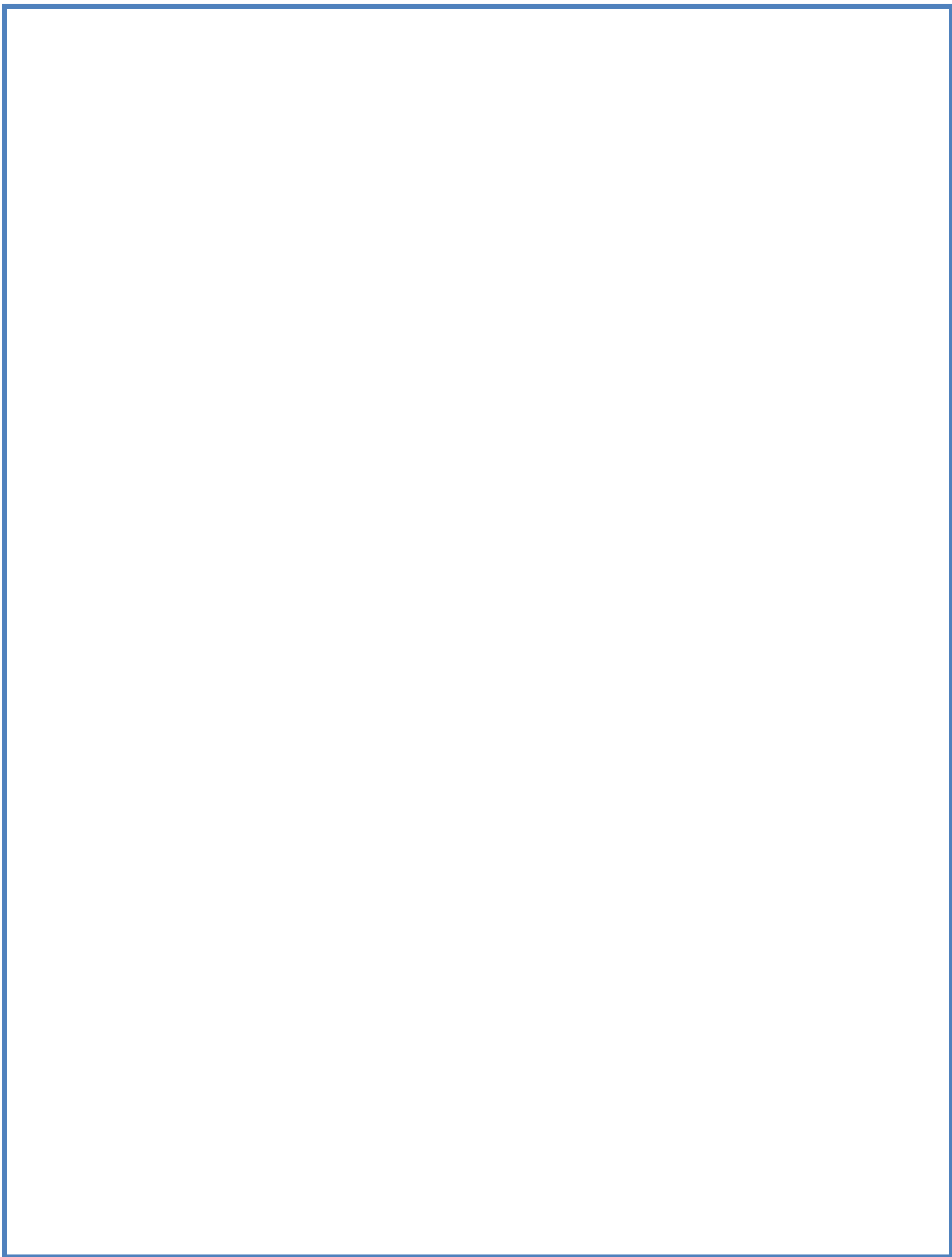
I have taken many interesting classes that have ranged from college credit history classes to analyzing the meaning of the Torah and the philosophy of Jewish law to current events in Israel, to understanding our relations to the other religions of the world. These classes have enabled me to become much more knowledgeable within Judaism and in everyday life.

I have also had the opportunity to participate in many activities ranging from Shabbatons to New York City scavenger hunts. These trips have allowed me to meet many interesting people and make meaningful friendships.

My years at BCHSJS are something that I know I will value for the rest of my life. I am glad that I never stopped coming every year.

I will be attending Rensselaer Polytech Institute in the fall.





BCHSJS

Bergen County High School of Jewish Studies



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