

# ECC NEWS

## SEPTEMBER 2010

### 22 Elul 5770—22 Tishre 5771

#### IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER...



<i>Friday, September 3</i>	<i>Barbara &amp; Tobe's class lead Shabbat</i>
<i>Monday, September 6</i>	<i>Labor Day / <u>NO SCHOOL</u></i>
<i>Wednesday, September 8</i>	<i>Erev Rosh Hashanah, Dismissal 12:45pm</i>
<i>Thursday, September 9</i>	<i>Rosh Hashanah Day 1 /<u>NO SCHOOL</u></i>
<i>Friday, September 10</i>	<i>Rosh Hashanah Day 2 /<u>NO SCHOOL</u></i>
<i>Friday, September 17</i>	<i>Katy &amp; Mor's class lead Shabbat</i>
<i>Friday, September 17</i>	<i>Erev Yom Kippur, Dismissal 12:45pm</i>
<i>Thursday, September 23</i>	<i>Sukkot Day 1/<u>NO SCHOOL</u></i>
<i>Friday, September 24</i>	<i>Sukkot Day 2/<u>NO SCHOOL</u></i>
<i>Tuesday, September 28</i>	<i>Pizza in the Hut Buddy Program (Pre-K/K/4th, 6th &amp; 7th grade) 6:15pm in Sukkah</i>
<i>Thursday, September 30</i>	<i>Shemini Atzeret/<u>NO SCHOOL</u></i>
<i>Friday, October 1</i>	<i>Simchat Torah/<u>NO SCHOOL</u></i>

## A Note from Sheryl...

Dear Parents,

In the coming weeks of school you and your child will experience the wonderful sights, sounds and sweet aromas of the children preparing for Rosh Hashanah. It is completely natural to teach children when the High Holidays on our Jewish calendar coincide with the fresh start of a new school year. What better learning opportunities are afforded our ECC teachers than to celebrate the same feelings that the children experience by a brand new beginning in school?

Our teachers use the “Understanding by Design” curriculum writing process. Our ECC Teachers work together as the architects of the blueprints. The blueprint emerges through a process of trying out ideas and listening to the knowledge and needs of the children. Our teachers begin by having clear goals for the **Enduring Learning** results of each unit of study prior to designing the activities and tasks to enhance the learning process. There is always assessment evidence which is recorded either by observation through play, children’s work or verbal communication. This is why you will be receiving many photos of your child as they act out what they are absorbing.

The **enduring learning** for Rosh Hashanah is *self-examination*. The activities evolve from looking in the mirror and creating self-portraits, asking the children to describe their images, measuring how tall you are by the number of apples, graphing eye color, and learning about feelings. Teachers delve deeper – what do you hope for, what do you dream, what is easy for you and what is hard for you? This flows forward to family, friendships, teachers and our community. Class rules are discussed and considered as “commandments” and respect for the entire group is established.

It looks like play – and it is play -play for a definite purpose; to challenge, to question, to take risks, to problem solve and to view things in a new light.

I wish you all a Shana Tova and the best of health and happiness for the New Year.

Sheryl

## *Jewish Studies...*

It seems that we've just returned to school, and the [Jewish holidays](#) are upon us. [Rosh Hashanah](#) is the perfect holiday for the beginning of the school year. Celebrating the [Jewish New Year](#) gives us an excellent Jewish framework in which to study beginnings, to look at how much we've grown, and to reflect on where we've been and where we'll be going together this year.

On Rosh Hashanah, we go to synagogue and hear the shofar being sounded. The call of the shofar serves to wake us up, directs us to pay attention to the kind of person we are so as to become a better person in the year ahead. Although we do lots of grown-up, serious, prayerful things on Rosh Hashanah, don't neglect to share the fun, childlike aspects of the holiday with your child. Dip apple slices in honey, take a nature walk together and observe how the world is changing, look at baby pictures and let your child tell you how much he/she has changed!

Now is a good time to start a [Jewish Holiday photo](#) album. Make a page for each holiday. Take a picture of your child and/or family at each holiday, and add it to the page - an easy way to see how much you've all grown from year to year! Teach your child about sharing good wishes for the New Year by letting him/her help make the cards. You can make something together on the computer, or photocopy your child's drawing to use as your card. And, of course, let your child drop all the cards in the mailbox!

