

## **Lerner Jewish Community Day School 2010 -2011 Board of Directors Bios**

### **Rachel Bearman – President**

We first came to The Lerner School in 2005 when our oldest daughter, Noa, entered Kindergarten. Since that time both Nathan and I have been active volunteers at the school. I joined the board in 2007 as co-chair of the Annual Campaign with my husband Nathan.

That experience was a wonderful opportunity for us to become more engaged and for us to reach out to Lerner families and the larger community, sharing our passion for the Day School. Over time, our commitment to the Lerner School has only grown. Now, our middle son, Dov, and our youngest, Lev, are both at the day school. I was honored to be asked to be the next President of the Lerner School. To the position I bring both a dedication to our school and community and experience as a professional and volunteer as both a member and leader of non-profit boards. I look forward to working with the board, the Lerner family and the larger community to continue to grow and strengthen our school.

### **Julie Harris – Past President**

After serving two years as Board President and previously as Vice President and PAC Co-Chair, I will enjoy remaining on the Lerner Board as Past-President. This is our family's 6<sup>th</sup> year at Lerner. Etan and I will have two children in the school next year; Jayden, a rising second grader, and Noam a rising fourth grader. I am a proud member of the challah club, and co-chair of the Care for the Mosaic Wall Committee. My husband, Etan works at The Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions at Duke.

### **Jeff Spinner-Halev – Vice-President**

My family and I moved to Chapel Hill nearly four years ago, when we enrolled our three children at Lerner. We now have two Lerner graduates, while Shoshana is a rising fourth grader at Lerner. My wife Elyza is often found at the school, taking pictures, assisting in a classroom, organizing a fieldtrip, or helping out in other ways. I have just finished my third year on the Board, one year as chair of the Policy committee, and two years as Secretary. During the day I teach at UNC, where I am a Professor of Political Science with a specialty in political theory. We are family with many Israel connections, and we lived in Jerusalem for a year in 2003-4. With the expansion of the school, and the new JCC, this is an exciting time to be at Lerner, and I'm happy to be able to help the school as it enters this new stage of growth.

### **Tal Lewin-Wittle – Vice President - Fundraising**

In 2010-11, I will be in my second year as Vice President-Fundraising. Prior to that I also served on the Board as Policy Chair. I have also co-chaired the Auction Committee for the past two years and served as classroom parent. Also, most Fridays you will find me at school baking with the Challah Club. All these activities have been rewarding ways to contribute to our school's success. My husband Eric and I have greatly enjoyed being a part of the Lerner community these past 5 years. Next year our eldest daughter Liora will enter the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and younger sister

Ilana will be a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader. As Vice President, I will continue to be an active part of helping the Lerner School strengthen and grow.

### **Chip Bailin - Treasurer**

Education: BA- Washington University, MHA- Duke University, JD-NCCU

Work: I've worked in the health care industry for almost 30 years in a variety of administrative and financial positions. Currently I'm serving as the Financial Director for the Department of Community and Family Medicine in the Duke School of Medicine

Family: Robin and I arrived in NC 28 years ago so I could attend graduate school at Duke and we never left. We've raised three children in Chapel Hill. My oldest daughter, Rori is a lawyer working in Washington, DC. My other daughter, Jessica is a television producer living in Knoxville, TN and my youngest is Josh who is a senior at Penn State. My wife, Robin, manages the Chapel Hill Senior Center and is active among the senior community. Since its inception we have been supporters of the Day school even though we never had the opportunity to send any of our children. I see the school as an entity that can engage the entire Jewish community regardless of synagogue affiliation or Jewish background. As a non-parent board member, I enjoy working on ways to expand support for the school from across the broader Jewish community.

### **Anne Marie Schneider - Secretary**

My husband Rob and I moved to Durham in 1991. We began at Lerner when my now Lerner graduate was a 3 year old in preschool. We started here anticipating attending our neighborhood public school. After being here and seeing the joy, love of learning and teachers we were here to stay. I have a current 6<sup>th</sup> grader and Lerner grad Alexandra, and current 4<sup>th</sup> grader Julianne. I am returning to the board for this year as secretary. I have served as PAC co-chair, fundraising chair for 2 years and VP in charge of fundraising for 2 years, have run the auction for 2 years and the 5K since its start 4 years ago. Besides my involvement at Lerner I work full time as the office manager and hand therapist at Balanced Physical Therapy, which my husband co-owns.

