



MY VIEW

Yael Batya Ortega

After Sukkos vacation, we dorm girls returned to Denver not knowing what our school experience would look like. We'd had a great start to this unusual year, but were unsure what the future would bring. We soon found out when the entire dorm needed to quarantine just a week after returning from Sukkos break. I still remember waking up to the insistent ringing of the intercom in my room. "Someone tested positive in the dorm. Now we can't go out for two weeks!" So many thoughts flew through my head, but deep inside I felt that Hashem knows better than anyone why this had to happen, and we need to do our best to take on this challenge. Those first few days were turbulent, with us trying to figure out how we would all be doing Zoom classes simultaneously. But eventually we made it work. This experience taught me two things: First, we should never take "normalcy" for granted. Second, instead of focusing on trivial things, let's try focusing on the joy and good that other people bring to our lives. This was how the other dorm girls and I were able to make the best of the difficult situation we were in.



Yael Batya Ortega of Ontario is a junior at BYD.

## Traditional Jewish Child-Rearing Rabbi Schwab on Rabbi Schwab

There is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to Jewish parenting. *Shlomo Hamelech* teaches us in *Mishlei*: "Educate the child according to his way" (22:6). Note that it does not say "according to the parent's way", but rather according to the child's way, interests, personality and talents. But as Torah Jews, certainly there are Torah sources of foundational principles that exist for parents to utilize as starting points in their holy mission of child-rearing.

We are living in troubled times, when parents are forced to spend much more time with their children in conditions that are not always optimal, neither for the child nor the parent. Many times these conditions create difficulty in making wise choices. Thrice daily we direct our thoughts pleading that Hashem grant us "knowledge, understanding and wisdom". This includes our plea for guidance, to give us the right ideas, and to put the right words in our mouths to guide our children.

But in addition to *tefillah*, I had the great fortune of having had a father who, over three decades ago, in a lecture presented at a Torah Umesorah Convention, formulated



important foundational principles of truly Jewish childrearing. This lecture was printed in *Selected Speeches*, published by CIS (1991), and entitled "Traditional Chinuch in Modern Times". Following are edited excerpts of the first principle "On Being A Friend To Your Children":

First, let us establish the Torah definition of parents and the roles of father and mother in their efforts to raise their children. In *Beraishis* (45:8), Yosef Hatzaddik says "Hashem has made me a father to Pharaoh." Rashi explains the word "father" as "chaver u'patran" "companion and protector". The ideal father and mother are supposed to be

precisely that: friend and protector of their child.

Later on, in *Devarim* (13:7), the Torah says, "If you will be influenced by your friend who is dear to you." Rashi interprets the words "your friend" to mean "your father". Rav Hirsch explains that the Hebrew word *Re'a*, friend, derives from the word *Mireh*, pasture. A friend is one who offers himself like a pasture for another to graze on.

Again, one's father must be his dearest friend.

The first time the word friend appears in the Torah is in connection with Yehudah's comrade Chirah, who is referred to as "his friend the Adulomite." to whom he confided regarding his misdeed with Tamar. The Torah wants to teach us that a friend is a person to whom one would feel free to disclose one's innermost secrets, even if one has committed a sin.

Parents are supposed to be a child's best friend with whom he can discuss everything and anything. The basic need of a

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## Parlor Meeting: January 2021

Rabbi Avraham Dovid Karnowsky, Director of Development

"This year's annual fundraising effort has been reimagined in a way that will enable the school to connect with donors during Covid-19 times," says Development Director, Rabbi Avraham Dovid Karnowsky.

Covid-19 continues to impact the world in many different ways, and everyone is being forced to adjust with the times. Institutions and nonprofits are no exception, and one of the biggest adjustments for us relates to this year's absence of traditional in-person fundraising events.

After careful deliberation, Bais Yaakov of Denver has decided to forego its Annual Parlor Meeting Dinner this year, and is instead arranging personal meetings with donors outdoors, or via Zoom or phone.



Many donors have expressed their appreciation that the school will not be needing to invest in a venue, caterer, and other expenses relating to a conventional yearly fundraiser. This year, every dollar donated goes directly to support education of Jewish young women of tomorrow.