*Taken from Jewish Every Day with permission*

L' Shanah Tovah Tikatayvu

Alyse Eisenberg

Jewish Studies Coordinator

*A note from the ECC Counselor...*

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

I want to introduce myself to those of you that don't know me and say how excited I am to be back for those of you who I had the privilege of working with in the past. I want to remind you of the counseling services available at Ann and Nate Levine Academy through a partnership between Jewish Family Services and the Levine Academy. My name is Andy Blum and I am the counselor for ECC and Lower School. I am looking forward to working closely with you, the children and the teachers. Some of the services I provide are:

- Assess the behavior of children who have been referred, by observing classrooms, recess and lunch, and then make recommendations.
- Assist teachers, parents and administrators with academic, behavioral, social/emotional or family issues.
- Provide crisis intervention and limited individual counseling to students.
- Provide group intervention when appropriate on topics such as peer relationships, problem solving, and conflict resolution.
- Offer consultation to parents.
- Provide Second Step or a similar program- which emphasizes feelings, problem solving and anger management.

My purpose is to be a resource for you, the parents and caregivers, as well as the teachers and students at the Ann and Nate Levine Academy. When indicated, referrals will be made to community agencies, private mental health professionals, and or/ Rabbis for additional assistance.

Faculty or parents may refer students, or students may request to see the counselor themselves. In order to facilitate the referral process, I am at ext:144 and I have a box outside my door (Room 30) please feel free to call or leave me a note at any time. Please know that I will keep personal information about the students in the strictest confidence.

I am so excited to work with all of you! I welcome any questions or comments you may have. Please feel free to speak with me, or leave a message in my staff mailbox.

Sincerely,

Andrea Blum, LCSW  
ECC- Lower School Counselor

## ***MEET OUR NEW LIBRARIAN...***

I am very excited to be here at Levine Academy ECC Library! It is a wonderful school with wonderful children and teachers. It has many advantages that other ECC's only hope for. I love working with children and see them grow and develop into caring, responsible adults who will help form the next generation.

As a young child I remember avoiding reading. A really great and determined librarian sparked in me a love for reading and literature. By the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, I wanted to become a librarian. Before attending college, I worked at a preschool and chose to go to college to become a kindergarten teacher instead. Although I certified to teach Early Childhood and Kindergarten, I taught first grade - which I loved. When the city's children's librarian position became vacant, I had to ask about the position – and the director hired me and started sending me to library school. I served five years as the Children's Librarian under her mentoring while working on a library degree from UT in Austin. When I married, my husband, John, and I moved to the San Antonio area. Altogether, I worked eight years in public libraries and nine years as a school librarian. Three years ago my family moved to Plano from the San Antonio area due to my husband's job transfer. We have only one precious daughter named Jennifer who is attending college to become an English teacher. I enjoy cooking, gardening, arts and crafts, storytelling, books, and most of all - working with children. My favorites color is green. My favorite food is chocolate-but I try not to eat much of it for good reasons.

Please stop by the ECC Library. I look forward to meeting you as the year progresses.

Violet Jasper

ECC Librarian

## ***Meet our P.E. Teacher...***

Hi, my name is Rhonda Adams and I love Levine Academy! I am the owner of PowerKids Sports & Fitness and I have taught sports, gymnastics & physical education at Levine for 11 years. My passion is centered around teaching children all of the wonderful things their bodies can do and challenging them to be the best they can be!

I have a husband named Cory and we have a daughter, Camryn who just started Kindergarten and a son, Jax who is 16 months. I love to spend time with my family!! I love to swim, work in the yard, do gymnastics and water ski!

I look forward to seeing and teaching many of the parents and children I have known throughout my years here as I look forward to meeting the many new parents and students at Levine.

Coach Rhonda

# Party Planning Reminder

The month of September is full of Jewish holidays. Please be respectful of these special days and refrain from planning parties for your children on these dates. See next page.