### **Allison Eisner - Development Co-Chair**

In the summer of 2005, I relocated from New York City to Durham with my husband Douglas and two children. We came to Durham so Douglas could get his MBA at Duke. He is now COO of Grassroots Biotechnology, an agricultural biotechnology startup located in downtown Durham. Liana, 7, is in first grade at Lerner and Jake, 5, is in the Daggim preschool class. They both enjoy Lerner tremendously and have enthusiastically embraced their Jewish identity and heritage as a result of their experience at the school. I enjoy volunteering in the classroom regularly as well as partaking in the various PAC volunteer opportunities. Prior to having children, I worked in advertising and market research in New York for 13 years.

### **Sharon Halperin - Development Co-Chair**

Sharon moved to Chapel Hill in 1983 from Boston. She and her husband raised 3 daughters here. She graduated from Quinnipiac University with a degree in Physical Therapy and from Columbia University with an MPH in Health Education. Sharon sees private physical therapy patients, does consulting work for several local non profits and is actively involved with the

Multiple Sclerosis Society and UNC Hospice. She is currently enrolled in a teaching certificate program for Holocaust Education.

### **Shashi Rao - Facilities Chair**

I was born and brought up in the Indian city of Mumbai, India and travelled a lot while growing up within India. My wife, Shayela, also comes from the city of Mumbai. We come from families with many sisters, brothers, uncles and aunts. We both moved here for higher education in the mid 1980's and continued to stay here having obtained jobs in our fields. I started my career after an education at the Indian Institute of Technology at West Bengal, India with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. I worked for a year in Bangalore with my father in his Machine Shop manufacturing electrical switchgear components with the primary responsibility of a Production Engineer. A year later, I proceeded to pursue my higher education in Industrial Engineering & Operations Research from Virginia Tech [located at Blacksburg, VA, USA]. I entered the workforce in the United States almost 6 months before I graduated with a local office of Carrier Air-conditioning. I started with a temporary position as an Applications Engineer supporting the Sales Team of the Virginia offices of Carrier Air-conditioning. This turned into a full time career opportunity with progressively increasing responsibilities with each new position over the last 18 years in the Engineering Services Industry in North America. Starting with just Airconditioning engineering, I have progressed to be directly involved in the entire Mechanical and Electrical engineering management of industrial, commercial and institutional facilities. Since 2006, I am in an Engineering & Business development role for Larsen & Toubro, heading the North American Engineering Services division. On the personal front, we both have one daughter, Alisha. We spend a lot of time, ~ 3 months every year, with our families in India. I am happy to volunteer and serve on the board as it allows me to continue to be associated with the school and be a part of the new phase of change and growth of the school.

### **Edie Kahn—Parent Activities Committee Co-chair**

My husband, Richard, and I were attracted to Lerner because of its small size and it's commitment to providing a nurturing and enriching learning experience for our son Benjamin when he entered kindergarten in 2007. In 2009, our daughter Helene joined her big brother at Lerner when she entered kindergarten. Over the past 3 years, I've had numerous opportunities to volunteer in the classroom and for school wide programs and I continue to be amazed by Lerner's dedicated teachers, staff and parents. I have lived in the area since 1994 when I moved to Carrboro, NC from Maryland to begin graduate school in UNC's Occupational Therapy master's program. I fell in love with this area and never left because of its "small town feel" and the wonderful music, art and outdoor activities. As an occupational therapist, I have worked in the public schools and private practice, working and playing with children and young adults.