Our donors understand that this year is exceptional to say the least, and the support is more crucial than ever. To express Bais Yaakov's gratitude, each donor of \$1,000 or above will be receiving a hand-delivered gift from the Bais Yaakov students. With the help of Hashem, we look forward to going back to our traditional in-person event in the coming years.

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## ALUMNA PROFILE

## Rebecca Lapin Masinter, Class of 1999

### Creating a Community of Empowered Mothers



BY MRS. ALIZA CHERNITZKY

Every now and then, one encounters a person so utterly unique and multilayered that trying to categorize them into a neat little box is an exercise in futility. When talking with Rebecca Lapin Masinter, a beautiful synthesis of opposites is revealed: soaring idealism and

down-to-earth practicality; sincerity and lightheartedness; devotion to the community and focus on her family.

Rebecca was born in Los Angeles to Rabbi Daniel and Susan Lapin, founders of a local shul and school. "My parents have been and always will be my primary role models," says Rebecca. Towards the end of fifth grade, her parents decided to take a one year sabbatical. With their love of boating they set their sights on Mercer Island, Washington. That one year turned into many more, but without a Bais Yaakov in the area at the time, Rebecca came to Beth Jacob High School of Denver for its annual Shabbaton. "I loved it!" Rebecca reminisces. The decision was made, and Rebecca joined BYD.

"I learned so much throughout my high school years and to this day I use what I learned. Hardly a week goes by without my remembering Mrs. Schwab's Navi class and Rabbi Schwab's Dinim and Parsha classes."

But it wasn't just the classes that made an impression on Rebecca. "All of the people that I was surrounded by were people who pulled me up and kept me growing. Both in school and in the dorm I was surrounded by role models. It wasn't just an institution, it was a home."

Not only was the staff a positive influence, but so were the girls. For example, "The whole Shabbos afternoon was spent on *chessed!*"

After her graduation, Rebecca went to seminary in Baltimore, and earned her Bachelors of Science. "Thanks to Mrs. Melamed, I graduated high school with so many credits that I was able to focus on the science classes that I needed to complete my degree."

Rebecca always knew that her dream was to stay home

with her children. "My education at Bais Yaakov supported that goal," says Rebecca. As her family grew she took jobs that could be done with minimal distraction from her home life. She tutored for the SATs, and ACTs, and currently chairs the math department for a local Baltimore school, all while homeschooling her six children. Many people began requesting Rebecca to give parenting classes. That is when the idea for Toras Imecha was born.

"Toras Imecha started out as a Whatsapp group where I would share short weekly Divrei Torah based on the Parsha or the Yom Tov for mothers. Perhaps I couldn't commit to giving hour long parenting classes. But surely I could give 4-5 minute ones!" There are currently around 300 members between two groups, and Toras Imecha is now a podcast and has its own website, [Torasimecha.com](http://Torasimecha.com), which was designed by one of Rebecca's sons.

"Today there is less privacy and more connectivity, and more oversharing. Yet women, and particularly mothers, are lonelier than before. I wanted to create a wholesome and positive platform for mothers to share their wisdom and learn from others."

Mothering can be a thankless job, with no salary nor recognition, which makes it challenging to stay motivated and focused. "You can't do anything well without a real sense of the importance of your work. I think we've come to a point where people are not fully aware of the importance of the role of a Jewish mother. That is a reality that I would like to challenge." Rebecca speaks about the false perception that stay at home moms are anything but intelligent. "Being a mother takes so much brain power! You have to know medicine, pedagogy, psychology and multiple other disciplines to properly parent each individual child."

Part of Beth Jacob High School's education is about the centrality of the woman in the home. "I don't think that it is a coincidence that many of my listeners are BYD alumnae" observes Rebecca. One thing is certain- the strengthening of Jewish mothers is key to the strengthening of the Jewish people. And Toras Imecha is definitely a step in the right direction to achieving that goal.

*Mrs. Aliza Chernitzky is the Educational Assistant at Beth Jacob High School.*

child is a sense of total confidence and security; to be held by the father's hands or in the mother's arms. A child has a desire to be loved, encouraged and appreciated. For this reason a parent has to be a "companion" and a "protector". In short, the child's closest and most intimate confidant and advocate.