Erev Rosh Hashanah	Wednesday, September 8
Rosh Hashanah	Thursday, September 9/ Day 1 Friday, September 10/ Day 2
Erev Yom Kippur	Friday, September 17
Yom Kippur	Saturday, September 18
Sukkot	Thursday, September 23 /Day 1 Friday, September 24/Day 2
Shemini Atzeret	Thursday, September 22
Simchat Torah	Friday, September 23

# SHABBAT SHALOM

## ECC WISH LIST...

We are looking for small tricycles for our 2 year old playground and regular tricycles for our Hillcrest playground.

If you have one or more that is gently used and you would like to donate, please bring it to the ECC office and we will provide you with a letter for your taxes.

Sincere thanks as always.

## Back-To-School Anxiety

By Michelle Lurie, Psy.D.

**What is Back-to-School Anxiety?** The prospect of returning to school after the summer break is both exciting and anxiety provoking for our children. Even for those children who have attended camp, returning to the classroom setting, having a new teacher, and being surrounded by some unfamiliar faces can create anything from “butterflies in the tummy” to downright panic. Children may tell their parents that they feel nauseous or have a headache, or may exaggerate minor physical complaints as an excuse not to go to school. Others may crumble to the floor crying “don’t leave me here!” Whether this is your child’s first school experience or a new phase, these early morning meltdowns are draining for everyone involved. However, allowing your child to stay home only worsens the symptoms over time, and getting your child back into school as quickly as possible is important. It is essential to develop a good “drop off routine.” Children thrive on the predictability of rituals and routines. Just as a good bedtime ritual helps you to enforce parting until morning, a consistent drop-off routine will help you part for a day at preschool. Both parents and teachers can work together to help your child make this transition.

### What can you do to help your child?

- Let your child know that he or she is not alone and that other children have similar experiences. Did you have any separation fears as a child? Share with your child how you were able to overcome these fears.
- Remove uncertainty by describing the specifics of what your child might expect at school.
- Have your child visit the new classroom and meet with the teacher ahead of time.
- If possible, schedule play dates with new classmates ahead of time or early in the school year.
- Explain that each day will be easier and the anxiety will decrease with time and familiarity.
- The week before school starts, get your child back into a predictable routine of bedtimes and mealtimes that are consistent with the school routine.
- Allow your child to take an appropriate “transitional object” such as a small and unobtrusive soft toy to school for comfort, security, and familiarity. A family photo in his or her cubby might do the trick.
- Your “drop off” routine could be as simple as helping your child hang up his coat, reading a book in the reading corner, and then waving goodbye at the door. Or you could decide to watch your child color a picture and take it with you when you depart. Have realistic expectations: a drop-off routine will not always keep your child from crying, especially at first. Some children cry for days before they adjust and they may need the teacher’s reassuring arms to help when you leave.
- Remain calm and matter of fact when saying goodbye to your child.
- Don’t hover and linger in the classroom and avoid “check-in visits” when your child is in school.

Helping children with separation is a large part of a preschool teacher’s job. Often the teacher is more effective at calming down your child after the dreaded goodbye has passed. But ask her to let you know if she is consistently unable to calm your child.

### What can the teacher do to help your child?

- Encourage the parent to bring the child to school a little early in the morning to have time to adapt and separate from the parent.
- Have an organized and predictable routine.
- Prepare the child in advance for what to expect and remove surprises and unknowns.
- Try and reduce anxiety-provoking experiences in the classroom and excessive expectations.

Create a warm and accepting classroom environment by modeling acceptance and tolerance and preventing teasing.

Separation fears are usually outgrown by age 5 or 6. Therefore, if your child exhibits a developmentally inappropriate and excessive anxiety concerning separation from home or from loved ones, he or she may be experiencing a Separation Anxiety Disorder. This might be characterized by excessive distress when separation from home or loved ones occurs or is anticipated, excessive worry about losing, or about possible harm to loved ones, persistent reluctance or refusal to go to sleep without being near a loved one, repeated nightmares involving the theme of separation, and repeated complaints of physical symptoms when separation from loved ones occurs or is anticipated. Separation Anxiety Disorder usually begins between the ages of 7 and 11. If your child’s separation fears persist, it is important to seek consultation with a qualified mental health professional.