### **Mandy Summerson - Parent Activities Committee Co-chair**

My husband Graham and I have lived in Durham for 15 years now. I am originally from the Washington, D.C. area and he is from Winston-Salem, NC. We have two boys, Gray and Matthew who both attend Lerner School. Gray has attended since Kindergarten and is now preparing to "graduate" from 5th Grade and Matt will be entering 2nd grade next year. I have been very active in the Jewish Community since the time Gray attended Pre-School at Beth El. I was an assistant pre-school teacher while Gray attended Pre-School and then followed

Gray to Lerner his Kindergarten year as a position became available for an Administrative Assistant for Lerner. I worked at Lerner for 3 years developing a Business Manager position and was very active in strategic planning, budgeting, daily accounting and facilities. Graham was the Board's Facility Chair during this time. Following my position with Lerner, I took on a new job and experience with The Durham-Chapel Hill Jewish Federation as Federation and JCC Program Manager and then Program Director. I continue to do project based work for the Federation as I use this time to also care for my ill father. We are currently members of Judea Reform. I look forward to volunteering my time in this capacity for The Lerner School since in the past I have been a staff member. I feel I have a lot of insight into the daily operations of the school which will be beneficial to both the exceptional members of the Board and Staff at Lerner. I also look forward to meeting many of the newest families to the Lerner School that I do not know yet.

### **Brian Chmura– Policy Chair**

My wife, Donna, and I have lived in Durham for 14 years. She is from Greensboro originally and I am from NJ. We met in law school at GW. Molly, our little first grader, is nearing the end of her first year at Lerner. She loves it and so do Donna and I. I am an attorney and have worked with Chapel Hill Kehillah and Durham-Chapel Hill Jewish Federation on legal issues pertaining to organizational polices. For the Chapel Hill Kehillah, where I served as VP of Administration and Finance, I worked with the director to draft and secure board passage of dozens of SOPs, workplace and community policies, and an employee handbook. I was also involved in the recruitment and hiring of religious and preschool directors. Prior to serving as VP, I had been a member of the Board for 2 years and before that was the founding co-chair of the Chapel Hill Kehillah Jewish Preschool committee under which the preschool was established. I also was the chair of the bylaws committee at the Kehillah and oversaw a complete redrafting of the synagogue's bylaws in 2006 and have recently completed a review exercise which has led to several amendments to improve the bylaws at the upcoming annual meeting. I also served as a member of the Kehillah's Strategic Planning Steering Committee and as Chair of the Finance, Facilities and Fundraising subcommittee for Strategic Planning.

### **Jodi Beetham– Public Relations Chair**

My husband Mik and I and our two children Ryan and Nicole moved here from New York City 5 years ago where I owned and operated a Real Estate Brokerage Firm for 14 years. One of our main reasons for moving out of the city was to obtain a greater sense of community and more room to spread out; 2 kids and 2 dogs in an apartment was way too crowded. We have since become a part of a warm Jewish Community and feel lucky to be able to contribute to the intimate community at Lerner. I have served on the Lerner Board , first as PAC Co-Chair, and now as Public Relations chair and I am looking forward to contributing towards Lerner's success while it strengthens and grows. We own and operate Green Energy Lawn Care, an environmentally friendly, full service lawn care company where Mik orchestrates the work out in the field, and both of us focus on the sales and marketing. I have a great love for exercise and general fitness and greatly enjoy running and walking with friends.

### **Julie Mell - Religious Practices Chair**

I am a Jewish historian and a member of the faculty at NC State University. I completed a Ph.D. at UNC-Chapel Hill with degrees in History and Religious Studies. My husband Malachi Hacohen and I moved to Durham in 1993 when he joined the faculty at Duke. (He is also a

Jewish historian!) We've had 2 daughters here, both of whom now attend Lerner: Hadas (2<sup>nd</sup> grade) and Lilach (preschool). One of my favorite times of the week is the Shabbat Sing-a-long. The joy and enthusiasm of the children as Shabbat is coming in is a "moment of grace" each week. We are also long time members of the Orthodox Kehillah at Beth El Synagogue. At Beth El, I've helped lead the Tot Shabbat and I've served as the representative of the Orthodox Kehillah on the Beth El board for the past 2 years. We like to spend the summers in Israel with our Israeli family, when we can.

### **Bern Becker - Pre-School Liason Chair**

Bern has been a Durham resident nearly 17 years and has been married to Marc Becker for 10 years. She earned a BA in English Literature/ Fine Arts Minor from Siena College near Albany, NY. Bern and Marc have two children; David, a rising 1<sup>st</sup> grader and Sara, rising Daggim class. The Becker family has been part of the Lerner community for 3 years. Bern's background includes years of Project Management for Distance Education at the Higher Learning level, client management for a database marketing firm in Chapel Hill. She's been an art teacher for grades K-8 in a NY private school and currently teaches the youngest cohort at Beth El Preschool. Bern has enjoyed being a stay-at-home mother.