My father was my best friend. How did he do it? I believe two factors were paramount: Firstly, we were made to feel safe and secure in our home. There was no question as to who was in charge. The chain of command was clear. My father was King, my mother was Queen, and we children were the fortunate subjects of these most benevolent masters. With a strong European discipline as the unspoken and seldom-demonstrated undercurrent, there existed, simultaneously, an open, happy and fun atmosphere, with encouraging and demonstrative hugs, jokes and lots of laughter.

We especially felt this at our Shabbos and Yom Tov tables, when we were treated to culinary delights prepared by my mother, with father leading robust singing of beautiful Shabbos *zemiros*. Those were interspersed with both cheerful and serious stories with which my father would regale us, bringing to life the remarkable personalities and the saintly and holy people he encountered which inspired us for greatness and *yiras shamayim*.

My parents were not the helicopter type. We felt free to express ourselves, encouraged to show our talents, getting them to laugh while we entertained, always

maintaining the utmost respect for them. This made us feel relaxed and to feel that we were living in a very secure structure, full of love.

Secondly: Something extremely important to make us listen even more: My father told us how to deal with sin. Sin, an *aveira*, is something very destructive to our lives, he would teach, but is not to be worn as an albatross around our necks; rather something to face head on. If a person committed an *aveira*, he was not to ignore it, but confront it; not to blame others, but "face the music" meaning "listen to the music in your head, your conscience, your shame, your bad feeling, sadness and regret, and admit it immediately. Make up your mind that you won't do it again". Essentially, do *teshuvah* and do it right away. And then, move on. Don't let it get you down forever because, "*Ein tzaddik baaretz asher yaaseh tov v'lo yecheta*"-There is no righteous person in the world that does good and doesn't sin. After that, we were able to be free again, to resume our happy lives in our home.

The result of the above was that there was no place we felt more comfortable, more secure, more happy than in our home, being provided with whatever we needed materially, psychologically and emotionally. With our best friends, our parents, as our protectors, our companions, Yiddishkeit was never a burden. It was a great state of being and happiness. Why would we want to be any other place?

*Rabbi Myer Schwab is the founding dean of Beth Jacob High School of Denver.*

## In Memorium

Mrs. Bernice Zussman, OBM



Beth Jacob High School joins the Denver Jewish community in mourning the passing of Mrs. Bernice Zussman, OBM. Mrs. Zussman, together with her wonderful husband, Ben A"H, had an unparalleled impact on the Denver Jewish community. The Zussmans were at the helm of the founding of many Denver Torah institutions. The organizational meetings for the founding of Beth Jacob High School and The Denver Community Kollel were held around their dining room table. Their daughter, Sivia, was a member of the very first graduating class of Bais Yaakov. Since then, granddaughters and great-granddaughters have graduated from the school.

The Zussmans were people with unusually open hearts. They ran away from honor, never wanting anything in return for their chessed.

Mrs. Zussman's passing is a great loss to the Denver community. We are forever indebted to her for her role in ensuring a thriving Torah community in Denver.

## Batya

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## ADMINISTRATION Q &amp; A

## “Students [are] Thriving in the New Normal”

Bais Yaakov’s Judaic and General Studies Principals on Education During Covid-19

BY HADASSAH ROSSKAMM

**Q:** The world is a different place than it was less than a year ago, but BYD is still open and classes are in session. What kind of behind-the-scenes work went on to make that happen?

**Mrs. Schwab:** There was excellent communication between the school and the health authorities. We made changes to classroom set ups so that we could have social distancing. We also stocked up on masks and hand sanitizers, etc. A lot of work went into planning how to teach using a hybrid model, with some students in class and others learning remotely. We also made an investment in things that we later found out were not effective, such as sneeze guards and gloves.

**Mrs. Melamed:** During the summer we had several discussions to plan for technological and safety issues. We installed Plexiglas panels, new technology for math, and rented a tent to set up in the dorm for outdoor classes when possible. We had Chromebooks set up to use for Zoom. We tried to create a lighter curriculum, so that the students can get out of school earlier most of the days. We also got additional staff, and provided extra tutoring.

**Q:** How is this year different from other years?

**Mrs. Schwab:** To rephrase the question, I would say, How is this year *similar* to others? There are many difficulties that we have to struggle with, such as hearing people behind their masks and the many-frequent absences. It was hard to get to know the new students, because we couldn’t see their facial expressions. It is also harder to find extracurricular activities that can be done safely. On the other hand, I see that the students have a much stronger thirst for learning this year, more than they have had in other years.