### **Jenny Hoffman - Recruitment Chair**

We moved to Durham 6 years ago; 2010-2011 will be our 5<sup>th</sup> year at the Lerner School. Our youngest child of three will join Lerner this year as a Preschooler. I studied Fine Arts and Architecture in college and graduate school. Before becoming a mother, I worked and volunteered in the field in a variety of ways: as an Architect Intern, graduate student teaching, and on construction crews. I've always been an active volunteer at Lerner doing one thing or another. Most recently I served as the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Class Parent and as the Book Fair Chair. My personal interests, when I can find the time, is anything design or construction-related, yoga, biking, gardening and reading. I've come to feel that Lerner contributes far more to our family than the religious and academic education of our children. I would love to see Lerner flourish and grow. As Recruitment Chair, I hope that I can be a welcoming face to prospective Lerner parents. I look forward to helping find new and interesting ways to get the word out about our special school. I am excited to join the Board and to work with such a creative, devoted team of parents and community members.

### **Sue Egnoto – At Large**

Sue, Morris, Grace and Eve moved to Chapel Hill, NC from the Bay Area just four short years ago looking to slow down and integrate ourselves into a smaller community. Grace (a senior) settled in at Durham Academy and Eve attended our local public elementary school. After a short and disappointing experience we frantically looked for an alternative for Eve (then in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade). I had heard great things about Lerner, so I decided to check it out and two weeks later Eve was attending! It's been a fabulous choice for Eve and our family. Being connected to the school has provided us a path to be actively involved in the Jewish community. I have been privileged to serve for several years on the board as PR chair. I also serve on the finance, committee. We are an interfaith family & members of Judea Reform.

In my work life, I am a marketing professional specializing in new product development, positioning and branding. If I ever find the time I'll restart my marketing consulting practice. I have an MBA

from M.I.T Sloan School of Management and a BS/MS in Imaging Science from R.I.T. I make a mean Cosmo, make challah with the challah club, still play soccer, and hate to miss a party.

### **Jodi Bakst - At Large**

Jodi Bakst is a mother of two children who attended Lerner. Her son graduated from Lerner in 2005 and is now at Chapel Hill High School. Jodi is a Realtor and an active volunteer in the Jewish Community. While at Lerner she served on the Board and was a fundraising co-chair. She was the former co-chair of the Women's Philanthropy Division at the Jewish Federation and has served on numerous other Federation committees. Jodi is excited to again serve on the Lerner Board. She is a strong supporter of the school and it committed to its success.

### **Patty Wild – Ex Officio Past President**

After eight years as a Lerner parent, the youngest of my two daughters will graduate and I become an alumni parent this year. I previously served the Board as Past-President, President, V.P., PAC Co-Chair and Chair of the Committee on Trustees. I continue as a member of the Head Support Committee and founding Challah Club member. I love the school, and look forward to its continued growth and success as we transition to new leadership but continue with our strong staff, and involved parent community. I am especially interested in strengthening relations with Lerner alumni. When not at Lerner, I work 3 days a week as an Audiologist, and enjoy family time with my husband Michael, who is a sales manager for Nestle Clinical Nutrition, and our daughters.

### **Bryna Rapp – Ex Officio Past President**

I have been a member of the Lerner School Board off and on since 1993. At the time, I was pregnant with my first child, Ben. Both my kids were at Lerner for elementary school and now Ben is in 10th grade at American Hebrew Academy and my daughter Sadie is in 7th grade at Duke School. Fortunately for me, I have a slew of younger niece/nephews who will keep me tied to the school until at least 2017! I have served as President and lead the Head Support Committee and Committee on Trustees for 2 years each. I am a founding member of the Challah Club and a lifetime co-chair of the Care for the Mosaic Wall committee. I love everything about the school... the teachers, the parents, the amazing children who make up my extended family. I am an architect by training, but spend my professional time running a small commercial furniture business in Carrboro (the FurnitureLab) with my husband Greg and my brother, Nathan. I spend my free time raising money for the Partnership for a Jewish Center so that we can have a JCC next door to the school before the end of the 2010/11 school year!