**Mrs. Melamed:** Well, we’ve had much more substituting. We are also trying to make things easier for the students with all the issues relating to substitutes, quarantine, and technology. We are supporting the teachers by being more understanding, and adjusting expectations from the students this year.



**Q:** How is it the same?

**Mrs. Schwab:** We still try to stick to the curriculum as much as we are able. We still have very devoted teachers and lovely girls.

**Mrs. Melamed:** We are still giving over the high quality education to our students as we have in the past. The warmth of the staff towards the students is definitely there, and everyone is thinking of ways to make things be as normal as possible for our students. The focus, goals, and general atmosphere are the same.

**Q:** What kinds of challenges does teaching during this time present, and how have you adapted?

**Mrs. Schwab:** The students and teachers having difficulty hearing each other, and people constantly having to go remote. But we do it – we do what needs to be done. And we pray that it should end.

**Mrs. Melamed:** It is very challenging to teach students on Zoom. Also, getting materials to students who are learning remotely can present a big challenge. Technology has also been a big issue, with it freezing up or not working consistently. Finding substitute teachers or combining classes is a daily challenge. To me, the biggest challenge is not being able to connect with the students in a warm way as in the past. Students also need a high quality feeling of belonging and fun, which has been more challenging to provide.

**Q:** What gives you encouragement during this time?

**Mrs. Schwab:** Knowing that Hashem has a plan – even when we don’t understand. Coming to school and seeing how eager my students are to learn gives me a lot of *chizuk*.

**Mrs. Melamed:** The girls. They’re still positive, smiling, and upbeat, even though they’re struggling to keep up. That gives me the biggest *chizuk*. Also, I know that there are schools that have been doing Zoom for months, so I’m grateful that we are able to be in-person. Keeping things as normal as we can is comforting. It is very encouraging to see the students thriving in the new normal. Students are working hard to develop themselves, so that’s very inspiring.

**Q:** What message would you send to teachers/parents/students?

**Mrs. Schwab:** To the teachers: I appreciate the heroic efforts you make to keep the school going despite the challenges of having your own home quarantining, and the difficulties of teaching through a mask. To the parents: Please realize how much effort and work go into keeping the school going despite all the odds. To the girls: Continue to be resilient. We, Am Yisrael, overcame many challenges in the past, and we’ll overcome this one too. And I wish them all that they should be safe.

**Mrs. Melamed:** My general message is that this is a very special school, and the specialness of the school is the wonderful staff – they are so caring and warm. The students are exceptional in their work and *middos*. My message is to keep on working on yourselves and developing yourselves, and keep positive. Hashem is holding our hands. The educational process still continues. Parents, be proud of your daughters! They have risen to this challenge in a beautiful way. I am very proud of the students and how they have grown through this challenge. Hashem has given them extra strength to continue being the amazing Bais Yaakov girls that they are. *Chazak V’Amatz!*

*Hadassah Roskamm of Denver, CO is a senior at Beth Jacob High School.*

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## RECIPE CORNER

# Marvelous Matbucha

BY DEENA SANDOCK ABRAHAM



Dips have been a popular part of Shabbos day seudos for a while now. On my rare trips to the east coast, I am amazed at the selection of dips that are available. It can feel overwhelming to decide which dips to purchase. When I am at home in Indiana, the only dip that I can buy ready-made with regularity is chummus. Not that there is anything wrong with chummus, but the options offered in an average sized store in Brooklyn leave me a tiny bit envious at times.

About a year ago, my son offered to make dips when home for Shabbos from his out-of-state yeshiva. This was quite exciting for me, because despite knowing about the popularity of dips I rarely make them. My son's favorite offering is jalapeno dip. People say it's good, but I've never been enticed to taste it. There are a

lot of chopped jalapeno peppers involved and also lots of chopped garlic. But the main ingredient is mayonnaise. In fact, mayonnaise seems to be the main ingredient in all of the dips that my son makes. Don't get me wrong, I appreciate my son's culinary efforts, and his dips are very popular with his siblings. But when I see the copious amounts of mayo being put into the bowl, I lose most of my desire to eat the finished product.

So, I've been on a quest to find recipes for dips that do not contain mayonnaise. Happily, I found that they do exist, as this recipe for matbucha can attest.

I used to think that matbucha could only be made during the summer when tomatoes are deep red, ripe, and most flavorful, but this recipe can be made using canned tomatoes. That allows a certain ease that might be appealing to cooks even during the summer as it makes the recipe considerably simpler.

When I first prepared this recipe, I was a bit intimidated with roasting the peppers to char the skin, but found that it wasn't difficult at

all. This recipe does take a long time to cook. The long simmering time allows for the full amount of flavors from the ingredients to really be highlighted in the matbucha.

**MATBUCHA**

1 large red bell pepper  
1 large green bell pepper  
2 medium jalapeno peppers  
6 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil, divided  
5-7 cloves garlic, sliced  
3 (28 oz.) cans diced tomatoes (or 5 lbs. ripe tomatoes, diced)  
1 Tbsp. kosher salt  
2-3 tsp. sugar  
1 tsp. sweet paprika

Place the whole peppers on a foil lined baking sheet and roast at 425 degrees until their skins are charred. Remove from the oven and cool. Remove the skins and seeds. Chop the bell peppers and dice the jalapeno peppers. Set aside. Heat four table-



spoons of the oil in a large pot. Cook the garlic for about five minutes, making sure to not allow it to brown. Stir in the tomatoes and the juices from the cans, along with the peppers, salt, and sugar. Bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 1½ hours, stirring every ten minutes. Stir in the remaining oil and the paprika. Continue to cook for at least another hour, stirring often.

*Deena Sandock Abraham is a 1990 BYD graduate.*

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## Goldie Lieberman Berman

Class of '81



that I should finish the college education I had discontinued over 30 years earlier. I am proud to say that even as a mother and grandmother of a large family, I did finish my education and now have permanent Florida State teaching certification.

Since my graduation from Bais Yaakov, I have continuously been involved in education. I received a teaching certificate from Machon Devorah Seminary and taught for many years, both in the classroom and in resource settings. In 2010, I was asked to start a new resource program for Toras Emes Academy in North Miami Beach, Florida that would assist struggling students. I began the ACE Program with seven students and currently, in our school of over five-hundred children, we are servicing about seventy of them. As my responsibilities grew, I felt

During my years in Bais Yaakov, I was encouraged by the administration to tutor students in elementary school. On my graduation day, Rabbi Lauer said to me, "Don't let the hardships of being an educator get in the way of doing what you love to do and are good at." This ideology is one that I tried handing down to my children as well, for the more you overcome in order to succeed, the more fulfilling the mission. Thank you Bais Yaakov for giving me the foundation and fortitude to help make a difference.

*Goldie Berman lives in Hollywood, Florida.*

## FROM THE DESK OF MRS. BRURIA SCHWAB

## Safe and Sane?



learned from the pandemic. It was thought that we were at the end of this hard period and too much had already been written about it, so we didn't print that article.

Here we are standing more than half a year later and no end is in sight. So, I'm returning to the topic that currently occupies the thoughts of all of us human beings.

This pandemic is no laughing matter. We are stressed and worried. So, let me say a few words with a "wink", in an attempt to relax a little and lighten the mood. You probably have noticed that at the start of this situation jokes abounded, but no longer do people joke as much.

You can tell that this is a serious illness. A name was added to Corona, just like to a seriously ill person. It's now called, "Covid-19".

Unlike last year when I described

positive lessons, such as family togetherness, realizing Who is in control, limiting wasteful affairs, etc., now I'd like to list some negative habits and characteristics that we have acquired:

Overeating

Anxiety

Depression

Boredom

Loneliness

No hugs or kisses

Sloppy grooming (What's the point of applying makeup if it all ends up on the mask anyway?)

Impatience

Mumbled speech

Too much technology

Talking to yourself in public (behind your mask).

Too much eating (Oops-I said that already, but it helps to cope with some of the other items on the list!)

A lovely lady wished me, "Stay safe and sane!" Are those mutually exclusive? An oxymoron?

There is one very positive tendency I'm observing: Students are actually eager to learn, and for me that is one big shining light in these challenging times.

*Mrs. Schwab is the religious studies principal of Beth Jacob High School.*